

# STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2020

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## HEARINGS BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

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# STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2020

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2019.

## OVERSIGHT OF UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

### WITNESS

AMBASSADOR MARK GREEN, ADMINISTRATOR, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LOWEY

The CHAIRWOMAN. The subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

I welcome you all, especially our new members. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. I don't know. This is not a good sign.

But I will mention them anyway because they would want us to acknowledge them, Ms. Torres; Ms. Frankel—I think she lost her voice, too—Mrs. Roby; and my friend, the former chairman and ranking member, Mr. Rogers. I look forward to a very productive year.

Administrator Green, thank you so much for joining us. I am constantly impressed by you and the wealth of experience of our development professionals.

USAID helps the world's most vulnerable people, assists in the recovery of millions from natural disasters and conflict, and supports democracy and the rule of law. These development efforts are the front line of our national security.

This is a tumultuous time around the world.

Globally, democracy is in crisis. The right to free and fair elections, freedom of the press, and the rule of law are under assault.

Yemen is on the edge of catastrophe as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with 20 million civilians facing starvation. The second-largest Ebola outbreak ever recorded rages in a fragile Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in more than 500 deaths so far, including nearly 100 children.

Political turmoil in Venezuela continues. More than 3 million people have already fled, and some 25,000 more flee every day in what has been called Latin America's worst ever refugee crisis.

In Burma, since 2017 some 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled their homes in the northern Rakhine province to escape persecution and violence.

And in Syria more than 6 million people are internally displaced, and the vast majority of the 5.6 million refugees in neighboring countries live below the poverty line.

It is clear that our humanitarian and development efforts are needed now more than ever. For USAID to succeed in leading these efforts the agency must have sufficient resources and staffing to nimbly and effectively respond.

But several of this administration's policies have hamstrung your agency, reducing response time and preventing the U.S. from partnering with some of the most capable and experienced implementers. Perhaps no better example is the administration's expansion of the global gag rule and the Kemp-Kasten determination against UNFPA.

These terrible policies undermine our effectiveness and make it much harder to reach people who need us most.

I can clearly remember, my friend, Administrator Green, and I just have to take a break from these notes because we all have experiences that we will never forget. I remember visiting a place where abortion was legal, and I think of this woman with all the little babies following her, and I think today if she were taken to a clinic and that clinic dared to provide any kind of guidance on abortion they would be out of business, and this woman would not be able to get any guidance at all.

I know you are in a difficult position in this administration, but if I wanted to take the time I could probably give you another half dozen or more examples where birth control is health. It is survival. And to put these clinics out of business if they are threatened with providing full direction on Women's health is an abomination.

So, my friend, these self-inflicted wounds compromise the quality of our efforts and are a disservice to the American taxpayer.

Another example is the administration's suspension of assistance during policy reviews and subsequent breaks in programming that have led to negative consequences. President Trump also appears to have a flawed view of foreign assistance, in my judgment, as a reward to our friends and its withdrawal a punishment to our enemies.

Moreover, the administration's approach to multilateral engagement, whether it be at the United Nations, the World Bank, or elsewhere, has been reactionary and shortsighted. Our assistance has direct impacts that alleviate suffering, save lives, and enable stability that is essential to our own interests.

In our interconnected world, our national security is strongest when development, diplomacy, and defense are all well-funded and equally prioritized.

I want to make it very clear: This subcommittee stands ready to work with USAID. To do so effectively will require ongoing, open communication, especially on areas where funding needs are outpacing available resources.

Failing to maintain our position as the leader in global development and humanitarian assistance will cost lives, risk the spread of infectious diseases, and reduce American influence around the world. I hope—and I should change that, my friend, to: We can count on you and your team to help strengthen communication and consultation with us throughout the 116th Congress.

I thank you very much for testifying today, and I look forward to our discussion. Before we move to your testimony I would like

to turn to my friend, Mr. Rogers, the ranking member—we just take turns, but I don't want to take any more turns in the next year—the ranking member for his opening statement.

And then I want to make it clear I will call on members based on seniority of the members who were present when the hearing was called to order. I will alternate between majority and minority. Each member is asked to keep their questions to within 5 minutes per round.

Administrator Green, we will be happy to place your full testimony in the record. If you would be kind enough to summarize your oral statement, I want to make sure we leave enough time to get to questions, Mr. Green.

I will turn to Mr. Rogers. That is what happens when you don't have a voice. Okay.

#### OPENING REMARKS OF MR. ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. I thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Congratulations on your accomplishment—historic accomplishment—being the first female chairman of the full committee.

The CHAIRWOMAN. So maybe there is a kind of plan. Was my voice taken away as the first woman? I don't know what is going on around here. [Laughter.]

Mr. GREEN. No. No, it can't be.

Mr. ROGERS. I know it is going to be difficult to fill both the roles of being a full committee chairwoman and this subcommittee chair as well, but I am pleased that you are staying on and leading the subcommittee, and I look forward to working with you and being as helpful as we can along the way. You and I have had a great working relationship down through the years of time in various roles, and I have found you to be very effective, and reliable, and honest, and true, and above-board. So I appreciate our friendship.

Ambassador Green, it is a pleasure to welcome you back to your old stomping grounds here on the Hill. You spent a good number of years—was it four terms—on the Hill, and a member of this body. Among your other accomplishments, we appreciate your service up here.

And it is good to see you again for your third appearance testifying before this subcommittee as USAID administrator. You have demonstrated your willingness to appear when called upon, to engage our members in a meaningful conversation about your work at USAID. I asked this of you in your first hearing as administrator in this very room. I believe you are upholding your end of the bargain, and I sincerely appreciate that.

I would hope this hearing would allow us to discuss the president's budget request for fiscal year 2020. If the speculation holds true, we are looking at another proposal for steep cuts in the international affairs budget being recommended in the president's budget, despite being roundly rejected by Congress for 2 years in a row now.

Unfortunately, the budget submission has been delayed until mid-March so we will need to have those discussions at another time.

Therefore, today we are going to focus on oversight. USAID plays an important role in contributing to our country's national security.

Across the globe USAID is on the front lines promoting democracy, growing economies, reducing disease, providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

That is why it is critical to make sure USAID is the most efficient and effective agency it can be. Taxpayers should feel confident their resources are being invested wisely, and they should be proud of what is accomplished overseas on their behalf.

You are fortunate to have a capable inspector general keeping an eye on the agency. She and her staff have done important work to help you achieve greater transparency and increased effectiveness, and I know you take her recommendations seriously and have made progress addressing them lately.

But there are some challenges that never seem to get resolved. They get written up year after year.

I will probably return to this topic with a question, but I am concerned that the USAID I.G. continues to raise the issue of vulnerabilities in financial management. These are the fundamentals, basics of tracking each and every dollar.

I understand you have made some improvement recently, but that doesn't mean you should take your foot off the gas. I discussed this and other issues in a hearing with the inspector general when I became chair of this subcommittee, and I intend to follow it until it gets resolved.

I strongly encourage you and your management team to remain focused on making this an agency strength rather than a perennial challenge.

The situation Venezuela, a topic of great interest, of course. The Maduro regime has caused desperate conditions in Venezuela, has threatened counternarcotics efforts and economic development throughout the region.

In turn, this has forced unprecedented numbers of Venezuelans to flee their homes. The outcome of this political crisis will have a substantial impact on Latin America for decades to come. I know you intend to address this in your remarks, so I look forward to hearing your update.

I hope you will address other important topics, such as your agency's role in countering Russian and Chinese influence around the world, efforts to suppress our partners in the Near East that continue to face turbulent times, and critical investments being made in global health security.

Before I close, I want to thank the men and women of USAID for their continued hard work and their commitment. I know the shutdown was difficult, sometimes demoralizing for so many federal employees, including USAID. I hope their dedication to their mission will stay strong, and I look forward to doing what we can to support them in that effort.

I know, Mr. Administrator, that you must be weary. You have been on the road—the air, if you will—for many months. I understand you were in Colombia recently twice in 4 days, I think, so we are glad to have you back here and we hope to give you a little rest amidst your troubles.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Again, Administrator Green, we will be happy to place your full testimony into the record. If you would be kind enough to summarize your oral statement?

I want you to do whatever you are comfortable with. I want to make sure, though, that we leave enough time to get to everyone's questions.

Mr. Green. Thank you.

#### OPENING REMARKS OF AMBASSADOR GREEN

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And up front I apologize for my voice. I picked something up on one of those travels, and until this morning I actually thought I was winning. Now I am not so sure, but I appreciate the forbearance of the committee.

So, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, Members, it is good to be with you. Thank you for this opportunity.

I would like to begin this morning by discussing USAID's efforts to address a few of our more-pressing humanitarian and development situations across the world. As many of you have alluded to, at USAID we have urgent work to do, and that work has never been more important.

To name one, I have just returned from Cúcuta, Colombia, a short distance from the border with Venezuela. There I saw first-hand the devastating effects of the Maduro regime's corruption, economic mismanagement, and oppression. I heard stories of unimaginable suffering: children starving, hospitals running out of medicine, and people walking, in some cases hundreds of miles over several days, to reach the border in search of help.

Of course, this tragedy is all the worse because Venezuela was once one of the region's wealthiest countries. At the request of Interim President Juan Guaidó, we have been prepositioning humanitarian assistance close to the border for eventual delivery into Venezuela.

While in Cúcuta last week, I welcomed the arrival of a new tranche of humanitarian assistance. Since February 4th, USAID, with support from the Departments of Defense and State and others, has prepositioned approximately 195 metric tons of crucial relief supplies, including emergency medical kits, food aid, hygiene kits, and nutritional supplies.

This past weekend, as I am sure you were watching, this past weekend was tragic, as thousands of Venezuelan, Colombian, and other humanitarian volunteers sought to transport lifesaving food and medical supplies into Venezuela. They were met with death, tear gas, rubber bullets, and violence ordered by the Maduro regime.

The United States, over the last couple of years, has contributed more than \$195 million in funding to support Venezuelan migrants and the communities hosting them. We are far from alone in that effort: 54 countries now recognize the interim presidency of Juan Guaidó. Many of our closest allies have pledged assistance, and many private citizens have already provided assistance to the region.

However, as I know you agree, in order to fully respond to these crises, we need to address their underlying causes. Just as we lead

the world in humanitarian assistance, we should also lead in our commitment to democracy, human rights, and citizen-responsive governance.

USAID stands in solidarity with Interim President Guaidó and those in Venezuela who seek a government that represents their interests and is responsive to their needs. So long as Maduro and his cronies continue to crush the people of Venezuela, their economy, and their hope, we know this crisis will continue.

The people of Venezuela, like those in Cuba and Nicaragua, who are also suffering under authoritarianism, deserve freedom and a return to the rule of law.

Some observers talk as though democracy is in irreversible decline, but the only way that freedom and democracy will fall is if we let them. As President Trump recently said in Miami, we can see the day ahead when all the people of Latin America will at last be free.

Members of the subcommittee, we are hard at work in addressing another humanitarian crisis, this one of a fundamentally different nature. The outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where health officials have recorded at least 869 confirmed cases and 544 related deaths all since 2018, should be of concern to all of us.

USAID disaster and health experts, part of the U.S. Government's Disaster Assistance Response Team, are on the ground working side by side with WHO and the Ministry of Health in DRC. The team is applying tools and valuable lessons learned, developed in the 2014 epidemic response in West Africa. The strategy is to break the chain of transmission and ultimately end the outbreak.

It is a complex working environment. Poor access to certain areas, security concerns, and community distrust have presented remarkable hurdles to our work.

But despite these challenges, responders are conducting their vital work in affected areas, including surveillance and case-finding, case management, and raising community awareness about transmission. We will continue to monitor and adapt accordingly, in coordination with our colleagues from the CDC.

This response is a priority not only because of our commitment to those affected, but also to prevent the outbreak from spreading throughout the broader region and, quite frankly, beyond.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing humanitarian crises in nearly every corner of the world. And what makes the tragedy of the Rohingya even more painful is that, similar to Venezuela, it is entirely manmade.

Bangladesh now holds 1 million Rohingya refugees from Burma, as well as the world's largest refugee camp; 730,000 of these migrants arrived in the wake of an ethnic cleansing campaign conducted by the Burmese security forces that began in August 2017.

I traveled to Bangladesh last May to visit the refugee camps and to hear from those who escaped the violence and bloodshed. I met with government representatives. I conveyed America's gratitude to Bangladesh for hosting the refugees, but I also encouraged them to allow humanitarian organizations to provide refugees with the full range of support necessary for their wellbeing—not just food assist-

ance and health care, but access to education, weather-resistant shelter, and livelihood opportunities.

USAID, in close coordination with State, continues to provide emergency food and nutrition assistance to refugees in Bangladesh. We are also working to ensure their host communities are not overly burdened by this significant population influx, and we continue to call on the government of Burma to take concrete actions to respect the dignity and the rights of all Rohingya in Burma to return voluntarily, safely, and in a dignified manner.

Members of the subcommittee, those are just a few of the most pressing situations at the forefront of our work. But I would also like to say a quick word about USAID's redesign process, or transformation.

When I last appeared before the committee in March of 2018, I provided an overview of several planned initiatives. After consultations with many of you and your staff, we have since launched many of them and we are eager to answer any questions that you might have as you look to review our remaining Notifications.

As you have heard me say before, private enterprise is perhaps the most powerful force on Earth for lifting lives out of poverty, strengthening communities, and building self-reliance. And so, just in December, we launched the Agency's first-ever Private Sector Engagement Strategy. This policy is a call to action to increase and strengthen our work with the private sector, moving beyond mere contracting and grant-making to true collaboration, co-design, and co-financing.

Another key initiative—and, Chairwoman Lowey, I have to thank your unbending leadership on this issue—aims to enhance a core aspect of our work: improving learning outcomes, especially for marginalized youth and communities in need. One aspect of USAID's new Education Policy that I am especially excited about is its focus on ensuring that we tailor our education programs to the unique needs of each country.

We are engaging all stakeholders in order to deliver quality, sustainable education. This includes universities, traditional education institutions, and, where appropriate, private sector faith-based organizations, and more. These new education strategies will ensure that we are considering every innovation to achieve the very best possible learning outcomes.

Finally, I would like to mention USAID's support for the White House-led Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, also known as WGDP. On February 7th, I joined Ivanka Trump in launching this initiative and announced USAID's new fund to support and scale up innovative programs that advance women's economic empowerment around the world. This fund will have an initial allocation of \$50 million and will support high-impact proposals including those that support training and skills development, expand access to finance, and reduce barriers to women's free and full participation in the economy.

Members of the subcommittee, with your support and guidance we will ensure that USAID remains the world's premier international development agency.

And with that, Madam Chairwoman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear and to continue our conversation. I welcome questions.

Thank you, Madam.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

[The information follows:]

**Written Statement of Administrator Mark Green, U.S. Agency for International  
Development (USAID)  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
February 27, 2019**

**Introduction**

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the latest on USAID's redesign efforts and our approach to the most pressing humanitarian and development issues around the world. It is an honor to be here.

To ensure that USAID remains the world's premier development organization, the Agency initiated an internal redesign process, or *Transformation*, in early 2017. When I last appeared before Committee on March 22, 2018, I provided an overview of several planned initiatives in this framework. After consultations with many of you and your staff, we have since launched many of them, and are eager to answer any questions you might have to approve our remaining Congressional Notifications on our Transformation.

**Country Roadmaps: Defining and Measuring Self-Reliance**

In pursuit of the day when USAID's development assistance is no longer needed, we are now orienting our work around the concept of building *self-reliance* in partner countries. USAID defines "self-reliance" as a country's ability to plan, finance, and implement solutions to its own development challenges. We believe that two mutually-reinforcing factors determine a country's self-reliance: commitment, or the degree to which a country's laws, policies, actions, and formal and informal governance mechanisms support progress toward self-reliance; and capacity, which refers to how far a country has come in its ability to plan, finance, and manage its own development agenda.

The Agency has turned to a team of data and policy experts to help us identify the best available, third-party, metrics to measure commitment and capacity, and provide an overall snapshot of a country's level of self-reliance. Following consultations with USAID employees, external

partners, and other stakeholders, we settled on 17 objective metrics across the political, social, and economic spheres. To tell each country's unique story, we created "Country Roadmaps" for all 136 low- and middle-income countries as classified by the World Bank. These Country Roadmaps, which were rolled out in August 2018 for socialization with partner governments, visually depict each country's performance across all 17 metrics.

These Roadmaps serve four specific purposes. First, they help us identify where each country is in its development journey, a crucial first step in reorienting our in-country approach around the concept of self-reliance. Second, they help inform our strategic decision-making and resource allocation processes, and ensure that we tailor USAID's investments to advancing each country along that journey. Third, because they use objective, open-source data, the Roadmaps provide USAID with a common touchstone for use in dialogues with country and development partners. Lastly, the metrics help signal to USAID—and the broader U.S. Government—when a country has attained an advanced level of self-reliance and might be ready to enter a new, more enterprise-centered phase in our development partnership.

In October 2018, we published the Country Roadmaps online at [USAID.gov](https://www.usaid.gov/country-roadmaps). I welcome you to take a look.

### **Diversifying Our Partner Base, and Engaging New and Underutilized Partners**

Metrics provide us with critical insight, but, ultimately, it is our in-country partnerships that advance the mission. Tapping into the innovation and resources of the private sector, and working with the full breadth of stakeholders, is critical to achieving sustainable development outcomes and building self-reliance. Many locally established actors—such as education institutions, non-profits, faith-based organizations and the private sector—have long engaged in efforts to build capacity, increase accountability, and provide services in countries prioritized by USAID. They are our natural allies in our development mission.

Historically, these groups have often struggled to compete for USAID funding because of burdensome compliance and solicitation requirements, the imposing dollar size and scope of our

awards, and unfamiliarity with USAID’s terminology and practices. On our end, we have admittedly lacked a sustained commitment to mobilizing new and local partners. The result has been a dwindling partner base. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, 60 percent of our obligations went to 25 partners, and more than 80 percent of our obligations went to just 75 partners. The number of new partners has decreased consistently since 2011.

With the launch of USAID’s first-ever Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Strategy last December, we seek to reverse this trend, and tap into the good ideas and innovative approaches that we know exist in underutilized partners. Included in the core tenets of the Strategy are collaborative approaches to partnership, prioritizing innovation, and building the commitment and capacity of new partners. By diversifying our partner-base, we will not only incorporate new ideas and approaches into our tool-kit, but we will also strengthen locally led development—a core component of each country’s Journey to Self-Reliance.

Recently, for example, USAID awarded the “Stop Gender-Based Violence (GBV)” project to the Zambia Center for Communications Programs (ZCCP). This five-year project will work to ensure that girls and women, boys and men, and members of priority populations across seven of Zambia’s ten Provinces are able to live lives free of GBV and enjoy healthy, supportive, and gender-equitable relationships. The project is the culmination of a concerted effort to identify a partner with local expertise and then help build their capacity to partner with USAID. It is precisely the sort of locally-led development with new or underutilized partners that we seek to facilitate through the new A&A Strategy. We expect to move forward soon with a series of specific procurement reforms suggested by our staff and partners to implement the Strategy quickly.

### **Strengthening Private-Sector Engagement**

While there is a continuing role for traditional grant-making in our work, we can accelerate and amplify our efforts and outcomes by increasingly applying market-based solutions to the development challenges we aim to address. At USAID, we have long recognized that private enterprise is the most-powerful force on earth for lifting lives out of poverty, strengthening

communities, and building self-reliance. But until recently, the Agency lacked a formal, overarching policy to guide and galvanize our engagement with the private-sector.

That changed last December with the launch of USAID's Private-Sector Engagement Policy. The Policy serves as a call to action for all Agency staff and our partners to increase and strengthen our work with commercial firms, and embrace market-based approaches to achieve more sustainable development and humanitarian outcomes. We seek ever-greater input from the private-sector, moving beyond mere contracting and grant-making towards true collaboration, co-design, co-creation, and co-financing. As part of this greater focus on private-sector engagement, USAID looks forward to a close partnership with the new Development Finance Corporation (DFC) established by the BUILD Act to mobilize financing. With close integration of tools such as the Development Credit Authority (DCA) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation's new equity authority and other reforms, the DFC will make private-sector engagement much more effective. We are working closely with OPIC and the White House to make the new DFC a reality. Through collaborative endeavors with our USG partners and the private sector, we seek to merge the capabilities and breadth of our respective expertise to tackle problems that neither could solve alone.

We pursue greater engagement with the private-sector because it is sound development, it achieves better outcomes, and it leverages the vast, largely untapped resources of commercial enterprise throughout the world. But we also pursue it because it is good for American businesses. The world's fastest-growing economies are largely in the developing world. USAID's work to promote regulatory reform already helps level the playing field for American businesses, by reducing their barrier to entry in these large markets. Combined with financing support from the new DFC, the United States can help bring these American businesses directly to the table to tackle specific challenges and further expand their opportunities.

This renewed emphasis on private sector engagement has already borne fruit. For example, last November, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and Corteva, one of America's great agribusinesses. Together, we will tackle global hunger while simultaneously

cultivating new markets for U.S. technology and expertise. I am excited to see what other partnerships emerge in the months and years ahead.

### **Basic Education**

Strengthening education systems is essential for countries on their Journey to Self-Reliance. High-quality education creates pathways for greater economic growth, improved health outcomes, sustained democratic governance, and more peaceful and resilient societies. Following passage of the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act, USAID led the process of developing the U.S. Government's International Basic Education Strategy to increase collaboration and coordination across our various Federal Government Agencies and Departments that are working on education in developing countries. I launched the International Basic Education Strategy in September 2018, and USAID continues to work on its implementation in partner countries worldwide.

USAID followed the launch of the Strategy with the release of our own Education Policy in November 2018. The Policy builds on the leadership USAID has shown around measurably improving learning outcomes, and reaching the most-marginalized children and youth—particularly those affected by conflict and crisis.

One aspect of the Policy that especially excites me is its focus on ensuring our education programs are tailored to the unique needs of each country. Through this policy, we are supporting partner countries to deliver quality education in a way that is sustainable. We are engaging all stakeholders that are actively working to improve education outcomes in a given country, including, U.S. universities, the private sector, faith-based organizations, teachers, communities, families, and students themselves. For example, USAID is working with the University of Notre Dame to improve literacy for children in Southern Haiti. Our partnership builds on the current network of 150 Catholic schools that represent the only meaningful education available there. These new education strategies will help ensure that we are considering every innovation and possible approach to produce the very best learning outcomes, including non-state schools and alternative ways to deliver skills training.

## **Women's Economic Empowerment**

No country can meaningfully progress in the Journey to Self-Reliance if inequalities between men and women impede half the population from realizing their full potential. The development dividends of greater participation by women in the economy are manifold: our experience shows that investing in women and girls accelerates gains across the full development spectrum, including in preventing conflict, improving food security, and promoting health.

On February 7, the President Trump launched the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) initiative to promote women's economic empowerment globally, and in so doing boost economic growth, peace, and prosperity. In support of this initiative, I have announced the establishment of a new USAID fund with an initial allocation of \$50 million to finance and scale up innovative programs from USAID and across the U.S. Government that advance women's economic empowerment across the world. The fund will support high-impact proposals in furtherance of the W-GDP Initiative's three pillars: training and skills development for women, expanding access to finance for women entrepreneurs, and improving the enabling environment by reducing barriers to women's free and full participation in the economy.

This fund will build on our existing portfolio of activities in this key area, and maintain the momentum established through earlier initiatives, such as the WomenConnect Challenge USAID launched in 2017 with Ivanka Trump. The WomenConnect Challenge, a global call for innovative solutions to address the gender digital divide and better integrate women into the digital economy, received more than 500 applications across 89 countries. We announced nine winners last October—including one woman, from Uganda, I had the pleasure of meeting earlier this month who started an organization that has helped women in rural Africa develop their computer and information-technology skills and, in many cases, establish their own businesses.

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While we are excited about these new initiatives, USAID has remained focused on our core day-to-day work: supporting the world's most-vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises; promoting human rights, democracy, and citizen-responsive governance; and improving development outcomes in the areas of economic growth, education, environment, and health worldwide. Every day, our highly professional and dedicated staff work diligently to deliver sustainable development solutions and build self-reliance in partner countries, projecting American values globally, and advancing our foreign-policy and national-security objectives.

I know I cannot touch upon our work in each country in the limited time afforded to me here today, so allow me to discuss some of the themes and situations at the forefront of our attention.

### **Venezuela**

As you know, the illegitimate dictator Nicolas Maduro has repeatedly blocked efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the millions of Venezuelan citizens in need. We continue to monitor the situation in Venezuela closely, where Maduro and his cronies have destroyed the country's institutions and economy and created the largest cross-border mass exodus in the history of the Americas. On January 30, 2019, I had the opportunity to speak by phone with Interim President Juan Guaidó, and I communicated our message of solidarity with the Venezuelan people. He already knew of our work to provide assistance to Venezuelans who have fled Maduro's tyranny. He expressed gratitude for our efforts, and we agreed to continue working together in support of dignity, human rights, democracy, and justice in Venezuela.

On February 25, Vice President Pence announced that the United States is providing nearly \$56 million in additional State and USAID humanitarian assistance to support the regional response for the nearly 3.4 million Venezuelans who have fled Venezuela due to their country's political and economic crisis caused by the illegitimate Maduro regime. With this new funding, since FY 2017, the United States has provided more than \$195 million in humanitarian assistance and development and economic assistance to aid those Venezuelans who have left their country. In addition, on January 24, Secretary Pompeo pledged an additional \$20 million in State and USAID humanitarian assistance for those people inside

Venezuela as they struggle to cope with severe shortages of food and medicine shortages and other dire impacts of the regime-caused crisis. This funding will purchase emergency food and health assistance aimed at reaching the most vulnerable populations in Venezuela. We are working with the Departments of State and Defense to pre-position relief items—including food, nutritional supplements, hygiene kits, and medical supplies—in Colombia and Brazil so they are available to reach Venezuelans in need, as soon as is safe and logistically possible.

As President Trump has made clear, the people of Venezuela are not alone. The United States stands with those who are yearning for a better life and a true democracy. In Venezuela, USAID funds local organizations involved with human rights, civil society, independent media, electoral oversight, and democratic political processes, and the democratically elected National Assembly. We know the answer to Venezuela's crisis must be human liberty and democracy; the people of Venezuela deserve a return to democracy and the rule of law, and a peaceful and prosperous future.

#### **Outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

Since the declaration of the outbreak on August 1, 2018, health officials have recorded at least 869 cases, including 544 deaths, in DRC's North Kivu and Ituri Provinces as of February 25, 2019. The U.S. Government deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to the DRC to augment the ongoing Ebola response efforts. These disaster and health experts from USAID and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), are working with partners to provide robust life-saving assistance and support affected populations. The DART is coordinating with the DRC Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization, other donors, and key actors to support a coordinated effort, encourage sustained resourcing and fair burden-sharing, and ultimately end the outbreak. USAID assistance primarily focuses on breaking the chain of transmission, including through preventing and controlling infections, surveillance and case-finding, contact-tracing, case-management, and raising awareness in communities about how the virus is transmitted.

This response is a priority for the U.S. Government, not only because we are committed to supporting those affected, but also because effective efforts to contain and end the outbreak will prevent it from spreading throughout the broader region and beyond, including the United States.

### **Democratic Backsliding**

A significant, though not insurmountable, challenge we face across all regions is democratic backsliding, in which authoritarian forces seek to unwind freedom's gains. From Caracas to Phnom Penh, autocrats are employing more sophisticated and subversive tactics to prolong their rule, including weakening checks on their authority, eroding universal freedoms, and making a mockery of elections. As history has demonstrated, authoritarian systems exacerbate some of the biggest threats to U.S. national security, including violent extremism, armed conflict, and transnational organized crime. As such, USAID will continue to fund programming that aims to counter authoritarian impulses, nurture the capacity of civil society to advocate for an agenda of liberty and advance fundamental freedoms worldwide.

### **Democratic Reform in Ethiopia**

After years of violent social upheaval and setbacks, Ethiopia's new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has taken numerous concrete steps to break from his country's authoritarian past. These steps include the release of thousands of political prisoners; dropping legal action against opposition politicians; removing restrictions on media outlets and civil-society organizations; rewriting key pieces of legislation; and making peace with neighboring Eritrea. We are hopeful these actions will lead to a credible, more-vibrant, multi-party democracy with a market-based economic system that provides inclusive opportunity to all citizens.

We are working with the Ethiopian people to address some of their most-pressing humanitarian and development challenges. For example, USAID is funding a three-year partnership between the Government of Ethiopia and the Center of International Development (CID) at Harvard University to identify and address systemic constraints to economic growth in Ethiopia. We are also working with the Ethiopian judiciary and Attorney General's office to help implement legal

reforms that address human rights violations and ensure a fair, transparent participatory legal process for all citizens. Additionally, as part of our overall efforts to help Ethiopia achieve a prosperous and stable future, USAID plans to launch a new Global Food Security Strategy Country Plan for Ethiopia to support Ethiopia on the Journey to Self-Reliance.

### **Clear Choice**

USAID has been aggressive in communicating to partner countries the advantages of the U.S. development model—which incentivizes reform to spur private enterprise and free-markets, attract investments, and foster self-reliance—and the long term costs of alternative models that saddle countries with unsustainable debt, lead to the forfeiture of strategic assets, and further the militaristic ambitions of authoritarian actors. Recently, I had the opportunity to address the Chiefs of Missions from all our Embassies worldwide. I encouraged them to incorporate our messaging framework into their dialogues with host government counterparts. We offer partner countries a path to self-reliance and an enterprise-driven future. The authoritarian model offers essentially, servitude.

### **Indo-Pacific Strategy**

In Asia, USAID plays a key role in advancing the U.S. Government's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS). America's vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region is one in which all nations are sovereign, strong, and prosperous. Together with our U.S. Government partners, and in coordination with like-minded donor partners, including Australia, Japan, and Republic of Korea, USAID helps advance the IPS by strengthening governance in areas critical to achieving this vision—primarily with regard to bolstering economies, supporting democratic institutions and transparency, and fostering incentives to manage natural resources that address the region's substantial infrastructure gap—foremost in energy, transportation, and digital infrastructure. By promoting open, transparent, rules-based, and citizen-responsive governance across Asia, the IPS mitigates the influence of predatory countries while unlocking enterprise-led growth that helps drive sustainable development and increase partner countries' self-reliance. As part of this strategy, USAID is playing a leading role in the interagency.

**Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh and Burma**

Bangladesh now hosts one million Rohingya refugees from Burma, as well as the world's largest refugee camp. 730,000 of these migrants arrived in the wake of an ethnic cleansing campaign conducted by Burmese security forces that began in August 2017. Last May, I went to Bangladesh and Burma's Rakhine State to see the alarming reality facing Rohingya communities. I saw firsthand their terrible plight. The United States is the largest-single donor of humanitarian aid to this crisis and stands as a beacon of hope to Rohingya.

Our efforts have been, and remain focused on measures that will improve the situation for Rohingya in Rakhine State, as well as Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. While providing life-saving assistance is critical, the Burmese Government must address the underlying causes of conflict and violence in Burma for there to be lasting peace, and for the country to move toward fulfilling the promise of its far-from-yet-realized democratic transition.

**Conclusion**

Chairwoman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, as I stated during my last testimony, I believe that we are creating a USAID that can better leverage our influence, authority, and resources to advance U.S. Government interests and improve the way we provide humanitarian and development assistance. The initiatives that I have covered today bring us closer to that goal. As we continue to move forward in these efforts, I invite your input and guidance so that together we can ensure USAID remains the world's premier international development Agency.

Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today, and I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. A pleasure to welcome you, Mr. Administrator.

A few weeks ago the administration rolled out the Women's Global Development and Prosperity program, or W-GDP. Now I, as you well know, fully support increasing women's economic empowerment. The inconsistency, however, of this administration's policies on such an important issue is baffling.

And I won't say just Ivanka Trump; I will talk about the whole administration. Because you and I know that financing alone won't solve this problem. Our programs will not be effective if we don't see women and their challenges holistically, and address the environment in which they are raising their families and supporting their communities.

So do you believe this administration has put the policies in place to effectively encourage women to take advantage of economic opportunities? You will probably say yes, so I will let you give a quick response.

Mr. GREEN. Yes.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I wouldn't want to put words in your mouth. I wouldn't even think of that.

I hope we can work together on W-GDP, but is this administration reconsidering its stance on funding for important women's health and education programs that would be necessary for women to better contribute economically?

Mr. GREEN. The administration, in terms of women's education, very much is looking to boost women's education and to tackle the barriers to women's education. As part of the W-GDP Initiative we are taking a look at all the—country by country—all of the barriers to participation in the economy.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Including health barriers specific to women?

Mr. GREEN. Taking a look at health barriers, all the barriers.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I hope you look very, very carefully at the health barriers that this administration advocates.

So let me be very specific, will the administration reverse its position on an expanded gag rule or misguided prohibition on UNFPA funds to ensure women are able to take advantage of this new initiative?

Mr. GREEN. I will give you a two-part answer.

In coming weeks we will be producing, as we have pledge to do, a report on the impact of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy announced 2 years ago. We will make that report public. I do not believe that it will be reversing its standing position and policy.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I thank you, frankly, for your frank answer. As I mentioned before, I have traveled to so many places, and you see what empowerment of the women does when they can have appropriate health advice and assistance.

The last USAID administrator under a Republican administration, Henrietta Fore, launched the Development Leadership Initiative with a vision to double the number of permanent Foreign Service officers at your agency. And I was so proud to support this initiative when I was last chair of this subcommittee. In fact, the Development Leadership Initiative garnered strong bipartisan support

in recognition of the invaluable role USAID personnel play in our national security.

The Obama administration continued this Bush administration initiative, but this administration has significantly reduced staffing. Can you respond? I know I just have a few seconds left.

Mr. GREEN. As you know, a year-plus ago we were under a hiring freeze. Since then we have taken steps to hire approximately 140 career Foreign Service officers, which we will do between now and the end of Fiscal Year 2020, which is in line with available O.E. budget. And beyond that, we will continue to hire staff and begin to power-up since the freeze was lifted.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Maybe I can ask you directly: Should USAID be expanding, or is your current staffing level sufficient? And what is the impact of the dramatic workforce reductions, including on morale and workload?

Mr. GREEN. So we will be expanding our staff in line with available budget. So it is not a set number; it is making sure that we have the right people in the right place to do the jobs that are necessary.

I can tell you that during the lapse in appropriations in which a good percentage of our staff were furloughed, that did delay a number of operations that we would normally take on, including oversight. So when we have staff reductions like that it certainly hurts our effectiveness.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I thank you very much.

And before I turn this over to Ranking Member Rogers I want to say this committee, whether Chairman Rogers is in charge or I am in charge, and all the members, are passionate about the important work of USAID and feel there have been some mistakes, wrongheadedness in terms of the cuts. So we are happy to be your partner; we are happy to have open and honest discussions, and continue to support the very essential work that you are doing.

So thank you for appearing before us today.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Administrator, China. Anecdotally, all of us on various trips around the world have noticed of late very active Chinese involvement in that country. They have emerged as a major provider of export credits, infrastructure financing, symbolized by their very ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, they call it.

Unlike the U.S. and most Western donors, China's lending policies are not guided by standards of anticorruption, transparency, or the ability to pay the loan back—sustainability. Many of us are concerned that this model gives Chinese companies a big advantage in emerging markets and allows Beijing to use large projects as a way to gain geostrategic influence and power.

Understanding that the U.S. response must involve many agencies, what is USAID's role and strategy to counter the China model of development around the world?

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Ranking Member, for that question. It is a topic that I am passionate about.

First and foremost, when you ask countries why they accept or turn to China, in most cases they will say, because they are there and the U.S. is not. So the first answer is we need to engage in

more places more often with countries. I think we need to be there and show what it is that we offer.

Secondly, I think we need to do a better job in helping countries analyze the terms of what China offers. You and I wouldn't really refer to what China does as assistance. It is predatory financing is what it is. And so I think helping countries to be able to analyze the cost-benefits of the China package is important.

Most importantly, we have to be clear about what it is that we offer and what the end game is. So what I say is in many of these countries it is a choice between self-reliance, which is what you get in the end of your partnership with us, the ability to lead yourself, provide for yourself, guide your own future, versus servitude, in which you are in perpetuity indebted to an authoritarian power. I think we should be full-throated in pointing out the clear differences. So I think it is a combination of all of them.

We have got to be there. I think we have to do a better job in describing what it is that we offer. And I think we have to do a better job in describing the downside, the cost of what China offers.

Finally, I think that the new DFC, which will be coming online towards the end of the year, is an important tool in the toolbox. We shouldn't try to be China-light. We shouldn't get into a bidding war with China. But what we can do, with quality financing from the DFC and other parts of the U.S. Government, is incentivize the kinds of policy reforms that can help a country rise. Every country wants to lead itself, and we want to make it clear that we can help them get there.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, it is a juggernaut. The Chinese are launching—have launched a juggernaut.

They are all over the world and they are pouring billions of dollars into questionable loans for projects that probably will never see the light of day. But they have made their presence there. They have made friends.

Mr. GREEN. If I can, a term that I heard in talking to some businesses in Latin America, they said that they refer to Chinese assistance as “loan-to-own” because there really is no sense of providing financing. It is essentially indebtedness that will allow China to take over assets.

Mr. ROGERS. Yes. And we have never seen anything quite like this, have we?

Let me quickly switch to Venezuela. A lot of focus on the situation inside Venezuela, and rightly so.

You have provided us with helpful overview of recent events. We would like to hear more about what we have done and will do for other countries in the region that have been strained by the more than 3 million people that have fled Venezuela. Could you help us out with that?

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, and it is an important question.

One of the things that makes Venezuela different in terms of its scope is the fact that it is happening as we speak. As the Chairwoman pointed out, we are seeing the flight of migrants increase each and every day, getting on for 4 million now, and it is affecting the entire region.

So we have been providing assistance to host countries to support those migrants who have come over as well as the commu-

nities that are, in fact, hosting them. It is moving as far as the Caribbean, where the economies—just by World Bank numbers—may be prosperous but they are fragile. If they are tourism-oriented you can see how the presence—sudden presence of migrants would be burdensome. So we have been trying to provide some support there.

This is not a bilateral problem; it is not U.S.-Venezuela. This is a problem, a challenge that affects the entire region, and that is why it is receiving the attention, and it should be.

Mr. ROGERS. I think my time is expired.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Good to see you, Mr. Ambassador.

First, thank you for being here. Thank you for your leadership.

I have several questions. I apologize, I have to go into another hearing so I am going to try to summarize my questions all in one round.

Of course I have been concerned about the Trump administration's cuts to UNFPA and the impacts that these cuts have on the health and wellbeing of women and girls around the world. As you know, UNFPA provides critical voluntary reproductive health care, including family planning services, to the world's poorest women living in over 150 countries around the world.

Now, I know you have previously stated that USAID was in the process of reprogramming U.S. funds that were going to UNFPA, but we never got a handle on where those funds were reprogrammed for, what accounts they went into. And, you know, how in the world, now, are you ensuring that women and girls are—in vulnerable situations, such as the child health care and refugee camps in Jordan—how are they accessing care now, given the shift in funds?

So I would like to know what accounts they are going into.

Secondly, of course, I am back talking about democracy programs in Cuba. Of course, the ZunZuneo program, covert Cuban Twitter designed to stir unrest, funding for Radio Marti and Television Marti are, I believe, a waste of taxpayer money. And we have learned recently that it was TV Marti described as an anti-Semitic segment against George Soros. I don't know if you conducted an investigation or not.

But why are we continuing to fund these programs wasting taxpayer dollars, and what is the status of the investigations into all of the wasted money? And is USAID playing a constructive role in what seems to be really an organic opening in Cuba?

There are about 830 Wi-Fi hotspots, and so, of course we know under the Obama administration we moved toward at least trying to normalize relations and engage in some dialogue and some diplomacy, but yet now these—under Trump the policies have turned us back. And so I am wondering what your assessment is on the Cuban people, in terms of curbing trade and travel.

My next question just has to do with HIV and AIDS in terms of country ownership. And are countries, which we all agree need to happen, but is the groundwork established to insist on country ownership?

And then finally, what are we doing in the West Indies and the Caribbean? We discussed this a little bit, but I know there has been very little involvement in the West Indies and the mainly black Caribbean countries, and I do know that China is, of course, there, and I am wondering why we haven't engaged much in the West Indies.

So thank you again.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Congresswoman Lee. You may be in and out but you have gotten all of your questions in and I will attempt to address them as best I can. And I enjoyed our conversation yesterday.

So first, with respect to UNFPA and the reprogramming of dollars, with respect to last year's funding, the 2017 fiscal year funds, those were—those funds were put into maternal and reproductive health—voluntary family planning and maternal and reproductive health activities in priority countries. In addition, part of the money was used for the prevention of cervical cancer in Malawi and Mozambique as part of an integrated program on women's health.

With respect to Fiscal Year 2018 funds, those are still being under review and we will supply a Congressional Notification to your office to make clear our intention as to where those funds will go. So as always, we will make sure that we are very clear where those funds go.

With respect to Cuba, we have increased humanitarian assistance in Cuba to political prisoners, and we do continue to provide access to independent media as much as we can in Cuba. With respect to the precise question you asked, I will have to get back to you. My office will supply a written response. I just am not entirely familiar with that.

On PEPFAR, I support Ambassador Bix's efforts to begin to build stronger sustainability of our PEPFAR investments in some of the countries that have increasing capacity. I think we all recognize that in the long run the right answer in nearly every sector is to help countries to be able to lead themselves.

In the case of health systems in countries with high AIDS—HIV/AIDS burdens, it is building their capacity, slowly getting them to mobilize more and more of their own domestic resources so that eventually, sustainably they can take over leadership themselves. That is what Ambassador Bix is trying to do.

Obviously USAID is part of the larger PEPFAR effort, and we are committed to doing that. It is challenging in many environments, but we think it is important.

With respect to the Caribbean, and the West Indies in particular, as we discussed yesterday, I appreciate and, quite frankly, welcome your passion on this. These nations are our neighborhood, and I think that we should engage them more, and as much as we can.

We often engage only during moments of humanitarian crisis, when there are storms and other natural disasters. And I am proud of the fact that we do. It would be nice to engage with them outside of storms and natural disasters. Those relationships are important.

And again, I think that if we can bolster the economic vitality of our own neighborhood, the Americas, the Western Hemisphere,

I think every American benefits. I think it is good for us as well as being good for them.

So you have my commitment to sit down and work with you on that. I share your passion. I think it is great.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Excuse me.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope you feel better.

Before I make my comments, if I could ask Ms. Lee a question. Are you coming back to the hearing? The reason I ask is you know you have a particular passion for Haiti and I have some questions in that regard. If you are coming back I will probably save those for the—

Ms. LEE. I am not sure. No, go on.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I will have to do it by myself then, okay.

Ms. LEE. Yes. Thank you very much. But I am sure I associate myself with your remarks on Haiti. [Laughter.]

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. Thank you.

Again, thank you, Madam Chair, for the time. And, frankly, it is a privilege for me to serve on this subcommittee.

Mr. Administrator, I never, frankly, know what to call you: congressman, administrator, ambassador, or Mark. So welcome.

Mr. GREEN. Mark works well.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mark is okay? Yes.

Thank you for your long-held leadership and public service. We are really grateful.

Before I ask you a few questions starting with northern Iraq I would like to give a few reflective comments.

I think that the United States Agency for International Development, that title doesn't appropriately capture the fullness of what we are trying to do here. And if I had a chance to rename this, this would obviously have to be shortened, but I do believe you have one of the most important jobs in the country, perhaps the world, because it is about a couple fundamental things, promoting human dignity, attacking the root causes of structural poverty, and attempting to create and imagine a 21st century architecture for diplomatic relations that is based in authenticity, in service—and this is the key point—in service to America's humanitarian impulse, international stability, and our own national security.

Now, if you can find a way to take all of that and press it into a new title I think we could rename the agency because I think it is broader than the two words "international development" captures. And I know you have a particular passion for this, and I am grateful for your service.

You did mention we have humanitarian crises all over the world. And again, I think all of us who have been given this great gift of public service have to reflect on the more fundamental question as to why.

We can move economic aid; we can move assistance. But why do we continue to have these humanitarian crises, especially in an age of unprecedented prosperity in some places, unprecedented development of the sciences and technology? The world is still screaming for meaning, and ultimately I think that meaning is found in the philosophical proposition of human dignity.

Let me fast-forward, and I would like to—Madam Chair, I haven't had a chance to visit with you about this, but if we could do so privately I would appreciate it.

Administrator Green and I traveled to northern Iraq last summer, and what we were doing there at the request of the vice president's office was to evaluate the aid programs that were targeted to the religious minorities that once flourished in northern Iraq. Christian communities, Yazidi communities, certain minority Muslim communities once formed an ancient mosaic tapestry of religious pluralism. The Iraq War and then the consequences of ISIS have—and their genocide, their twisted, dark ideology—has decimated these peoples.

So the United States, again, very generously, has transferred aid. I believe it is near \$200 million.

My findings were that there is possibility that this aid has the potential impact that we desire: a regeneration of these communities, helping Iraq save, again, what once was a vibrant disposition toward pluralism. The situation, though, is urgent. The Christian community has trickled back; the Yazidi community, many of whom are trapped in refugee camps, there will be pressures for out-migration more than there have been if we don't act quickly.

But the more fundamental issue is security. Without security there is really little prospect that the aid that we are giving and other countries are giving is sustainable in the long run.

So, Mr. Administrator. I have taken up a lot of my time. But I would like you to respond to that prospect. And what I am trying to do is, working with Chairmen Engel and McCaul, a resolution through Congress that lays down a marker talking to this issue of security and integrating, frankly, Christians and Yazidis and minority Muslim communities into the Iraqi security forces with some authority to protect themselves.

Mr. Administrator, if you could respond to this?

Mr. GREEN. Thank you for your question and for your concern. And obviously you and I have had a number of conversations about this.

I have been struck by the way that the Iraq government in its approach to the flourishing diversity that was once there in northern Iraq, how they refer to it. They don't refer to minorities; they refer to "component communities," with the idea being that Iraq cannot be whole if it is missing those key components.

We do believe, I do agree, that if we are to defeat ISIS once and for all we must undo some of what it tried to do, which was to destroy that diversity of freedom of conscience. And so we think it is important work to be done.

Yazidis, Christians, as you have pointed out, a number—a range of minorities, there are two pieces to it. As you know, and thanks in part to your leadership, we are providing valuable assistance to these communities to try to provide the infrastructure that allows them to return and have economic livelihood.

The two challenges that I see, which will determine whether we are successful in the long run, are: number one, they have to—they must not argue amongst themselves. In other words, they cannot allow the fragmentation of the communities to finish the job that

ISIS started in terms of breaking apart what was a wonderful mosaic.

But most importantly is security. And as I often say, I am not in the wish projection business. I try to be clear-eyed. And unless these communities feel as though there is some security around them I find it hard to believe that they will either stay or return, as you and I both hope they will.

So I think addressing security is a key part of our long-term success.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Great. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

And I just want to say to my colleague I remember to this day—the name of the person who gave us that briefing on what happened in Iraq, and I voted for that war. It was probably the most misguided vote I ever took in my life.

And I agree with you, that was a tragedy, and I look forward to working with you on this enormous challenge.

And I know my good friend feels the same—well, I won't say you agree with everything I just said, but we have an enormous job to do and I thank you again on that effort, as well.

Ms. Torres, a pleasure. A new member of the committee, and we are delighted to welcome you here today.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you so much. It is an honor to be here with all of you.

Thank you so much for being here, Mr. Green. As you know, I have traveled extensively within the Western Hemisphere and have looked at all of the work that USAID is doing, and I am grateful, and I am a fan of the work that is being done by your employees that I think are just wonderful ambassadors of the U.S. as we continue to look for opportunities to expand democracy within our hemisphere.

So you have a big job. Part of that is dealing with issues of public corruption.

In the 2019 budget justification for Guatemala, USAID programs were to address corruption by improving internal controls and transparency of public financial management and procurement at the national and local levels. We were to help them increase transparency.

How is that happening, and what is your assessment within the Guatemalan government? Recent actions have been tearing at the rule of law, violating the rule of law, tearing at the work that we have been focused on doing there.

In Honduras \$4.4 million were to go to NGOs to serve as watchdogs for government actions, to conduct social audits and evaluations of government programs and services, and advocate for reforms, and promote transparency there, again, and accountability.

Can you talk about those two countries and how—what is the progress there? And I know that the administration was calling on a review of the funding within the Northern Triangle. What is the status of that review, the assistance that we are providing to the Northern Triangle?

El Salvador has elected a new president. We are all hopeful. My glass is always half full. But we will see.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you for the questions, and also for your passion for the region. We think it is very important.

First off, you raised the issue of corruption and impunity in those three countries in particular, and it is right for you to raise and elevate that concern because it really touches almost every other aspect of their economy, their governance, and the environment that too often drives people to leave their homes and head northward.

With respect to Guatemala, what I can say is some of the investments that we have made, the support of the special prosecutor's office for extortion and anticorruption, it has helped increase the number of final verdicts in extortion cases from 26 in 2015 to 512 in 2017. The number found guilty of extortion increased from 41 to 735 over the same period of time.

Mrs. TORRES. I have had several meetings with the attorney general in Guatemala, Ms. Porrás. Those numbers sound really great, but we are talking about the little guy, right? We are talking about, you know, the little guy hitting up the liquor store, or the convenient supermarket, or the restaurant.

The major cases of public corruption dealing with members of congress, narcotraffickers in congress, we have yet to hear about those.

Mr. GREEN. I wish I could tell you that we had easy wins and victories to point to in there. It is difficult work. It is very difficult work. We will continue with it. I share your concerns and your priorities.

Mrs. TORRES. So as far as how much money has been spent in helping to improve the justice system, the judicial system in Guatemala?

Mr. GREEN. I will have to get back to you. I don't have that number at my fingertip.

Mrs. TORRES. Okay. I apologize for not meeting with you ahead of time. I don't like to do the surprise questions.

Mr. GREEN. We will make sure we get that to you.

Mrs. TORRES. Okay. Will you continue with Honduras?

Mr. GREEN. Yes.

So in Honduras our support has been to the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras. It has enabled the hiring of a record number of anticorruption judges, prosecutors, and investigators in Honduras.

And so working closely with the national Attorney General, it has achieved three high-profile convictions and taken on three other high-profile corruption cases. So it is beginning to show some progress.

And I agree with you, as you alluded to in Guatemala, sort of getting the big fish, if you will, is not only important for a sense of justice, but symbolically message-sending. So we will continue to push and to provide support where we can. We think your priorities are well-placed.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you.

My time is up and I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I just want to say before I turn to the next person, to my friend Ms. Torres, I was part of the administration's strategy led by Vice President Biden.

And if I recall, Mr. Green, there was \$3 billion appropriated over 4 years for the Triangle strategy.

But I think you ask a very important question and I would love to have a follow-up meeting with you to see—I am not sure at this point whether all that money was spent. In some areas did it accomplish something?

The reports we get back, and I know you get back, are extremely serious. People's lives are at stake.

So I would like to follow up with you at some time to talk about that money, unless you know right now how much of that \$3 billion was spent and did it accomplish anything, before our friend goes to another hearing.

Mr. GREEN. I don't know off the top of my head. I will make sure that we have a briefing for you. But that is great, and I really appreciate the interest. Again, it is our neighborhood. This is important.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

And thank you. Welcome to the committee, and thank you for bringing up an important issue.

And I am delighted to turn it over to Ms. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And, Administrator Green, thank you for being here. Thank you for your service. And I appreciate all the time that you spent with me yesterday. It has been a hectic couple of days, so I appreciate your flexibility.

And, Madam Chair and our leader, Mr. Rogers, I just want to tell you how grateful I am to be a member of this committee. I look forward to working with all of you. This is a very distinguished group of members of Congress, so I am very honored to get to join you here in this subcommittee.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We are honored to—

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you. Thank you.

A couple things that we talked about yesterday, and I will just throw them out there and then give you an opportunity to respond. We had talked about some success stories between coordination between USAID and DOD, and I wanted to give you an opportunity to kind of expand on that.

Also, as you know, my interest has been mostly focused on Afghanistan. Over the past 8 years I have spent quite a bit of time traveling there, and there are programs that are in place that there has been a little bit of frustration in terms of measuring outcomes instead of inputs.

And one of the things that we also talked about was a change in the metrics of how you demonstrate that the investments are equating to positive outcomes. And so that also is of interest to me. And you can talk about that across the board, but you know my interest has been mainly focused in Afghanistan.

And then I would leave you with just an open-ended question that is what do you need from Congress right now to continue the work of the agency? And in the immediate future what do you fore-

see as being pressing policy or budgetary matters that we need to be aware of so that you can continue to do the work that you do?

Mr. GREEN. Great. Thank you.

In terms of civ-mil relations, it is probably one of the best-kept secrets in terms of our work. We work very closely with the Department of Defense, largely in two different areas.

First off, let me say that we have 23 staff from USAID who are embedded either at the Pentagon or in the Combatant Commands, and it has been that way for the last several years, certainly in crisis response.

A few weeks into my tenure as Administrator we were responding to the second earthquake that hit Mexico City, and it was a crisis, as you can imagine. There were people trapped in buildings.

After a phone call from Mexico Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as from the White House, we turned around, worked with our partners at DOD, and we were able to get a search-and-rescue team there by the next morning before breakfast. That is a clear case of where we partner with DOD to move our humanitarian people the most quick, effective way that we possibly can.

More importantly, we work closely with DOD in stabilization efforts. So in conflict zones where there is success in the battlefield you only really lock up that success if you replace the vacuum with citizen-responsive institutions that begin to create a culture in which people have a stake in the survival of the community, and that is what we do, and that is what DOD doesn't want to do. And so we work hand in hand.

I traveled with General Votel to Raqqa, Syria to take a look at our stabilization work there. So it is a wonderful relationship. We think it works well, and we look forward to it continuing to grow.

With respect to Afghanistan, obviously a difficult working environment for a number of reasons, part of what we are trying to do in Afghanistan is to create economic vibrancy to create inclusive development that stabilizes some of the areas that have been rocked by years of conflict. We helped the Government of Afghanistan launch air cargo corridors that connect the country to markets in India, in the Gulf, in Europe.

We have been working with the Government of India in which we bring young Afghan women craftsmen, if you will, to India to be trained in how to market and run small businesses and then bring them back. And I have seen some of that firsthand.

What we try to do in our metrics is to not so much look at outputs as take a look at outcomes. Our view is that every country wants to lead itself, and so we should take a look at what the impediments are to its self-reliance, recognizing that every country is in a different place in its journey and every country has got external factors that have affected it, and Afghanistan is certainly one of them.

But we are working to try to build their regulatory capacity and their access to markets so that hopefully we have a vibrant market-based economy for the future.

Mrs. ROBY. My time is up, but I just—I want to ask you that before my next trip specifically to Afghanistan I would like—I would love an opportunity to sit down with you to go over the specific pro-

grams and really drill down so that I will have an opportunity to ask questions while there. So thank you.

And thank you, Madam Chair.

And you can respond to my last question some other time, but I am sure you will let us know.

Mr. GREEN. Most definitely. We would be happy to provide a briefing and show you projects while you are there.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And I would like to say, Ms. Roby, I look forward to working with you.

And I can remember the number of girls, it was about a million girls who were in school. I don't know if those million girls are still in school, and it has become harder and harder—and you have been there so many times; I have been there several times—to actually go out and see the schools and see if they are there.

In fact, I do recall an incredible Afghan woman was a member of their congress, and her daughter was killed not too long ago. You probably remember that, too, because she looked so much like her mother.

The education of girls has been a key priority for us, and I would really appreciate the opportunity to do more and to get an update from you on how many girls and women are in schools now, and are those schools still in existence, and are they still enabling other girls to have that opportunity, among other issues.

Thank you for your work.

Mr. GREEN. The only response I have is that your priorities are well-placed, that inclusive development is the key to Afghanistan, not merely development, but inclusive development that creates a broader investment by all parts of the community. Women and girls for too long have been entirely marginalized, and we know that is inherently unstable and inherently doesn't produce the development outcomes that we all want to see, including the Afghans themselves.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And there has been Ms. Roby and Ms. Davis, other women members—I don't know if you allow men to go with you on this trip.

Mrs. ROBY. Not on that one.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Not on that one. But they have been keeping up on these issues.

So I thank you, and we look forward to—I am so pleased that we were joined by Mr. Price. There are many hearings at the same time.

So we can turn to you if you are ready to ask a question.

Mr. PRICE. I think I better be ready—miss the chance here—I do apologize for the back-and-forth act here with all the different hearings.

I want to let you know about a request that you already have, and I will not dwell on it because I want to move to another question. But we really do appreciate your long history with and support of the House Democracy Partnership, the work we do with emerging democracies in legislative strengthening in particular.

I am going to submit a question for the record. I think your staff has already got this underway. We want to make sure we have a good baseline as to where legislative strengthening has gone on, where it is still going on, how much of this is USAID contracts,

how much may be happening through other offices, and so forth. So we do want to support that work and would appreciate a good information baseline.

I want to address West Bank funding, and I come to this with some evidence brought to me by constituents who have worked for many years in the West Bank, and in particular with a school in Bethlehem, the Hope Flowers School. These constituents were there a few weeks ago. They have seen the work done there to help Palestinian children.

The chairman and I have visited this school some years ago. They have worked for years teaching nonviolence, citizenship, social and community skills.

Using a USAID grant, the Hope Flowers School trained and provided special education teachers and therapists to work with Palestinian students with trauma, learning disabilities, and autism. They have just been awarded a new USAID grant to expand this work into the local community.

Now, my understanding is without this grant the classes and staff helping students with autism will be eliminated, there will be no services for more than 200 children who get referred to the Hope Flowers School for diagnosis and an educational plan. How could anyone think cutting off that aid is in this country's interest?

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Congressman Price.

What I can tell you is that we are working under the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act, or ATCA, as it is called. As a result of the passage of ATCA, the Palestinian Authority, at the end of January of this year, requested that we no longer provide funding, and so we have ended all ESF projects and programs funded with the assistance and under the authority specified in ATCA in the West Bank and Gaza.

Welcome the chance to continue discussions with you on the future of West Bank-Gaza assistance. But as a result of the passage of that law we have been directed by attorneys at the State Department and USAID, and again, as a specific request of the Palestinian Authority to cease assistance. And so we are having to take a look at the very footprint of our operations there.

Mr. PRICE. Well, there are reports, as I am sure you know, that USAID tried to find a workaround to allow the continuation of certain development assistance projects, but that request was denied by the White House. I would appreciate your comment on that.

And also it sounds to me like a fix to the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act might be indicated. Would you support that? What would it look like?

Mr. GREEN. We would welcome an opportunity to work with you with respect to that legislation and any changes that you would seek to make.

Mr. PRICE. All right. You know, the list is very long.

One incredible—incredibly wasteful and counterproductive project involves Jericho: a nearly complete multimillion-dollar sewage network in Jericho. It is going to have to be buried under asphalt and abandoned, because of this pulling of aid.

And it just seems wasteful, seems counterproductive in terms of this country's interest and in terms of the kind of effort we all should concentrate on to strengthen the forces of moderation and

democratic development in the Palestinian community. Many, many frustrations here.

But one of the bright spots has been our very targeted, very discriminating aid efforts, and this just appears to be a wrecking-ball operation, as we come in and wipe these away.

Mr. GREEN. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr.—Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I would like to just follow up because my friend—excuse me—Congressman Price makes a very important point.

And, Mr. Green, assistance was stopped before ATCA by this administration's review. As you know, the United States is currently not providing bilateral aid to the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In my judgment, this is a decision that doesn't make any sense. It reverses more than 2 decades of bipartisan support for humanitarian, economic, and security assistance, and I have long argued that such funding with stringent conditions plays a critical role in improving the lives of Palestinians, helping to improve economic opportunity and providing stability to both sides in the conflict.

I don't want to put you on the spot because I know you very well, but you are working for this administration. I would like to know what, in your view, will cutting off bilateral aid accomplish, putting aside ATCA. This decision was made before ATCA.

And if you could share with us the impact of these cuts, especially on the United States' ability to influence a future two-state solution—that is—I am still hoping, and I have been working for that for a very long time—a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians. So ATCA is a problem, but this administration took that position before ATCA.

And I just want to say, because I know my good friend was involved as well, people like Dennis Ross used to give me advice, lists of groups that were doing important work, which we funded, in the West Bank. So if you can explain to me what will cutting off all bilateral aid accomplish, I would be most appreciative.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

What I can tell you is—and you are correct. In 2018 the President had a review of U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority and in the West Bank and Gaza to ensure that these funds were spent in accordance with U.S. national interests and were providing value. And that review at that time froze the assistance that was going.

As a result of that review we did redirect certain funds. And then on top of that came the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act and the resulting correspondence that we received from the Palestinian Authority.

So I can tell you that that is how we got to the situation where we are. Obviously we are all hopeful—we are hopeful, in particular—for a long-term solution that allows us to continue doing what we think is important work.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I guess it is my turn.

I just wanted to add to my good friend, because this is of great concern to me, we are waiting for this great peace plan that Jared

and Jason Greenblatt are waiting to produce, but I haven't seen anything yet, and I am very concerned.

I will say that I have met with a group like Arava, which is doing some important environmental work, working with those on every side of the issue, Palestinians and Israelis. So there are some groups like Arava.

But since I am asking the question now, maybe you can discuss further the impact of these cuts, especially on the United States' ability to influence a future two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

And maybe you can share with us, if you have any idea. Does Jason Greenblatt talk with you, or Jared talk with you? Do we know about this great peace plan while they are cutting off all funds that I think is so destructive?

Mr. GREEN. I don't know the details of the peace plan. It is no surprise to you.

I have met with Jason just once. This was some time ago. I can't tell you what the pillars of that peace plan are, to be honest.

In terms of a full-on description of what the review and what ATCA—what the ramifications are, I don't have that on my fingertips but I can pledge to you that we will provide a briefing. We don't seek to hide any of that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I think that would be very helpful because we keep hearing about this great peace plan. Then on another day, we are hearing, well, maybe there won't be a peace plan. In the meantime there is suffering, and for those of us who still have dreams of a two-state solution one day—and I have been in Congress for a long time, but it seems that cutting off all aid takes us backwards and doesn't move forward in a positive direction.

ATCA is another story, and I think that this doesn't help in moving the process forward. But I would like to, and I know Mr. Price and others would like to, have a complete briefing. I would appreciate that.

On another area, since we solved the West Bank and Gaza issue: The Russian government is pursuing efforts to undermine democracy, weaken multilateral institutions, and reverse economic progress. If you could share with us what role USAID should play in countering the malign influence of Russia in Europe and Eurasia, and does USAID have programs designed to counter Russia disinformation?

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for that question. As someone who once led an organization that was declared undesirable by Vladimir Putin it is an issue of particular relevance and significance for me.

We are crafting and unveiling something that we call the Countering Kremlin Influence initiative, and it really has several prongs.

Number one is economic independence by those countries which the—which Moscow and the Kremlin seeks to influence. So it is no surprise as to what they are, countries like Ukraine, particularly energy independence.

Secondly, working to foster independent media and media literacy for markets. I have seen a number of studies that show what the Kremlin is trying to do in terms of their messaging and their

media work, and most of it isn't attempting to convince everyone that the Kremlin is right; it is instead trying to undermine basic democratic institutions and to break apart coalitions.

So I think we need to continue to have a concentrated effort to create media literacy so people can spot the disinformation, and strengthen those independent media tools.

I was in Prague not so long ago and had a chance to meet with some of the civil society groups based in that region that are attempting to do this work, and we will continue to support them. We think it is very important.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Since we have so few people here I can't resist continuing this discussion for a minute.

How has the administration's previous proposed spending cuts for Europe and Eurasia affected individual missions in the region? Does USAID plan to close or downgrade missions in Europe and Eurasia?

Did I ask that question right?

If you could respond.

Mr. GREEN. Sure. We have no plans to close missions at this time. We naturally adjust footprints of missions around the world based upon changing conditions, progress that is made in self-reliance, but we do not have plans to close missions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now, as I understand it the 2019 request would have cut assistance for the region by approximately 55 percent. I would be interested in your view as what message does this send to our partners in the region, and how does it impact your job and USAID's effectiveness in pushing back against Russia?

Mr. GREEN. Well, inevitably cuts of that level, that significance, would force us to readjust operations and readjust our presence. Inevitably those are the costs, so yes, that would have forced us to reduce operations in that region and other areas affected by the impact.

I obviously believe strongly in our team and our programs and stand up for them. On the other hand, we do the best we can with the resources we are provided to make them go as far as we possibly can and to prioritize countries on the basis of metrics like our journey to self-reliance. But restrictions in assistance certainly reduce that which we can do.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I don't want to put you into a difficult position, but as you know, members of this committee choose this committee because they have a real commitment to the work of USAID and the important role of the United States throughout the world. So perhaps we can have another discussion and talk with you about how we could be helpful in advocacy and helping you do your job, because we know of your commitment and we have a great deal of faith in you, but we are very disappointed in some of the decisions that are being made.

Maybe they come from a lack of interest of some people in the administration; maybe it comes from a real divergence in opinions about leadership of the United States. But I am hoping that we can put together a briefing, and I know my good friend, Mr. Price, and his Democracy Partnership have been totally focused on how we can help move these governments in a positive direction.

So perhaps, Mr. Price, we can have a follow-up briefing, which would be very helpful, because we are all—and I believe it is bipartisan—very concerned about these cuts that are being made. And I would be interested to know on what facts they are based.

So I thank you, and I am very pleased—

Mr. GREEN. If I might, just to provide a clarification for the record, in Europe and Eurasia, in the case of Albania we will be entering into discussions on an evolving footprint there and what those programs look like. That is not an immediate mission closure decision, but just to—in the interest of full transparency, and this is not the first we have brought this to your staff, but just to be clear, we are taking a look in Albania at adjusting programming as they continue to rise in their self-reliance.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now I don't want to cut you off, so we look forward to that briefing. But if you have any other positive information that you care to share that isn't a cut in programs I am sure my colleagues on both sides of the aisle would be happy to extend your answer time. Or if you would rather wait.

Mr. GREEN. Well, I will just say I am a big fan of the House Democracy Partnership, and I think it is the one program that is out there which allows us to not only reinforce democracy in countries, but also the dispersion of power. Oftentimes at the State Department and at the country-to-country level, we think only chief executive-to-chief executive, but the value of the House Democracy Partnership is to build those legislative institutions that we all believe are the hallmark of Western democracies, and so I am a big fan of the work.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Let me harken us back to the more mundane part of the world that deals with the bureaucracy. I know it has to be done.

In my opening statement I mentioned my concern about a top management challenge that the USAID Inspector General has identified many years in a row now. Vulnerabilities in your financial management remain a challenge, she says.

One of the issues has to do with USAID's financial statements and reconciliation with the Treasury Department. Your books show one thing and Treasury's show another. And they are off by hundreds of millions of dollars.

That is something we should not ignore, and work on, and you have worked on it. You have made noteworthy progress, she says, to address the problem. And yet, it is once again identified in the I.G.'s fiscal year 2019 Top Management Challenges report.

In coordination with the OIG, have you developed a remediation plan to address issues with financial reconciliation?

Mr. GREEN. There are two different pieces to that.

Number one are recommendations with respect to management of programs and grants, and yes, in that case we have been undertaking a number of significant reforms that will change the entire way that we do that.

Secondly, what you are referring to is a historical fund balance with Treasury, \$131 million, resulting from a change in our finan-

cial management systems. This resulted from USAID's systems not properly recording all outlays.

There is no evidence, as the OIG confirms, that we over-expended any of our accounts. We have identified and resolved the problems that have led to the discrepancies, and we are, in fact, working on a plan with OMB on how to resolve that imbalance.

Mr. ROGERS. When do you think that will be approved, assessed, and the like?

Mr. GREEN. I am sorry?

Mr. ROGERS. When will that be concluded?

Mr. GREEN. I don't know. I can't tell you for certain. But we are working on it actively.

The OIG sits in our regular senior management meetings so we are in constant communication on that. But I will make sure we get back to you with a specific timeline.

Mr. ROGERS. I would encourage you to get it over with. It is a—

Mr. GREEN. Yes.

Mr. ROGERS. Burr under the saddle that doesn't need to be there.

Mr. GREEN. Right. But I would say, again, there is no evidence of an over-expending; it is a discrepancy in outlay timings. But we will definitely work on that and we will get to you a plan, a timeline.

Mr. ROGERS. Secondly and differently, you mentioned in your opening remarks about reorganization. We didn't give you a chance yet to expound on that or expand on it.

You have a different name for it I think. What is it called?

Mr. GREEN. Transformation.

Mr. ROGERS. Transformation. Tell us about it.

Mr. GREEN. And it is called transformation at this point because we are in the implementation phase of the whole operation. So in terms of all of the measures that we have brought before you, the one that is furthest along is the creation essentially of a new Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, and that is the C.N. that all four committees of jurisdiction have approved, and so we are in the process of implementation.

Our commitment to you is to be transparent each step of the way so that you can see how we are doing it, doing it with full consultation, because we want this to be sustainable and we want it to last. We have provided a timeline to you that shows when and how we plan to take each of the steps along the way, again, the humanitarian assistance bureau being the furthest along.

Another aspect to our transformation plans is captured by the Private Sector Engagement Policy that we unveiled last year, as well as the procurement reform that we are undertaking. People naturally focus on the structural changes because those are the most visible externally, but in many ways it is the, if you will, the software of our changes—private sector engagement, procurement reform—that I think will have the longest-lasting changes.

The idea is when we are done with all this that we will have an agency that is more field-focused than ever before and is more nimble than ever before. All of the reforms that we seek to undertake have been led by career-led workstreams.

We want to make it clear that it is not a political or partisan matter. It is a matter of taking the best ideas that we can find from this administration and past administrations and taking the opportunity of the mandate of a redesign to try to bring them to pass, in consultation with all of you.

Mr. ROGERS. I think there are nine pieces of your transformation, and you have submitted those to us. We have evaluated them over the last months and years even, and I think we have approved five of the nine.

Mr. GREEN. This committee has, correct.

Mr. ROGERS. This committee has. And yet it still needs to be done in the full committee and wherever else.

Is it important that we approve these changes to give you this transformation you are referring to? How important is this?

Mr. GREEN. It is very important to us because it helps us do our work more effectively and efficiently. You know, these are changes that need to be sequences and will—and we know will take some time.

The journey to self-reliance metrics framework is the first stop that we have undertaken, but certainly we are committed to working with you and we would like to keep these on track. But yes, they are very important. They will allow us to be more efficient in what we do.

Mr. ROGERS. Madam Chairwoman, this is something important, I think, for us and him—more important to him—for us to bear down and approve those nine pieces of this reorganization so we can get on with a better way of doing business.

Thank you.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Let's turn to the Northern Triangle countries of Central America. Our foreign policy and our immigration policy in recent years has focused on these countries by virtue of the migrant flows, the huge numbers of families, women and children, unaccompanied children that have sought refuge in this country, have come north and turned themselves in, usually, at the borders and sought refugee status.

I remember when this first occurred, when this pattern first became apparent. Ms. Granger led a CODEL to Guatemala and Honduras and the then commander of Southern Command, General Kelly, flew to Guatemala City to confer with us. I will just speak for myself. It was the first time I had focused on the need for in-country support, in-country assistance in these Triangle countries to make life more tolerable, to make life more secure, yes, but also to invest in health, education, other things that made it more desirable and feasible and safe for people to remain in those countries and not to seek to migrate.

And General Kelly, others from across the political spectrum, had a large influence, as you know, on the Obama administration and on Congress. And in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 we worked with the Obama administration to increase assistance to that region by something like 50 percent. And it was a diverse package of assistance, but a lot of it had to do with conditions in the home countries that would enable people more safely and securely to stay there.

When the Trump administration came in and set up their first budget, they proposed slashing assistance to each of those three countries. It was a devastating budget. I remember asking General Kelly how he accounted for this and he really couldn't account for it.

But whatever the reasons were, it was a devastating proposal and totally, totally ignored the reasoning—the very sound reasoning, I think—that had gone into those increases.

Now, I give Mr. Rogers a lot of credit for this: Congress did not accept those budgets. Congress restored funding in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador in many respects. We didn't fully do that. There has been a decline since 2016 and 2017, but the worse of the damage was avoided.

On the other hand, the potential of this has not been realized, and so now we are awaiting another budget. We hope that the past is not the prologue here, but we will see what the new budget looks like with respect to this item.

But I want you to comment on it. You are someone in a very good position to know what might be feasible here. I don't mean budget-wise. I mean feasible in terms of having the desired impact.

This clearly isn't a border security problem mainly. And so that is the—of course, realizing that we have in the past looked at the situation in the home countries and how to make some impact on that.

So I wonder what you think the potential there is and what the consequences should be for the way with think about our foreign affairs budget in the Triangle region.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you for the question.

So what we are—well, first off, as you know as a general matter, what we are trying to do in the region is to tackle the conditions that you and I both believe are drivers of irregular migration: problems of crime, problems of lack of economic opportunity, problems of a lack of meaningful education and workforce skills, and also governance in all of this enhanced by corruption.

Two things that we are trying to do that I think—I hope will make our programs even more effective.

Number one is trying to target our investments in those places the statistics tell us are the origins of many of those fleeing and heading north. So we are working with Customs and Border Protection to try to identify geographically what those communities are.

Secondly, we are putting into our programs in the performance evaluation trying to measure the impact these investments have on those who are heading north so that it is a little bit better tailored. You and I both believe that the investments that we have been making are important and are having a positive effect. What we are trying to do is make that more precise so it is easier to document and we can make sure that we are placing them right where they need to be in terms of those investments.

Mr. PRICE. General Kelly, at about the time we visited, had written a much-circulated article for the Military Times. You may remember that. And he didn't quite use the term, but the implication was that something like a Plan Colombia was required for the Tri-

angle countries in order to have the desired impact with all hands on deck, in terms of government agencies and forms of support.

We seem some distance from that now, but the prescription still may be on target. And so I think the kind of approach you are talking about—of course the funding level is important, but also a discriminating appreciation of what kinds of aid have the most impact and where we should be targeting our efforts, that is important, as well.

So we simply must work with you on this, and we appreciate your attention to it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. First of all, I want to say thank you to my colleague. When Ms. Torres was here we were talking about that, because I remember I was part of that Biden team and I was looking at the numbers: \$750 million 2016, \$650 million 2012, \$600 million 2018, \$527.8 million, total of \$3.528 billion for 4 years.

Given the administration's focus on immigration, I know the administration would like to increase those numbers to provide assistance. I should keep the smile off my face when I say that, but these are important discussions, and I know we all are concerned with what is happening in that region of the world.

And having been part of the original effort, I think it is important to Mr. Price, myself, both sides of the aisle that we have an in-depth briefing. What did we spend? What did we accomplish? What can we do differently?

And I thank you again. The importance of this issue is clear to this committee.

Thank you for bringing this up again, and I know Ms. Torres and many of us will work on it, so thank you so much.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Administrator, let me just put everything else I have got on the table and then we will try to unpack as much as we can: Haiti, Colombia, Farmer-to-Farmer, and the new DELTA Act.

Let me start with Haiti. Maybe if we have a little time to get to Russia after all that.

As I know you are aware, Haiti is one of the larger recipients of United States aid, and understandably so. The conditions there of, again, structural poverty, being in our neighborhood, is just such a deep scandal for so many of us. The country's dislocations, the current political upheaval, and on and on, make your work there both very important and very difficult.

But one of the underlying issues, obviously—well, not—it is not obvious; this is a problem—is the border area between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The consequences of economic dislocation because of the, let's say, underground movement of goods there or—movement of goods there that defy both market logic and disrupt the economy of Haiti are one of the key areas in which I think we need to focus on. We put in the bill last year some considerations in this regard. Could you address that?

Let me secondly move to Colombia right quick. One of the principals in the Colombian congress had spoken to me one time about if they just reforested the acres that they have lost due to the FARC and that war against them, that that could potentially offset 20 percent of the emissions in the United States. Again, reforest-

ation is a part of the broader conservation set of initiatives, actually gets us all to a place where we agree on the approach to environmental stewardship and the impact of manmade activity on the environment.

Farmer-to-Farmer, my predecessor, Congressman Doug Bereuter, who I happened to see this morning, conceived of this idea. A great concept linking farmers across America who have expertise with some of the world's poor to help them advance.

As we look at Feed the Future countries and better coordination of strategy there, using a program like Farmer-to-Farmer as a pull strategy, that actually implements two things: our expertise worldwide to fight against hunger and create the right types of long-term structural development there in the agriculture space, but also enhancing diplomacy to me is the right thing to do.

We tried to reform Farmer-to-Farmer in the Farm Bill. We got part of the way there.

Part of a metric that I think we need to use is what we call yield gap analysis, which actually can determine whether or not what we are doing in Feed the Future countries is actually resulting in the outcomes that we want to see in terms of addressing the needs of poverty and hunger.

Finally, the DELTA Act. Very proud of this initiative. You are familiar with it: Defending Economic Livelihoods and Endangered Animals. What we have done here is basically create the possibility of a transnational—tri-national conservation area between Botswana, Angola, and Namibia to protect the extraordinary ecosystem of the Okavango Delta.

Beyond that, though, thinking about, again, the creative ways in which conservation and preservation of delicate ecosystems actually lead to economic livelihood, and then promote almost unimaginable possibilities in new emerging diplomatic relations in areas in which we in the past have had some difficulties.

So you got a minute and 30 seconds to do all that.

Unless, Madam Chair, you will be kind enough to extend me a little flexibility.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Always my pleasure.

Mr. GREEN. And thank you for the questions.

I traveled to Haiti in December, and it wasn't really until that trip that I took that I began to appreciate just how much the dysfunctional border between Haiti and Dominican Republic impacts the economic prospects in Haiti. It is hard for me to see Haiti becoming at all self-reliant as long as you are having the problems that we are of smuggling of goods and ineffective revenue collection in that D.R.-Haiti border.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Can I stop you there?

Madam Chair, would you be willing, perhaps with Ms. Lee, to go deeper into this issue? Because all of the good work that the administrator and we are trying to do in Haiti is impacted, or undermined potentially, by this singular problem. And it is a severe dislocation but it is not well-known.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I won't go into detail, but I think you probably remember that we had a briefing—was it about a year ago or 2 years ago?

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Four years ago.

The CHAIRWOMAN. But two of the best people USAID has ever had that were assigned to Haiti. They were extraordinary.

Now, I went on my honeymoon to Haiti a long time ago.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Really?

The CHAIRWOMAN. I have also been to the Dominican Republic.

Mr. ROGERS. And look what happened to the economy. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. But I would like to say that was probably one of the best briefings I ever had. And I think what you are saying is important because I was so proud of our representatives. I wish I could say that the results equaled the talent and expertise of our representative.

We can go into this further, but I would be most eager to work with you to get—I think my good friend, Mr. Rogers, was there as well, and—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. For your honeymoon, too? [Laughter.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. Not on my honeymoon.

It is a good thing I could be excused because my voice is so bad you don't understand what I am saying anyway.

But I would like to follow up with you. All I am saying, it seems to me we have this discussion, we put some of the best people there, and unfortunately the progress doesn't measure the talent. And I would love to have further discussions.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. The point of raising it and using so much time is, again, if you could help us help you with the right kind of language embedded in our bill that addresses this—because again, we did so as a first step last year, and of course that bill is just being implemented—it would be helpful to us.

I don't pretend to have a fullness of an answer here. I just know this is a problem. And we have a huge investment in Haiti, but the preconditions for that investment to be made whole rely on this—an—a successful outcome here. So can you help us?

Mr. GREEN. Yes, I don't disagree with you. This last trip I think really laid that bare for me.

I met some young entrepreneurs. You know, they are working hard at it. You saw some economic growth, but they were being undercut by smuggled goods and they can't rise. I mean, it is impossible to have a full, vibrant economy with a dysfunctional border like that.

So you have my commitment. We are starting to put together a working group. Haiti is a country that has tremendous bipartisan support. We all want to see success, so I would very much like to take it on with all of you.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay.

Reforestation, Farmer-to-Farmer, and DELTA.

Mr. GREEN. Farmer-to-Farmer, we have expanded the grants from Fiscal Year 2018 and we are trying to embed that more with our cutting-edge research capabilities. As the son-in-law of a farmer and a believer in farm diplomacy, we want to keep expanding it. We think it is like the Peace Corps, it is American diplomacy at its best.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Let's brand it.

Mr. GREEN. And—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I think the brand has been lost.

Mr. GREEN. Let's work on that.

And in terms of reforestation, we think this is—it is sound from a biodiversity point of view, but it is also really important economically. Unless we create economic self-interest in the areas around these parks there is no reason that parks and forest land are going to survive.

Creating economic vibrancy so that people have a stake in the park's survival is key. We have seen it work in so many places. So we would like to reinforce that.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So you will have an implementation plan on the DELTA Act?

Mr. GREEN. Sure, yes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. To be continued.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. I will be brief and allow you to answer the last part of my previous set of questions.

But, Madam Chair, one of my children once complained about not wanting to go to school and said, "Why do you not have to go to school, Mom?" I think today's hearing is, as are many, is evidence that we learn a lot in this job every single day, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to work on a deep dive with all of the specifics of these very necessary programs that exist throughout the world.

And so again, I just can't tell you how grateful I am to be here, and I appreciate you taking the time to be with us.

The last part of my question was very open-ended, and we will give you an opportunity to tell us what you want us to know, but how can Congress—what do you need from Congress right now to continue the important work of your agency? And in the immediate future, what do you foresee as being a pressing policy or budgetary matter that you want us today, here right now, to be aware of?

Mr. GREEN. I think it is continued attention to at least one aspect of Ms. Lowey, the Chairwoman, has begun to address, and that is how we provide basic services to displaced communities.

What I always tell people, what truly worries me and gets me up in the middle of the night is the fact that we have 70 million displaced people in the world. We have children being born in camps, raised in camps; we provide nutrition but we are not adequately tending to their needs to keep their connectivity to the outside world so that someday, God willing, the fence comes down, the gate opens up, they are able to be productive members of whatever society they are in.

So I am really worried about providing service in conflict, post-conflict, and crisis settings. With the Chairwoman's leadership we have been able to use the generous education funding to begin to address that. We are just scratching the surface. We have a long way to go.

That is the single most important challenge I would point to for all of you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I thank you and I know you had a hard stop at 12 noon. But I really do appreciate the wisdom of all the members of this committee.

And I would just say in closing, I hope this is not difficult for you, but I would hope you would give us a budget request that is real.

Mr. GREEN. Sure.

The CHAIRWOMAN. So let me also say I appreciate your leadership. I thank you for your time.

As you can see, there is a lot of depth of all these members. They are interested in these issues, and I am hoping we can continue this discussion informally and help you by giving you the resources we need and the technical assistance that you need, frankly, to do the job.

So I thank you so much.

I thank you, for both sides of the aisle, for your wisdom. There is so much interest here and we look forward to continuing to work together.

And I hope our throats clear up. I hope you feel better. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Okay, I have to say this concludes today's hearing. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands—it stands adjourned. Thank you.

[Questions and answers submitted for the record follow:]

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Enterprise Funds**

The Egyptian-American Enterprise Fund and the Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund received their final tranche of seed funding from USAID in 2018. These funds totaled \$300 million and \$100 million, respectively, and were intended to help improve the economy, leverage additional investment into the private sector, and create jobs. What are the results of these investments in both countries? Specifically: How many companies benefited from the Funds' investments? Have these companies continued without USAID funding over the last year? How many jobs were supported by these Funds? How many companies receiving investment employed a significant percentage of women? Did the Funds help attract foreign direct investment into the Egyptian and Tunisian economy and what is the estimated value of FDI thus far? What lessons were learned by USAID in overseeing the Funds? Have either or both of the Funds been assessed as successful enough to replicate in other countries? Is USAID considering follow-on projects to these enterprise funds?

**Answer:**

**ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

To date, the Egyptian-American Enterprise Fund (EAEF) has invested \$184 million out of the \$300 million available directly into seven companies and three local Egyptian investment funds. The three local investment funds then invested in 46 companies. The EAEF owns a stake in all of these companies and funds. Moreover, the EAEF sold approximately 40 percent of its position in consumer-finance provider Sarwa Capital for \$46 million in an Initial Public Offering that valued shares in the company at three times the original investment. That \$46 million returned to the EAEF and is available for future investments.

Based on the EAEF's initial impact analysis, the Fund's investments have created at least 1,200 jobs in Egypt. Women founded two of the companies into which the EAEF directly invested. Nearly half of the companies and funds into which the EAEF directly invested employ a significant number of women (defined as more than 20 percent of the workforce). The estimated value of the Foreign Direct Investment attracted into Egypt as a direct result of the EAEF is approximately \$280 million, not including the Fund's investments.

## **REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA**

The Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund (TAEF) has worked with local partners to create four different platforms for investments in Tunisia. Its main platform, the Tunisian-American Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Company (TASME) has invested in 20 companies, 14 of which feature women in ownership or management. All of these companies continued without additional funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) over this past year. The 20 firms employ a total of 625 women. Subsequent to TAEF's investment, a subset of these 20 TASME companies received additional outside capital that totaled \$10 million.

The Tunisian-American Search Fund (TASF) introduced the U.S. "Search Fund" model to Tunisia, in which investors work with promising entrepreneurs and managers to identify and acquire existing companies for them to run. TAEF sponsored a seasoned executive as "Entrepreneur in Residence" to identify a privately held Tunisian company that could benefit from professional management and new financing. Currently, TASF is in the final stages of acquiring a Tunisian company with 46 employees (five of whom are women), and is mobilizing additional Tunisian debt as part of the purchase.

TAEF has also created two private-equity funds that invest in larger-scale SMEs: TunInvest Croissance and INMA. To date, these two funds have invested in 11 companies that employ a total of 1,608 employees. All 11 firms have continued to operate over the past year without any additional funding from USAID. Two of the companies have women in ownership or management positions. One of the funds has received \$2 million in outside capital since TAEF invested.

TAEF's start-up investment platforms are Flat6Labs-Tunisia and Anava Seed Fund. These two organizations have capitalized 20 companies, which employ 58 individuals, including 24 women. Four of the start-ups received a total of \$2 million in additional capital from Tunisian and foreign investors.

Additionally, TAEF has invested in two microfinance institutions in Tunisia, which, in turn, provide capital to small businesses throughout the country. TAEF's funds have reached more than 4,000 microfinance clients so far.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

For any country in which lack of investment capital is a constraint to growth, the Enterprise Fund model could likely work well. A key lesson learned is the importance of operational independence of the Enterprise Funds, overseen and managed by Boards of Directors. The funds have been successful in part because of the appointment of qualified Board Members and Chairs, with wide authority to develop and implement their own, country-specific investment strategy. As a result, the development, financial, and public-diplomacy outcomes have been abundant and impressive. In both Tunisia and Egypt, each Fund should be in a

position at the time of liquidation to return the original grant amounts to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, including interest. Nevertheless, I believe the future creation of such funds should ensure the U.S. Government holds a seat on their Board of Directors, to maintain consistency with U.S. development objectives.

USAID will hand off the creation of any new Enterprise Funds to the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) established by the Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) Act. Consistent with USAID's commitment to the Journey to Self Reliance and the new *Private-Sector Engagement Strategy* I launched in December of 2018, the Agency sees abundant promise in the Enterprise Fund approach to international development.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In 2018, the Administration announced the cut off of U.S. aid to UNRWA – the organization that provides education, health care, and humanitarian assistance to more than 5 million Palestinians. There are ongoing concerns with UNRWA, which is why U.S. funds to the organization should come with strict oversight. Nonetheless, a total suspension of aid reduces the United States’ ability to push critical reforms and reach those in dire need. Was USAID consulted before the State Department announced the suspension of US contributions to UNRWA? Following the US cutoff of funds, the State Department committed to “new approaches” to provide for Palestinian children with a more “durable and dependable path towards a brighter tomorrow.” Has USAID been included in these efforts and, if so, to what extent?

**Answer:**

Last year, President Trump directed a review of U.S. contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and U.S. bilateral assistance in the West Bank and Gaza, to ensure these funds were serving U.S. national interests and providing value to the U.S. taxpayer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) participated in the discussions on bilateral assistance, along with other key stakeholders in the interagency. The Bureau for Population, Migration, and Refugees at the U.S. Department of State manages the relationship with UNRWA, and I will defer to my colleagues from the Department of State to respond on this issue.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Transfer of Credit Authorities to the U.S. Development Finance Corporation**

With the passage of the BUILD Act, the new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) will launch in FY20. Accordingly, the Development Credit Authority (DCA) within USAID will be transferred to the new DFC. DCA provided a direct linkage between funding mechanisms and USAID development programs, streamlining financing and strengthening the effectiveness of these programs. Maintaining such linkages is critical to success in the transition.

How is USAID preparing for the transfer of the Development Credit Authority and other credit program authority to the newly established U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC)?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to creating and maintaining institutional linkages with the new U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC), including through the transfer of the Development Credit Authority (DCA). USAID task teams are meeting regularly to prepare for the orderly transfer of the DCA's staff, legacy credit portfolio, systems for compliance and monitoring, budget and transfer authority, and programmatic records and files. These teams are connecting with similar teams within the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and we anticipate a full transition across all areas by the DFC's targeted effective date of October 1, 2019.

In addition, OPIC has formed over 40 working groups around specific technical and operational issues that need resolution for the DFC to begin operations. Our DCA staff is active in many of those meetings, and is helping to shape the future policies and procedures of the DFC.

We are also in close contact with OPIC's leadership to talk on a regular basis about designing and establishing close institutional linkages between USAID and the DFC.

**Question:**

The USAID Administrator will serve as Vice Chair of the new DFC Board. Aside from that, how will USAID mitigate any development impacts on current and future programs as the DCA transitions to the DFC?

**Answer:**

For current programs, we expect no change as a result of the transition. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) currently has 265 Development Credit Authority (DCA) guarantees across 63 countries. USAID Missions own those guarantees, and manage them as they would any of their other development programs. They will continue to do so into the future. DCA currently provides compliance support to those Missions to ensure they are collecting data correctly on guaranteed loans, partner financial institutions are paying fees, the U.S. Department of the Treasury is paying claims when necessary, and the participants in each guarantee agreement are honoring their legal requirements. The new U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC) will offer this type and level of administrative support in the future. USAID expects that the ownership of the legacy guarantees and the responsibility for ensuring their performance and development results will remain with our Missions.

We have identified several opportunities for loan guarantees for Fiscal Year 2020, and are in discussions with OPIC on when and how to best to proceed with those potential transactions, as the new DFC is still a work in progress..

**Question:**

What will happen to current programs when the DCA transitions?

**Answer:**

For current programs, we expect no change as a result of the transition.

**Question:**

Is USAID still taking on new programs up until October 1st?

**Answer:**

Yes. We have a robust pipeline of transactions that we will be closing this Fiscal Year before the full transition of the Development Credit Authority (DCA) portfolio on October 1, 2019. As in all past years, our DCA staff will be working very hard to close all of those transactions before the end of the Fiscal Year.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The DFC is also a key part of the Administration's broad Indo-Pacific Strategy. Unfortunately, the strategy is still a mystery. What is USAID doing in accordance with the Indo-Pacific Strategy? Please differentiate whether such activities are new, created as part of the new Indo-Pacific initiative, or if USAID has been doing these programs all along. Are these programs concentrated in specific sectors of development, or is USAID investing in a more integrated, cross-cutting approach to issues including strengthening rule of law and governance, preserving the environment, and mitigating climate change?

**Answer:**

Announced by President Donald Trump in Vietnam in November 2017, the goal of the *U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy* (IPS) is to advance a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region in which all nations are sovereign, strong, and prosperous. To achieve this goal, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will focus on three objectives: fostering economic growth, strengthening democratic systems, and improving the management of natural resources. Please refer to the attached paper for a detailed discussion of USAID's implementation blueprint.

USAID's approach in the Indo-Pacific region builds upon, and scales up, activities proven effective in a number of countries, while ensuring our partners focus sharply on addressing the specific challenges identified in the attached document. At the same time, our approach includes activities related to digital connectivity, an area in which we have not invested in the past.

**STRATEGIC APPROACH OF THE  
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)  
TO IMPLEMENTING  
THE U.S. INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY**

**Goal:** Announced by President Donald Trump in Vietnam in November 2017, the goal of the *U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy* (IPS) is to **advance a free, open and secure Indo-Pacific region in which all nations are sovereign, strong and prosperous**. The U.S. Government (USG) has defined the region as spanning from the West Coast of the United States to the West Coast of India, which thereby encompasses East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia. The IPS consists of three pillars:

- **Governance Pillar:** A free Indo-Pacific means **nation states free from coercion** — through strengthened regional architecture, protected sovereignty, and peaceful dispute-resolution in accordance with international law — and that uphold fundamental human rights and democratic values essential to engendering **free people**.
- **Economic Pillar:** An open Indo-Pacific means **open trade and investment** — marked by free, fair, and reciprocal trade and open, market-based investment environments — and **open connectivity** — including open sea lanes, airways, and cyberspace — to drive regional integration and economic growth.
- **Security Pillar:** A secure Indo-Pacific means a flexible, resilient network of **security partners** that promote regional stability; advance maritime security; ensure the freedom of navigation and overflight; and address shared threats, such as transnational crime and terrorism.

**USAID's Strategic Approach**

USAID is advancing the goal of the IPS by supporting bilateral and regional efforts focused on three objectives: fostering economic growth, strengthening democratic systems, and improving the management of natural resources.

**Fostering Economic Growth**

**Challenge:** Despite Asia's growing wealth, a number of challenges constrain partner countries' growth and create opportunities for foreign predatory tactics that create economic and political dependency. Among them are weak regulatory environments, constrained fiscal space, lack of infrastructure, and corruption. These challenges also hinder free and fair competition by U.S. companies, which impedes U.S. private-sector investment in the world's fastest-growing markets.

**Response:** USAID's investments in economic governance will focus on the following:

- Leveling the Playing Field for Trade: USAID's assistance will support programs that promote legal, regulatory and policy reforms. Specifically, USAID will develop the capacity of partner governments to (a) enforce contractual agreements under international trade arrangements; (b) meet internationally accepted standards for intellectual property, labor, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and address technical barriers to trade; and, (c) facilitate trade by easing border controls and compliance requirements.
- Improving Competitiveness: USAID will fund bilateral programs that: (a) reduce barriers to entry, and to market access, by legitimate investors; (b) lower the cost of doing business by

streamlining procedures and cutting red tape for obtaining permits and licenses, easing labor market restrictions, and strengthening the enforcement of contracts; and (c) promote greater competition by reforming procurement rules to allow legitimate foreign players to participate, strengthening anti-trust and competition requirements, promoting conformance with standards following international best practices, and strengthening the enforcement of intellectual-property rights.

- **Creating an Enabling Environment for Infrastructure Development:** USAID’s funding will support the development of infrastructure in partner countries, as well as level the playing field for American companies to compete in the infrastructure sector in the Indo-Pacific region. Through technical assistance and training, USAID will launch programs, including those under the **Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network (ITAN) Initiative**, to help the public and private sectors to (a) foster open and transparent procurement processes; (b) build capacity to conduct feasibility studies and bid documents; (c) prioritize public-private partnerships in infrastructure to reduce dependence on predatory credit-financing arrangements; (d) allocate government funds to the infrastructure projects with the highest returns to optimize the use of domestic fiscal resources; (e) implement robust environmental and social safeguards with respect to infrastructure investments; and, (f) implement activities to mobilize domestic resources, such as improvements to tax administration and public financial management. Through ITAN’s Technical-Assistance Facility (TAF), partner governments will have access to the legal and technical assistance needed to analyze the feasibility of loan packages for infrastructure projects.
- **Strengthening Digital Economy and Connectivity:** USAID will launch and finance digital programs, including those under the **Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) Initiative**, to assist the public and private sectors to 1) advance a rules-based framework for the development of policies on information and communications technology; 2) enhance capacity to implement and regulate digital-economy standards, consistent with international best practices; 3) establish partnerships between governments and the private sector on innovative digital approaches to address common development challenges, such as misinformation drive by social media, e-government, e-health modules, and training for youth across Asia in skills needed for the “fourth industrial revolution.”

### **Strengthening Democratic Systems**

**Challenge:** Over the last few years, democratic institutions across Asia have faced significant tests. Some foreign influences have overtly and covertly intervened to exploit institutional weaknesses and spawn corruption that undermines democratic institutions and the long-term stability of our partner countries.

**Response:** Under the Governance Pillar and in support of the Transparency Initiative, USAID will fund programs to assist governments, civil society, and the private sector in the following areas: (a) promoting the integrity of electoral processes; (b) supporting the independence of media and the integrity of information; (c) protecting human rights, including civil and political rights; (d) fostering accountability and transparency, including by fighting corruption; (e) strengthening the rule of law; and, (f) strengthening civil society.

### Improving the Management of Natural Resources

**Challenge:** Irresponsible infrastructure projects erode the natural resources upon which many of our partner countries depend for their long-term growth, including energy, water, land and clean air. Reckless extraction of natural resources ignores environmental safeguards, fosters corruption, threatens the livelihood of vulnerable populations, and undermines the prospects for long-term economic growth.

**Response:** USAID will fund programs that focus on the following: (a) strengthening legal frameworks for the management of natural resources and ensuring the enforcement of environmental safeguards; (b) fostering private-sector engagement on sustainable supply-chains, the transformation of the energy sector, and safeguards; (c) promoting the adoption of international environmental standards; and, (d) supporting water and energy security, as well as legal and sustainable forestry and fishing.

- **Accelerating the Transformation of the Energy Sector:** To implement the **Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE)**, USAID will fund programs that (a) scale up our investments to develop integrated, smart, secure, profitable, and stable energy sectors in the Indo-Pacific region; (b) promote the modernization of utilities through digitization and the enhancement of their performance, including by reducing theft and waste; (c) foster regional energy connectivity; (d) attract increased levels of private-sector investment (and create associated enabling environments to help facilitate and sustain those investments); and, (e) accelerate the adoption of regional and bilateral competitive energy markets that will increase access to power by Asian households and businesses.
- **Advancing Environmental and Social Safeguards and Standards:** USAID will assist governments, civil society, and the private sector in partner countries to formulate and implement environmental safeguards, which will help protect valuable natural resources, support economic growth and improve citizen-responsive governance. At the same time, transparent government policies, regulations and transactions that foster adherence to internationally-accepted standards will make it difficult for irresponsible infrastructure projects and resource-extraction arrangements to flourish.
- **Combating Transnational Environmental Crime by Improving the Management of Natural Resources:** The Indo-Pacific region is rich in forests, fisheries and other natural resources, all of which are in peril. USAID will fund activities to combat the poaching of, and trafficking in, wildlife; illegal and unreported fishing; and illegal logging. Besides contributing to the Economic Pillar, USAID's investments in improving the management of natural resources also contribute to U.S. security by combating transnational environmental crime.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The United States has unparalleled knowledge and experience in combating Ebola, which is crucially needed as the latest outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has now become the second largest in history. But is there any new thought as to precautions that could be taken to send USAID or CDC personnel to affected communities? Are we less effective because we are refusing to let our people get close to where the greatest need is?

**Answer:**

In an ideal world, experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would deploy into Ebola-affected areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to help coordinate and improve the response to the outbreak. However, the current environment in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces is too dangerous for such action, as the Secretaries of State and HHS have both agreed. Recent violence (shown on the attached map) highlights the security concerns for all who are working in the outbreak zone. This highly insecure environment makes the response extremely challenging and complicated.

Nevertheless, USAID and other donors are funding the deployment of hundreds of epidemiologists, physicians, and experienced public-health professionals through international non-governmental groups, United Nations agencies, and other international organizations—including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Federation of the Red

Cross and Red Crescent Societies— into the Health Zones in which the transmission of Ebola is occurring. In addition, USAID has hired a team of independent international consultants who are embedded with the WHO responders in Eastern DRC as a substitute for U.S. Government Direct-Hire (USDH) personnel.

The Government of the DRC has made the decision to move its national coordination operations from Beni to Goma, and the U.S. Government is working to adjust accordingly. USDH staff in Kinshasa and Goma continue to work closely with the DRC Ministry of Health, the WHO, and other agencies to provide daily support and technical recommendations for improving the response to the outbreak. Additionally, U.S. Government staff remain in constant contact with the USAID consultants and the partners and responders who are located in the affected areas.

U.S. Government security experts conduct regular, on-the-ground assessments and reviews of the situation in Eastern Congo. The Director of the Office of Security at USAID joined staff from the Office of the Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa on the most recent such trip. USAID defers to the U.S. Department of State on security assessments and guidance related to access in Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, including for the possible deployment of additional USDH responders to Goma.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In November, the White House announced that as part of its implementation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, it would not issue waivers to several of the poorest countries, thereby cutting off health and development assistance. Was USAID consulted on the decision to not issue waivers to South Sudan, DRC, Laos, Burma, and Burundi? As the U.S. government Expert in development, how has USAID worked within the interagency to ensure that programming decisions further the goal of anti-trafficking instead of making vulnerable women and children even more so? Cutting off livelihood and education programs in the poorest countries is likely to be counterproductive to reducing the incidence of trafficking. How has USAID advocated for these programs?

**Answer:**

Human trafficking, which is modern-day slavery, threatens public safety and national security. The Administration seeks to implement the restrictions mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) on foreign assistance to, or to benefit, the governments of the countries on Tier 3 in the *Trafficking in Persons Report* produced by the U.S. Department of State in a way that holds these governments accountable for failing to meet the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking in persons. Restrictions on U.S. assistance to the governments of Tier 3 countries serve as a diplomatic tool to urge action to meet the TVPA's minimum standards. My understanding is that the provisions of the TVPA are clear that assistance in countries listed on Tier 3 of the State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report* that is not assistance to, or to benefit, government institutions is exempt from the TVPA's restrictions.

Consistent with the President's determination to issue a limited number of waivers for countries on Tier 3 of the *Trafficking in Persons Report* for 2018, the Administration will not provide assistance that is subject to the TVPA's restrictions during Fiscal Year 2019. USAID, in coordination with the interagency, has carried out a programmatic, legal, and policy review of assistance subject to the TVPA. In certain instances, to preserve life-saving interventions and protect other U.S. national-security and foreign-policy priorities, the Department of State and USAID are consulting with the National Security Council on whether to continue programs that involve governmental institutions or personnel by relying on exceptions in the TVPA or other available legal authorities. The status of these assistance activities is pending final policy review.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

You've often stated that the purpose of foreign assistance should be to end its need to exist by helping put countries on the path to self-reliance. To determine progress on that path, USAID has created country roadmaps that measure self-reliance by a number of metrics. How does the data you gather on your country roadmaps ultimately impact USAID's existing Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), and how will it continue to inform new USAID programs and strategies?

**Answer:**

The Country Roadmaps will provide the framework around which our Missions think about self-reliance in a given country, especially the country's trajectory to self-sufficiency. This, in turn, will inform the strategic choices a Mission proposes in its revised Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), as it begins to reorient how it engages with the government, civil society, and the private sector to advance self-reliance. For the purposes of strategic planning, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Country Roadmaps: (1) provide a snapshot of how a country is performing on the overall Journey to Self-Reliance (*i.e.*, the scatterplot), based on the dimensions of Capacity and Commitment; and, (2) provide a framework for understanding a country's relative strengths and challenges therein, by using the seven sub-dimensions and 17 metrics that serve as proxies for wider systemic challenges in the country. Together with other relevant supplemental information and analytics, the Country Roadmaps will ultimately enable the Agency to analyze how to leverage and incentivize host-country commitment, and build long-term capacity.

The Roadmap metrics are not intended to link directly to programs, as they are measuring a country's performance at the national level. Instead, the Roadmaps provide a conceptual framework through which a Mission can identify opportunities and understand USAID's comparative advantage in supporting our partner countries in their Journeys to Self-Reliance. Through this process of analysis, each Mission can link these opportunities directly to the strategic choices they make in its CDCS and tailor programs to leverage partner countries' strengths and respond to their unique development challenges. We also have begun using the Road Maps to shape our budgetary allocations, including our proposal for the 653(a) submission for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 and the building blocks for the President's Budget Request for FY 2021.

**Question for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

USAID received \$3 million in Fiscal Year 2018 for work focused on advancing and protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) persons abroad. I also understand that you received \$3.5 million in FY 2019 for continuing that important work. How is USAID planning to use the funding provided in recent years? What are the U.S. government's priorities in this area?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funds programs that help protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in developing countries from violence, discrimination, stigma, and criminalization. We prioritize efforts that support the following: 1) data-collection and research to inform policy; 2) strategic communications efforts to reduce stigma; 3) context-specific projects in the most-difficult climates; and, 4) emergency response.

With Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 funds, USAID is funding five LGBTI-specific projects. Four of these projects receive their financing through our Human-Rights Grants Program (HRGP): 1) a project in Eastern Europe that will provide local civil-society organizations (CSOs) that serve LGBTI people with strategic communications tools that help reduce stigma; 2) a project in the Middle East/North Africa that will enhance the safety and security protocols of local LGBTI CSOs that advocate for protection from violence; 3) a project in the Caribbean that will train service-providers in non-discrimination toward LGBTI people; and, 4) a project in Africa that will build the capacity of LGBTI CSOs that are working to advance protection from discrimination. The fifth project is a public-private partnership that leverages the technical expertise and financial contributions of the Swedish International Development Cooperation

Agency (SIDA) and many private-sector partners.

With FY 2019 funds, USAID intends to continue the approach of funding context-specific LGBTI programs in the most-difficult climates through the HRGP, and by providing additional resources to the global public-private partnership mentioned above.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#9)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Funding to International Organizations**

The U.S. is the largest donor government to a range of important UN humanitarian, development, and public health agencies, including the World Food Program, UN Children's Fund, and World Health Organization, among others. Last summer, however, USAID issued revised guidance on the disbursement of project-level funds and procurements to public international organizations, such as UN agencies. Specifically, the new guidance appears to put new restrictions on funding for international organizations, dis-incentivizing multilateral partnerships. Can you explain these new guidelines and the rationale behind them? Given the broad geographic reach, high level of capacity, and political legitimacy of UN agencies and other public international organizations, how is USAID working to ensure there is not a negative impact on its programming, especially in difficult environments?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) works closely with many international organizations around the world, and often funds them to deliver development and humanitarian assistance. At the same time, the Agency is also committed to leveraging new resources; increasing co-collaboration and co-design; and broadening our partner base for our grants, contracts, and other transactions.

In furtherance of these priorities, the Agency introduced a new Senior Obligation Alignment Review (SOAR) in June 2018 to ensure the leaders of our Bureaus and cross-cutting functional Operating Units examine high-dollar-value acquisition and assistance proposals prior to solicitation, and to encourage creativity and innovation. (The SOAR process replaced the previous Acquisition and Assistance Review and Approval Document [AARAD] process.)

All proposed awards to Public International Organizations (PIOs) go through the SOAR process. To support the SOAR process, and in line with our commitment to broaden our partner base, in August 2018 we made revisions to Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 308: Agreements with Public International Organizations. ADS 308 now requires that the file documentation for awards to PIOs include, “[a]n explanation of the purpose(s) of the assistance and how the purpose is justified under the authorizing statute, including why support to the PIO provides a greater benefit than any other available transaction.” This justification is also included in the SOAR documentation.

Awards for urgently needed humanitarian assistance, Food for Peace emergency food aid, and urgent activities of USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives do not participate in the SOAR process.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (#10)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Tuberculosis is the leading infectious disease killer - even though we know how to prevent, treat, and cure it. Of the 10 million sickened every year, 4 million TB cases are never found by local health systems. With the additional resources for FY 2018 and FY 2019 for TB to fight TB, what is USAID doing to support countries to improve case findings to detect and treat these missing millions with active TB? Despite TB being a major health challenge for the Western Hemisphere, especially in Haiti and Central America, no Western Hemisphere countries are listed as priority countries for USAID TB programs. Why is that and are there plans to expand to these countries?

**Answer:**

The Administration continues to prioritize efforts to combat infectious-disease threats, including tuberculosis (TB). The global TB epidemic has serious consequences: Every individual with TB unreached by the United States or other programs will spread the disease to approximately 10-12 more people in his or her lifetime, and improper or incomplete treatment could spread multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB).

I launched the Global TB Accelerator to End TB in September 2018 to support countries to meet the target agreed at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on TB of treating 40 million people by 2022. The Accelerator will focus on the countries with high burdens of TB in which the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) already has existing partnerships, and where the Agency could reprogram funds to better align with local communities and partners to deliver performance-based results towards the global target. This is a change in approach to ensure USAID is fighting to end TB effectively and efficiently, by leveraging these new commitments.

The Global TB Accelerator to End TB will expand and target technical expertise to increase the diagnosis and treatment of cases of TB and MDR TB. This includes through the placement of advisors in Ministries of Health; the increased involvement of local organizations in the TB response, including community and faith-based groups; the accelerated transition of sustainable funding and management of TB programs to national governments and their partners; and improved coordination with other health programs, particularly by addressing co-morbidities, such as diabetes, HIV and undernourishment. It will also focus on locally generated solutions that tailor USAID's TB response to patients and communities to address their diagnosis, treatment and prevention needs, and to combat stigma and discrimination. It will engage and leverage civil society, the private sector, and communities, including faith-based partners.

Several years ago, USAID began concentrating and focusing its investments in TB on the countries identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as having the highest burden of the disease. The WHO has not designated any Latin American or Caribbean country as high- burden. Because of the relatively low burden of TB in Latin America and the Caribbean and the concentration of TB cases in urban areas, USAID adopted a regional approach to support these countries in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Regional Office for the WHO in the Americas. With funding from USAID, PAHO assists governments to adopt effective approaches to finding people with a "TB in Large Cities Initiative." USAID also works with countries in this region to maximize their grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and provides short-term technical assistance to remove any bottlenecks in the implementation of these awards.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Grace Meng (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

How does this plan incorporate the expansion of Menstrual Health Management (MHM)? What are the specific targets of MHM expansion in the Water and Development Plan?

**Answer:**

As one of the core operating principles under the *U.S. Global Water Strategy* and the Water and Development Plan, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) seeks to empower women and girls and promote equality between men and women by integrating interventions for menstrual-health management (MHM) into other programs where practicable. The Agency's Water and Development Plan has two targets: To reach 15 million people with sustainable access to safe drinking water and eight million with sustainable access to sanitation by 2022. Activities to meet these targets take multiple approaches to measuring results.

USAID's implementers set targets and custom indicators specific to MHM on a project-level basis, and may include the following illustrative indicators, aligned with global normative surveys, such as the Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation:

- (1) Proportion of women with a private place to wash and change while at home and using reusable or non-reusable materials during last menstruation; and, (2) Proportion of women who did not participate in social activities, school, or work because of their last menstruation.

The Agency's investments seek to improve MHM in key settings, including, but not limited to schools, to alleviate a major constraint to the participation of women and girls in education and public life. Such work ranges from helping to set design standards for public facilities, developing national policies, and creating educational resources for both males and females, to improving the availability, affordability, and appropriateness of MHM-related supplies.

The Water and Development Plan's focus on women and girls demands a holistic approach to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). For example, consideration of privacy, security, lighting, and location is critical to reducing gender-based violence in latrines in both humanitarian and development contexts, as well as for building confidence that women and girls can use latrines to manage menstrual hygiene needs safely and comfortably. Our hygiene activities empower women by promoting social and behavior-change communication that includes education on hand-washing, but also on changing negative gender and social norms. The Agency also funds research into preferred hand and menstrual hygiene products to ensure our investments support supplies that are acceptable, affordable, and available.

Ongoing MHM interventions serve women and girls of all ages, both in and out of school. The Agency tracks the overall number of women and girls reached through standard indicators on gender, which include MHM-related activities. The Water Office and Gender and Development Office have selected one of the Department of State's Standardized Program Structure and Definitions (SPSD) Standard Indicators for gender as the overall priority metric for MHM work at the global level: Percentage of female participants in U.S. Government-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment) (GNDR-2).

**Question:**

How will safety improvements in sanitation facilities be incorporated into this 2022 goal?

**Answer:**

Sanitation continues to be a top priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as reflected in the Water and Development Plan in support of the 2017 *U.S. Government Global Water Strategy*. USAID's investments facilitate access to toilets that are appropriately designed and located to ensure safety and use, particularly for women and girls.

Enacted in January 2019, the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act requires every USAID-funded activity to perform a gender analysis, which identifies, and seeks to understand and explain, gaps between males and females that exist in households, communities, and countries. USAID's implementers use this tool to determine how to design activities appropriately to address the needs of women and girls. An example would be locating toilets in areas that reduce the likelihood of gender-based violence and make them MHM- friendly facilities.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Grace Meng (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

I am concerned about the ways in which vulnerable populations might be left behind as USAID considers transitioning our foreign assistance in some countries, and merging and reimagining bureaus across our foreign assistance programming. According to CSIS, more than 800 million people go to bed hungry, and malnutrition is now the major contributor to the global burden of disease. This is why USAID's merging of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance with the Office of Food for Peace under a single Bureau for Humanitarian requires strict scrutiny.

While this merger has the potential to improve and extend the reach of U.S. humanitarian assistance, I have some concerns about implementation.

- What are the risks posed by this merger in the short-term, during the transition? Will there be a delay in distribution of services? Are the bureaucracies and systems management teams of these two offices prepared to combine efforts?
- As the President's proposed FY20 budget has been delayed, I am forced to assume that it will reflect the draconian cuts that proposed in the last two budget requests. The OMB's FY19 budget proposed the elimination of the Food for Peace Title II account and cut the International Disaster Assistance Account by 14%. How would these potentially dramatic budget cuts support such a merger? Wouldn't the benefits be negated by such a significant lack of funding?

**Answer:**

Our teams are already working on the practical implications and operational shifts of the merger of the Offices of Food for Peace and Foreign Disaster Assistance approved under our Transformation, and are prioritizing the continued delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance. This includes conversations that range from establishing shared core values for the new Bureau to developing common programming approaches. Furthermore, the two Offices have been co-located since September 2017 to improve communication and

alignment on humanitarian assistance and policy. Through these steps, we believe we mitigated the risks of the merger, and do not anticipate delays in the distribution of services to beneficiaries.

In regard to the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2020, the \$5.968 billion in an International Humanitarian Assistance account would allow the United States to remain the largest single humanitarian donor to crises around the world. The request, combined with existing resources, including funding from prior Fiscal Years, the U.S. Agency for International Development would maintain an annual average in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020 of roughly \$9 billion, matching the highest-ever levels of annual U.S. humanitarian-assistance programming overseas, while maintaining the principle that other countries, including in the development world, need to step up and do their fair share.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Grace Meng (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Although ISIS remains a real threat, our U.S. armed forces in coordination with a strong coalition continue to reclaim land in both Syria and Iraq. With these on-the-ground developments, donor and implementer attention is turning away from humanitarian assistance and toward stabilization and reconstruction. However, humanitarian needs in these same areas remain enormous and in some cases are deepening.

- What is USAID's vision for continuing humanitarian aid to areas declared to be clear of ISIS?
- How will humanitarian assistance be incorporated into recovery and reconstruction in order to ensure that people's most basic needs are met?
- From USAID's perspective, what conditions must be met in order for displaced Syrians to return to Syria?

**Answer:**

Despite the defeat of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), conflict remains the primary driver of humanitarian needs across Syria, and among Syrian refugees throughout the region. The 2019 United Nations Humanitarian Needs Overview identified 11.7 million people in need inside Syria, or 59 percent of the total population of the country, including 5.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). An additional 5.7 million Syrians have fled their home country as refugees. Across Syria, USAID funds partners who are providing humanitarian assistance to people in need, such as emergency food, shelter materials, safe drinking water, medicine, protection services, and relief commodities, including to families who are returning home to areas in Northeastern Syria liberated from ISIS.

In Iraq, USAID also continues to fund humanitarian assistance for IDPs and other people affected by ISIS' cruel occupation. Although more than 4.2 million Iraqis have returned to their homes, approximately 1.7 million people remain displaced, including members of endangered ethnic and religious minorities, and they remain dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. USAID funds partners who are providing emergency food and nutrition assistance, safe drinking water, health care, hygiene kits, improved sanitation, shelter, and protection services for IDPs and returnees.

USAID intends to continue providing humanitarian assistance for Syrians and Iraqis as long as needs remain. As the context evolves, so do the types and modalities of humanitarian assistance. Even while addressing basic needs, USAID's programming also seeks to build local the skills, knowledge base, and networks of local service-providers required to continue work in their communities long after the end of international humanitarian assistance. For example, in addition to stocking health clinics, USAID trains Syrian health-care providers in basic skills, and offers them specialized training on issues such as the prevention and treatment of sexual exploitation and abuse.

USAID supports the position of the United Nations that any returns of refugees or internally displaced persons in Syria must be safe, voluntary, dignified, well-informed, and sustainable. The return process must take place in coordination with the international humanitarian community and with full transparency, including unimpeded access to the populations during their movements and once they reach their destination. Returnees should also have access to information on their options, guarantees against arbitrary arrest and detention, a clear understanding of conscription/military-service requirements should they decide to return, and information on conditions in their preferred place of return.

Despite the overall reduction in hostilities in many areas of Syria during the past year, ongoing hostilities, insecurity, and opportunities for family-reunification continue to generate population displacement across the country. The United Nations recorded nearly 45,900 new displacements countrywide in February 2019 alone. In Northwest Syria, airstrikes and bombardments continue to prompt displacement – including the secondary displacement of people who have already fled their home areas.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Grace Meng (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Humanitarian NGO staff have been increasingly threatened during their work in Yemen, including increased incidents of detention and arrest, office raids, confiscation of property and documents, and verbal harassment. These targeted actions come on top of an already insecure environment in Yemen where gunfire and missile strikes are regular threats.

- What actions can the Trump administration take to better support operational humanitarian NGOs and their staffs, to help give them the space and backing they need to operate safely in Yemen and deliver essential assistance to vulnerable populations?

The Yemeni crisis has had a unique and dramatic effect on children. According to the NGO Save the Children, 85,000 children may have died from malnutrition in Yemen since 2015, and 1 in every 10 children in Yemen is now displaced. The UN has just stated that 2018 saw a 51-percent increase in killing and maiming of children, and that more than 4 million children cannot currently access education.

- What is your agency's strategy to ensure children's food security, education, and healthcare needs are prioritized in the short-term, while laying the groundwork for a stable future?

**Answer:**

Conflict is the cause of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The Administration continues to stress with all parties to the conflict that they must facilitate the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, including by alleviating bureaucratic obstacles. It is also critical that both humanitarian and commercial imports—especially food, fuel, and medicine—flow into, and throughout, the country freely, and without delay. The Administration continues to work in coordination with other donors to alleviate these bureaucratic constraints. The senior leadership of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) also regularly meet with our partners involved in Yemen to discuss the constraints they are facing. While the United States remains committed to helping the

Yemeni people with humanitarian aid, ultimately a political solution is the only way to end the conflict.

In the short term, our strategy for humanitarian assistance—provided through United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental partners—is to continue aiding the most-vulnerable, including children, based on need, while minimizing the chances for diversion. This relief includes emergency food assistance, treatment for malnutrition, medical care, hygiene kits, psychosocial support, safe drinking water, improved sanitation services, and vocational training to help people get back on their feet. Despite insecurity and access challenges, the United States has provided nearly \$721 million in humanitarian aid to help the Yemeni people since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2018. USAID is responsible for approximately \$692 million of that assistance.

In terms of development assistance, USAID is working with our partners to implement early-recovery programs throughout the country, particularly focused on health and education. For example, education assistance helps children deal with the psychosocial effects of trauma, as well as supports matriculation exams, ensures school buildings are safe for boys and girls, and addresses the chronic lack of access to schools. USAID is funding (a) child-protection services and comprehensive support to strengthen children’s coping mechanisms; (b) safe healing and learning spaces; (c) case-management and psychosocial support; and, (d) community awareness of harmful practices, such as child marriage. USAID finances the strategic objective of the UN- led Yemen Nutrition Cluster to ensure predictable, timely, and effective nutrition responses through robust, evidence-based systems and analyses of nutritional needs; advocacy; monitoring; and coordination. USAID also funds the Cluster’s expansion of the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition (SMART)

survey to more Governorates to ensure programming targets the children and communities most in need. Finally, USAID also supports the treatment of severe acute malnutrition in Yemeni children under five years of age by purchasing ready-to-use therapeutic foods.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

As Chair of the House Democracy Partnership (HDP), a congressional commission that works with parliaments in emerging democracies, I have seen first-hand the success of USAID's Development Assistance programming on the ground.

USAID contractors, such as IRI, NDI, RTI International, and FHI360, have been instrumental in improving the democratic practices of countries otherwise challenged by financial hardship or conflict.

I have serious concerns that the Administration will put out a budget, similar to the previous two years, that undermine countries that have been identified as emerging democracies in critical neighborhoods, whose governments are eager and ripe for democratic reform--- particularly as we are working to combat the rise in Russian and Chinese influence around the world.

- (a) Why and how is governance and democracy assistance important to U.S. security interests?
- (b) I've noted a decline in USAID stand-alone legislative strengthening programs over the years. Can you tell me how USAID intends to continue to support the institutional strengthening of legislatures around the world?
- (c) I believe your staff is already getting this together, but please provide data on the funding and organization of legislative strengthening programs conducted by the US government, including USAID and State Department programming, over the last decade?

**Answer:**

Foreign assistance in the fields of democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) directly supports the Strategic Objective of the *National Security Strategy* to "counter instability, transnational crime, and violence that threaten U.S. interests by strengthening citizen-responsive governance, security, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law." DRG programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) work with

governments, civil society, and regional organizations to address the drivers of violence, crime, and irregular migration, and to put an end to long-running, violent conflicts. USAID's DRG programs encourage reform by working with leaders in promising nations to promote effective, citizen-responsive governance; improve the rule of law; and develop institutions accountable to citizens. Illustrative DRG programs include, but are not limited to, those that support justice-sector reforms and institutional capacity, expand access to justice and human-rights protections, and strengthen public-accountability systems.

While the number of, and budget for, stand-alone legislative-strengthening programs have been declining at USAID, the Agency is increasing the number of programs that incorporate legislatures as one element in a broader strategy. USAID expects that these blended programs -- where legislatures are one of multiple components under the larger objective of strengthening political parties, elections, or civil society -- will continue to be an important element of our DRG investments. Additionally, USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance will continue to support legislative strengthening by incorporating academic research and practical expertise in programmatic implementation to develop innovative approaches to engaging legislatures through blended programs that incorporate political parties, election support, rule of law and judicial reform, and civil society.

For the category of activities known as Legislatures and Political Parties, between 2007 and 2017, the U.S. Government allocated a total of \$951 million. The five countries that received the most funding during that period were Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Compiling data on these blended programs is more challenging, but USAID will provide a best estimate in future updates on legislative programs.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The fight against Al Qaeda and ISIS have long-been spearheaded by the Defense Department. And it seems that throughout the years, this effort has become more and more like playing whack-a-mole, as terrorist organizations morph, change, and move. Do you think there's a role (or a larger role) for USAID to play in creating a more sustained effort to help those areas where AQ and ISIS are known to have a presence?

**Answer:**

During the past two decades, the U.S. Government has shown a remarkable prowess for removing members of terrorist organizations from the battlefield. Supported by defense and diplomatic colleagues, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has several roles to play as the United States confronts the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al Qaeda, and similar organizations. Where the United States defeats these groups on the battlefield (as in Iraq and Syria), USAID's programming is intended to support an enduring victory by providing services in areas terrorist would otherwise seek to influence in the absence of a viable government. The 2018 *Stabilization Assistance Review* (SAR), co-signed by the Administrator of USAID and the Secretaries of Defense and State, reflects USAID's broader commitment to investing in areas that are experiencing violence, including from terrorist organizations. The SAR articulates the role that USAID can, and should, play in the defense- diplomacy-development nexus to stabilize areas at risk of violence or a resurgence of conflict.

Ideally, the U.S. Government intervenes before a situation escalates to where USAID is assisting in the wake of military action. USAID is well-placed to undertake initiatives aimed at preventing the emergence or expansion of groups like ISIS and al Qaeda. Recognizing the importance of preventative work, USAID has made significant structural and policy changes to allow our activities and programming around countering violent extremism to get out ahead of the problem. A key element in USAID's transformation will be to elevate the Agency's role in the prevention and ultimate defeat of these groups through the new Bureau for Conflict- Prevention and Stabilization.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Increasingly, we are seeing examples of this Administration using humanitarian assistance, whether it be providing or terminating assistance to vulnerable communities, for political ends. Recent examples include: cutting assistance to the West Bank and Gaza, and just this weekend, we saw the provision of humanitarian assistance in Venezuela become political.

USAID's website says the following, "USAID will not walk away from our commitment to humanitarian assistance, and we will always stand with people everywhere when disaster strikes, for this is who we are as Americans."

How do you reconcile using humanitarian assistance as a political instrument with USAID's mission and the American values of helping the world's most vulnerable?

**Answer:**

The well-established principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence are critical to enabling humanitarian organizations to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and minimize the costs of conflict, disasters, and displacement. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as part of the U.S. Government, supports our humanitarian partners as they apply these principles. Furthermore, USAID recognizes the importance of needs-based humanitarian assistance. The United States has been providing humanitarian assistance since Fiscal Year 2017 to help people who have fled the man-made chaos and repression caused by the illegitimate Maduro regime in Venezuela, and we will continue to help relieve the suffering of Venezuelans throughout the Western Hemisphere.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The Administration's ongoing Foreign Assistance Review has largely been kept under wraps. Congress has not been consulted on the process, and Members remain without a clear understanding of both the purpose and content of the review. What can you share about the Foreign Assistance Review? How will it support USAID's progress in helping developing countries on the journey to self-reliance?

**Answer:**

We refer you to the National Security Council for further information.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

“On your recent trip to Colombia, you noted that the crisis in Venezuela is “now a regional crisis,” as more than three million people – about 10% of the population – have fled to neighboring countries of Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador. As we have seen with the crises in Syria and Yemen, a large influx of refugees to host countries can strain local resources and capacity. How is USAID working to assist countries in the region who are committed to helping Venezuelan refugees, and to address the regional impacts of this crisis?”

**Answer:**

Venezuela is experiencing a man-made political and economic crisis caused by the illegitimate and criminal Maduro regime. Marked by devastating hyperinflation, this chaos has led to severe shortages of food and medicine, and has driven nearly 3.4 million people to flee the once-prosperous country since 2014. Over the last two years, the United States has been supporting the efforts of the countries in the region that generously have welcomed their Venezuelan neighbors into their communities and provided them with food, shelter, and medicine. We remain committed to working toward a regional solution to this crisis.

As of March 6, 2019, the United States has provided more than \$256 million in humanitarian and development assistance to respond to the Venezuelan crisis since Fiscal Year 2017. This funding includes over \$213 million in humanitarian assistance aimed at meeting emergency needs, stemming the spread of infectious diseases, and supporting communities in 17 countries that are hosting Venezuelans. Of this amount, the U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID) has provided more than \$64 million in humanitarian assistance for Venezuelans and host communities in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Perú. USAID's partners are administering vaccinations in border areas; providing staff, training, and technical support for local health-care providers; and operating rapid-response health teams and health-care clinics in host communities. They are also making sure a hot meal awaits Venezuelans as soon as they cross the border to flee desperate conditions in their country; providing other emergency food assistance, safe drinking water, and basic household supplies; and working to protect vulnerable Venezuelans from violence and exploitation.

As we continue to ramp up emergency humanitarian aid, USAID is also working to boost the long-term capacity of the affected countries to respond to the influx of Venezuelans who are fleeing the chaos and repression in their homeland. Throughout the region, USAID is providing more than \$43 million in development funding aimed at strengthening and expanding basic social services, providing technical support to national migration authorities, and creating new economic opportunities in communities that are hosting Venezuelans. To date, USAID has provided such assistance in Colombia, Perú, Ecuador, Brazil, and Trinidad and Tobago. For example, in Colombia, we are funding a system to register and track migrants; a migration observatory; mobile health-care units; employment and entrepreneurship opportunities through the private sector; water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance; psycho-social services; an anti-xenophobia messaging campaign; assistance to prevent labor exploitation; and programming focused on improving citizen-responsive governance.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

You've often stated that the purpose of foreign assistance should be to end its need to exist by helping put countries on the path to self-reliance. To determine progress on that path, USAID has created country roadmaps that measure self-reliance by a number of metrics. How does the data you gather on your country roadmaps ultimately impact USAID's existing Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), and how will it continue to inform new USAID programs and strategies?

**Answer:**

The Country Roadmaps will provide the framework around which Missions of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) think about self-reliance in a given country, and the country's trajectory therein. This, in turn, will inform the strategic choices a Mission proposes in its Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), as it begins to reorient how it engages with a country to advance self-reliance, including how to allocate resources. For the purposes of strategic planning, USAID's Country Roadmaps: (1) provide a snapshot of how a country is performing on the overall Journey (*i.e.*, the scatterplot), based on the dimensions of Capacity and Commitment; and, (2) provide a framework for understanding a country's relative strengths and challenges therein, by using the seven sub-dimensions and seventeen third-party metrics that serve as proxies for wider systemic issues in the country. Together with other relevant supplemental information and analytics, the Country Roadmaps will ultimately enable the Agency to analyze how to leverage and incentivize host-country commitment, and build long-term capacity with our investments.

The Roadmap metrics are not intended to directly link to individual programs, as they are measuring a country's performance at the national level. Instead, the Roadmaps provide a conceptual framework through which a Mission can identify opportunities and understand USAID's comparative advantage in supporting our partner countries in their Journeys to Self-Reliance. Through this process of analysis, Missions can link these opportunities directly to the strategic choices they make in the CDCS, and allocate funding and tailor programs to leverage partner countries' strengths and respond to their unique development challenges.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Administrator Green, I understand USAID received \$3 million in Fiscal Year 2018 for work focused on advancing and protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) persons abroad. I also understand that you received \$3.5 million in FY 2019 for continuing that important work. I strongly support this funding and want to know – does USAID have a funding plan for LGBTI human rights in the coming year or years? Can you provide an accounting of how you are using this funding?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funds programs that help protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in developing countries from violence, discrimination, stigma, and criminalization. We prioritize efforts that support 1) data-collection and research to inform policy; 2) strategic communications efforts to reduce stigma; 3) context-specific projects in the “most-difficult” climates; and, 4) emergency response. In all of these efforts, USAID abides by the principles of “do no harm” and “do nothing about them without them.” The Center of Excellence for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance has a spend plan to allocate fully \$3 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Democracy Funds and \$3.5 million in FY 2019 Democracy Funds to support this important work.

With \$3 million in FY 2018 funds, USAID is financing five LGBTI-specific projects, four through USAID’s Human-Rights Grants Program (HRGP): 1) a project in Eastern Europe that will provide local LGBTI civil-society organizations (CSOs) with strategic

communications tools that help reduce stigma; 2) a project in the Middle East/North Africa that will enhance the safety and security protocols of local LGBTI CSOs that advocate for protection from violence; 3) a project in the Caribbean that will train providers of health care and basic social services in non-discrimination toward LGBTI people; and, 4) a project in Africa will build the capacity of LGBTI CSOs that are working to advance protections from discrimination. The fifth project is a public-private partnership that leverages the technical expertise and financial contributions of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and many private-sector partners.

With \$3.5 million in FY 2019 funds, USAID intends to continue the approach of funding context-specific LGBTI programs in the most-difficult climates through the HRGP, and providing additional resources to the global public-private partnership.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Last year, you announced a new performance-based Global Accelerator to End TB, in order to catalyze investments to end tuberculosis. As a part of this you announced a performance-based measurement system to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars achieve results and USAID awarded \$35 million to the University of North Carolina, for \$35 million, to assist in the development of these measurements. Can you tell us more about this exciting work and update us on the progress being made?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is building capacity around the world to find missing tuberculosis (TB) patients to end the disease as a public-health threat, which is an important milestone on each country's Journey to Self-Reliance. I launched the Global TB Accelerator to End TB in September 2018 to support national governments and partners to meet the target set at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting of treating 40 million people by 2022. The Accelerator focuses on the 25 countries with high burdens of TB in which USAID already has existing bilateral partnerships, and where the Agency can make investments better aligned with local communities and partners to deliver performance-based results towards the global target. This change in approach ensures that USAID is fighting to end TB effectively and efficiently by leveraging these new commitments.

In September 2018, I also announced the first award under the Global TB Accelerator, a project to improve data and impact in the fight to end TB. The TB Data, Impact-Assessment, and Communications Hub (TB DIAH) is five-year, \$35 million project

implemented by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in partnership with John Snow, Inc. TB DIAH's data hub and communications repository, opened in late March 2019 in conjunction with World TB Day, is available on [TBDIAH.org](http://TBDIAH.org). The Data Hub features the new TB Accelerator Dashboard, which measures the TB commitment and capacity of USAID-supported countries on their Journey to Self-Reliance to give policy-makers easy access to data on progress in their countries.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative David Price (#9)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

We have seen a proliferation of project delays caused by the Administration's interpretation or reinterpretation of various conditions placed on aid in statute in areas related to, for example, human trafficking, terrorism, and immigration. We commend the Administration for taking such issues seriously, however, we are concerned about the increasingly opaque process through which the Administration certifies which countries have or have not met such conditions. Can you commit to providing regular updates to the Committee on how such conditions and certifications are being interpreted and processed by the Administration?

**Answer:**

We are committed to working with Congress to obligate our funds in a timely manner. At this time, the country-level, regional and centrally managed development programs affected by restrictions under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and the President's suspension of foreign assistance in the Northern Triangle are still under review. We will provide an update to Congress as soon as we have additional information.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

As long as the Mexico City Policy is in place, will you commit to conducting comprehensive and annual reviews that study impacts on people's health, such as maternal well-being, incidence of HIV/AIDS, and infectious diseases, instead of merely looking at implementation?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Department of State has worked closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Defense to implement the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) Policy consistently, examine progress in carrying it out, and monitor its effects. The State Department's Six-Month Review on the PLGHA Policy, released in February 2018, recommended further analysis in the future when more data were available that would enable a more-thorough examination of the Policy's implementation.

USAID is working with the Department of State and other affected Federal Departments and Agencies to complete a second review, which we expect to release in May of 2019.

The United States is a leader in assistance for global health, including in its monitoring, evaluation, and use of data for learning. USAID will continue to fund robust efforts to review and evaluate our programming.

**Question:**

Where there are service disruptions due to the Mexico City Policy, will you commit to review any requests for exemptions and what criteria will you use to determine potential exemptions?

**Answer:**

In implementing the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance Policy, we work to minimize disruptions in care while ensuring that U.S. taxpayer dollars do not go to foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that perform, or actively promote, abortion as a method of family planning.

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, may authorize case-by-case exemptions to the Policy.

**Question:**

Will you also commit to making all stakeholder comments public – not just those that support the Mexico City Policy?

**Answer:**

In assisting with the Six-Month Review of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance Policy conducted by the U.S. Department of State, we received comments from stakeholders from all sides of the issue. We do not plan to release stakeholders' submission, as we did not inform commenters that we would disseminate their thoughts publicly.

**Question:**

How much funding is impacted by the 4 prime recipients who refuse to comply with the Mexico City Policy?

**Answer:**

As indicated in the Six-Month Review of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) Policy conducted by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) identified three centrally funded prime partners that declined to agree to the terms of the PLGHA Policy as of September 30, 2017. Two of these prime implementing partners, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Marie Stopes International (MSI), declined to agree to the PLGHA Policy in connection with large, centrally managed family-planning awards. Both of these cooperative agreements started in 2014, and their total estimated costs were \$71.8 million for IPPF and \$74.0 million for MSI. The third prime partner declined to agree to the terms of the PLGHA Policy in connection with a small-grants initiative. The total estimated cost of that award was \$500,000. (The total estimated cost of an award represents the maximum amount of funding USAID could obligate into the grant or cooperative agreement.)

As noted in the Six-Month Review, the fourth prime recipient that declined was a partner of the U.S. Department of Defense.

When the three prime recipients chose not to agree to the PLGHA standard provision, USAID did not provide any additional U.S. Government global health assistance to the organizations. However, the Policy did not affect previously obligated funded, and the partners were able to spend down existing or previously obligated funding while USAID worked to reprogram future funding to other organizations. In such cases, USAID works with the partner

to develop a close-out plan that allows for programmatic continuity and the orderly wind-down of activities.

**Question:**

How many people did the 4 prime recipients who refuse to comply with the Mexico City Policy previously serve, and what measures are you taking to ensure the same number of women and girls receive life-saving health services?

**Answer:**

The United States remains deeply committed to supporting health programs around the world. Preventing child and maternal deaths remains a priority for this Administration.

When the organizations indicated they would not agree to the terms of the Protecting Life in Global Assistance (PLGHA) Policy, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) actively transitioned activities to other qualified partners while minimizing the disruption of care. In addition, while USAID reprogrammed funds to other organizations, the amount of funding directed to the respective recipient countries remained the same.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Where are U.S. contributions to UNFPA fiscal years 2017 and 2018 being reallocated to, and which specific programs are these funds supporting? Will all transferred funds go to our existing international family planning and reproductive health programs?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) invested the funds originally appropriated for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 in innovative and cost-effective approaches to women's health, including activities in voluntary family planning and maternal and reproductive health, with a focus on priority countries with the lowest incomes and highest rates of maternal mortality. USAID devoted a portion of the funds to prevent cervical cancer in the Republics of Malawi and Mozambique, as part of an integrated set of programs to improve women's health.

These investments contribute to the U.S. Government's commitment to increasing women's access to high-quality health care, and advance progress toward the Agency's Priority Goal of ending preventable maternal deaths under the *USAID-State Department Joint Strategic Plan* for FY 2017–2022.

Similarly, USAID will invest the FY 2018 funds originally appropriated for UNFPA in women's health, including activities in voluntary family planning and maternal and reproductive health, and will submit the corresponding Congressional Notification in the coming weeks.

**Question:**

Has there been a lapse in reallocating UNFPA funding to other family planning programs? If so, what is the health impact?

**Answer:**

No, there has not been a lapse in reallocating funds originally designated for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) invested the funds from Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 to support activities in voluntary family planning and maternal and child health in high-need countries and a pilot program to prevent cervical cancer in the Republic of Malawi and Mozambique, as indicated in Congressional Notification

#230

**Question:**

Will the Administration consider a humanitarian exemption for UNFPA for its work in critical settings such as refugee camps?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Government will continue to prioritize the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence (GBV), and care for mothers and children in humanitarian settings. In terms of humanitarian funding, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development continue to work with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have been able to expand their programming in emergency settings to provide maternal and neonatal health care, including emergency obstetric care and services for survivors of GBV.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

What you are doing to ensure that programs benefiting vulnerable children and at-risk populations will be funded and allowed to continue?

**Answer:**

As part of an interagency process to comply with the restrictions laid out in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are undertaking a programmatic and policy review of assistance to, or that benefits, the governments of countries listed on Tier 3 of the State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report* for 2018 to which the President did not grant a waiver. This review is still in process, and our staff would be happy to brief you once it is complete.

**Question:**

Do you plan to exempt non-governmental organizations from adverse impacts of this policy, and if so, what steps are being taken to do so?

**Answer:**

My understanding is that the provisions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) are clear: Assistance in countries listed on Tier 3 of the State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report* that is not assistance to, or to benefit, government institutions is exempt from the TVPA's restrictions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

What, if any, changes or additions would be needed to current regulations and authorities for small U.S.-based non-profits to compete for more USAID contracts, cooperative agreements, grants, and other awards?

**Answer:**

Like other Federal Departments and Agencies, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) awards grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with Part 200 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). USAID policy, codified in Chapter 303 (Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations) of our Automated Directives System (ADS), adopts and expands upon the Government-wide policies.

The Agency continues to adapt approaches within existing regulations and authorities to increase opportunities for small U.S.-based non-profits and other organizations. We have introduced more collaborative and co-creation procurement processes in which organizations can submit concept papers to introduce their proposed program, which helps to reduce barriers to competition and lessen significantly the up-front costs of proposing programs. “Co-creation” is a design approach that brings applicants together to produce a mutually valued outcome collectively by using a participatory process.

We are also taking advantage of authorities to allow us to make payments based on the achievement of milestones, such as the Fixed-Amount Award (FAA), which reduces

administrative burdens and record-keeping requirements for local partners and small, U.S.-based non-profits. Because we are convinced the FAA has the potential for even-greater use with non-profit partners in the future, under the Effective Partnering and Procurement Reform initiative of our Transformation the Agency is exploring ways to use the FAA more widely under current regulations, as well as examining changes to the regulatory restrictions on the FAA that exist.

**Question:**

USAID has a unique procurement need in the federal government. For example, USAID often partners with small, U.S.-based non-profits that assist USAID's mission, a categorization that doesn't exist in other facets of the government. Unfortunately, unlike other places in the government, there is not a specific award mechanism set aside for small, U.S.-based non-profits.

- o What changes are you contemplating to help maximize the use of these small U.S.-based non-profits in USAID procurement?
- o Would you support a set aside for small, U.S.-based non-profits to help them compete for USAID contracts, cooperative agreements, grants and other awards?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working to enable governments, civil society, and the private sector in our partner countries to plan, fund, and manage their own development and partnerships through strengthened capacity and commitment a key factor in the Journey to Self-Reliance and a key rationale for diversifying both the USAID partner base and our modes of partnership. As noted above, under the Effective Partnering and Procurement Reform (EPPR) initiative of our Transformation, USAID has introduced more collaborative and co-creation approaches that reduce barriers to competition and will likely assist in diversifying our partner base. We are exploring ways to

increase flexibility under various approaches to assistance.

In appropriate contexts, USAID is placing a strong emphasis on engaging local partners and directing awards to new or underutilized local and non-local partners. In some contexts, USAID might pursue awards to experienced prime partners to mentor new or underutilized partners, including local partners and U.S.-based non-profits, as sub-awardees. These sub-awardees would perform most of the work, and therefore receive the majority of the funding, under the award.

USAID has just released its intention to issue the New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Annual Program Statement (APS) and solicitation on its public Business Forecast. The NPI APS will help our field Missions and other Operating Units engage new and underutilized partners to expand and amplify the Agency's work, particularly in contexts at risk of, or recovering from, violent conflict. Through a series of funding opportunities designed by technical and regional Bureaus, the NPI APS will initiate competitions through addenda published by Operating Units and Missions to target new and local partners to meet shared, country-level objectives using collaborative approaches and co-creation methodologies. As noted above, "co-creation" is a design approach that brings applicants together to collectively produce a mutually valued outcome using a participatory process.

The key definitions related to the NPI are the following:

- "New Partner": An individual or organization that has not received any funding from USAID as a prime partner over the last five years.
- "Underutilized Partner": An individual or organization that has received less than \$25 million over the past five years from USAID, and delivered more total funding in private development assistance than it has received from USAID in financial awards over the past five years.

- “Local Entity”: An individual or organization that: (1) Is legally organized under the laws of a country that is receiving assistance from USAID; (2) Has as its principal place of business or operations in a country that is receiving assistance from USAID; (3) Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country that is receiving assistance from USAID; and, (4) is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country that is receiving assistance from USAID.
- “Locally Established Partner”: An organization (indigenous, U.S., or international) that (1) provides private development assistance with funding from sources other than the U.S. Government; and, (2) works through locally led operations to enhance the capabilities and commitments of organizations in partner countries.

Following this initial NPI solicitation, which supports the objectives of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Affairs, USAID will launch additional vehicles related to the objectives of individual Missions, the Bureau for Global Health, and other USAID technical Bureaus.

Similar to the way USAID uses various tools to increase our use of U.S.-based small businesses, USAID is exploring approaches for incentivizing our Operating Units to make greater investments in new and underutilized organizations including small, U.S.-based non-profits.

**Question:**

In your recent report on Partnering and Procurement Reform, you identified that you wanted to incentivize and strengthen engagement with the private sector for the purposes of building enduring capacity for development. What concrete steps are you taking to accomplish this with respect to U.S.-based non-profits?

**Answer:**

As described above, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will be implementing the New Partnerships Initiative, a component of which will focus on incentivizing and strengthening private-sector engagement with U.S.-based non-profits.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The Yemeni crisis is in many ways a children's crisis. According to NGO Save the Children, 85,000 children may have died from malnutrition in Yemen since 2015, and 1 in every 10 children in Yemen is now displaced. The UN has just stated that 2018 saw a 51-percent increase in killing and maiming of children, and that more than 4 million children cannot currently access education. What is the U.S. Government's strategy to ensure children's unique needs are prioritized in the short-term, while laying the groundwork for a stable future?

**Answer:**

Children face many challenges in Yemen, including malnutrition, trauma, exposure to diseases such as cholera, and lack of access to schools. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working to address these threats through our humanitarian and development programs:

The United States is one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance in Yemen, having provided over \$720 million in humanitarian aid since October 2017. This assistance includes funding for medical care; the provision of safe drinking water, hygiene kits, and medical supplies to fight the spread of disease; and food programs. USAID's investments also address a variety of protection challenges faced by the children of Yemen, including gender-based violence (GBV), early marriage, and displacement. USAID is financing child-protection services and comprehensive support to strengthen children's coping mechanisms; safe healing and learning spaces; case-management and psychosocial support for GBV; and community awareness of harmful practices, such as child marriage. USAID also supports the

treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in Yemeni children under five years of age by purchasing ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) and providing them to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In 2019, USAID's support to UNICEF will ensure the availability of RUTF to treat 72,000 children with SAM in 10 Governorates: Abyan, Ad Dali', Aden, Al-Hudaydah, Al- Mahrah, Hadramawt, Lahij, Shabwah, Socotra, and Ta'izz.

While school feeding is an inherently cost-ineffective program to support education, food assistance, and livelihoods, given the grim conditions in Yemen, in Fiscal Year 2018, USAID launched a \$14.3 million school feeding initiative through the UN World Food Programme to reach children in the hardest-hit Governorates. The program is reaching over 450,000 children over the course of this school year and working with administrators in the Governorates to monitor the program and educate school officials on nutrition as well as procurement.

USAID's education program in Yemen includes two major programs: The Education in Emergencies Response and the Out-of-School Children and Youth Programs. Among many interventions, these programs provide psychosocial support to address the immediate issues children face as they deal with the after-effects of the trauma they have endured during the conflict. Further, the programs finance matriculation exams, ensure school buildings are safe for boys and girls, and address the chronic lack of access to schools so that over 700,000 out-of-school children and youth can receive quality education. In addition, in coordination with other donors USAID is laying the foundation for a stable future by developing a Transitional

Education-Support Project, which aims to strengthen the capacity of the Yemeni Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education, and the access to, and the safety of, schools.

In the health sector, USAID has launched an activity that will collect and use survey data in Yemen on the two most-vital public-health indicators in assessing the severity of a humanitarian crisis and informing early recovery and development: The nutritional status of children under five years of age and the mortality rate of the population. USAID will provide the findings to our partners that are working in nutrition, maternal and child health, and broader health activities to improve their understanding, funding, and actions that link nutrition and family health, and to sharpen the design of multi-sectoral programs to achieve optimum nutrition results.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In October of 2017, on International Day of the Girl Child, the President issued a statement saying that “We commit to upholding the God-given rights of all and working to ensure that every girl is born into a world where she is free to live her life to the fullest.” What is USAID doing to ensure that the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls is being implemented?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the lead organization for the implementation of the *U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls* across sectors, including health, education, water, and sanitation. In line with the Administration’s priorities on women’s economic empowerment, USAID is also building upon its current programming to promote youth entrepreneurship for girls. USAID’s investments reflect a cross-sectoral effort to map the overlapping areas of vulnerability in an adolescent girl’s life that pose barriers to her ability to maximize her opportunities, access information and services, and hold decision-making authority. USAID refers to this as a “whole-of-girl approach,” defined as enhancing girls’ access to high-quality education in safe environments; providing economic opportunities and incentives for girls and their families; empowering girls with information, skills, services, and support; and mobilizing and educating communities about the value and power of girls and young women.

Adolescent girls often face barriers to gain access to health and education, but they are a fundamental population for unlocking the full potential of societies. The full participation of adolescent girls in development contributes to building resilient, democratic societies;

improving health and nutrition outcomes; and strengthening economies. The Agency's programs address the differentiated needs of girls in specific stages of adolescence, and recognize that the challenges young adolescents encounter are distinct from those experienced by older girls who are approaching adulthood.

USAID's implementation plan for the *U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls* requires that programs designed to advance adolescent girls' development meet three goals of the Agency's "whole-of-girl approach": 1) Reducing gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefit from resources, wealth, opportunities, and services—economic, social, political, and cultural; 2) Reducing gender-based violence and mitigating its harmful effects on individuals and communities; and, 3) Increasing the capacity of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.

Listed below are a few concrete examples of USAID's investments that support adolescent girls:

- USAID-funded programs for adolescent girls in Malawi and Tanzania aim to increase and retain the enrollment of adolescent girls in school, as well as build the evidence base for programming directed at them. USAID oversees an ongoing evaluation of both programs to determine the results of interventions aimed at increasing girls' enrollment and retention in secondary school, improving parenting skills, motivating parents to invest in their daughters' education, and reducing school-related gender-based violence.
- The Spring Accelerator is a strategic partnership among the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, the Nike Foundation, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia, and USAID to improve the welfare of adolescent girls in East Africa and Asia. Through financial and technical assistance to entrepreneurs, Spring enables viable firms to develop goods and services that help girls, directly or indirectly, to learn, save, and earn in safety. The project is on track to benefit at least 200,000 girls by 2020.
- Improving the management of menstrual hygiene, such as ensuring separate toilets for girls and sanitary supplies at school, increases regular attendance and lessens the likelihood girls will drop out of school. In areas affected by conflict and crisis, such as South Sudan, USAID's partners distribute dignity kits for adolescent girls and create girl-friendly facilities for water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools, to make them

better and safer for girls.

USAID implements the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) program under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a public-private partnership to address the disproportionately high risk that adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa will acquire HIV. In 2018, in the ten original PEPFAR DREAMS countries, HIV diagnoses among adolescent girls and young women continued to decline in 85 percent of the communities/Districts with the highest burden of HIV that are implementing DREAMS. USAID and other Federal Departments and Agencies have now brought DREAMS to 15 countries.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Each year, 12 million girls are married before they turn 18. This has enormous negative impacts on their health, economic and physical security, and usually means the end of their education, adding to the 130 million girls who are not in school but should be. According to UNICEF, the root cause of this issue is gender inequality – the fact that girls are not valued as much as boys. What is USAID doing to combat child marriage, address the needs of already married girls and to get at the root causes of child marriage globally?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes the harmful impact associated with child, early or forced marriage (CEFM), and attributed at least \$11 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 to address it. To tackle this issue, USAID has looked to fund programming to prevent and respond to CEFM through a multi-pronged approach. Not only does USAID support stand-alone CEFM activities, but we work to integrate CEFM activities in four areas: education and economic opportunities, health, regulatory reform, and public- awareness campaigns.

USAID finances partners to provide economic livelihood opportunities to reduce economic hardship on families that create perverse incentives for families to marry off or sell their female children. USAID also funds activities aimed at keeping adolescent girls in school, as research shows that students who drop out of school are at increased risk of CEFM. USAID' partners provide health-related care and support to young girls as a result of child marriage. For example, USAID's partners offer care for young girls who become

pregnant and deliver before their bodies are fully matured, as they are more likely to develop obstetric fistula (OF) than older women. Additionally, poverty and malnutrition among children contribute to the condition of stunting (in which one's body does not fully mature), which exacerbates OF.

Laws and policies play an essential part in preventing CEFM. USAID works with national governments around the world to establish and implement legal regimes to protect women and children from entering early and forced marriages. USAID's activities work to increase female participation in government to be change-makers and strengthen laws and policies on the rights of women and children. Further, USAID works to assist governments in the implementation of laws and to strengthen existing systems (*e.g.*, child-protection services) to reduce CEFM.

Finally, USAID believes that community education is a critical component to preventing and ending CEFM. USAID funds partners to disseminate protocols; provide training to community stakeholders, parents, and other community members on the warning signs of CEFM; and work directly with family members and the children themselves.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative launched earlier this month promises to promote women's economic empowerment around the world, and included a \$50 million fund to be housed at USAID. Notably, the Initiative does not include access to women's health, which is critical to their economic empowerment.

Is this new funding over and in addition to existing funds to support gender equality and women's economic empowerment globally?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will continue working toward equality between men and women and strengthen women's economic empowerment through both the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP) and our existing programs. These funds Presidential Advisor Ivanka Trump and I announced as part of the W- GDP are in addition to the existing funds to promote equality between men and women and advance women's empowerment globally. The full \$50 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 is from the Economic Support Fund account.

The W-GDP Fund is not the total sum of resources USAID will dedicate to women's economic empowerment. For example, USAID attributed \$229 million in FY 2017 towards programming to support women's economic empowerment, and this broader work will continue. All the Agency's programming will align with the three Pillars of the W-GDP, discussed further below, and will include expanded collaboration with the U.S. Government interagency, the private sector, and other development partners.

**Question:**

How will the initiative be carried out within USAID in order to reach its goal of empowering 50 million women by 2025?

**Answer:**

The participating U.S. Government Agencies and Departments will implement the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP) by organizing and increasing their programming to achieve the ambitious goal of benefitting 50 million women by 2025.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will contribute to the implementation of the W-GDP by aligning our broad portfolio of activities to promote women's economic empowerment across the Agency with the goals of the Initiative. With an initial \$50 million in funds from Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the new W-GDP Fund at USAID will finance innovative and effective programs that advance women's economic empowerment, including through an Incentive Fund of \$20 million dedicated to incentivize new programming at USAID field Missions, including partnerships with government agencies and the private sector; a Women's Impact Livelihood Bond II, which will provide a partial guarantee of \$100 million in loans to women entrepreneurs and businesses that support women in South and Southeast Asia; and an expansion of the Engendering Utilities Partnership to increase the participation and leadership of women in the energy sector in Malawi, Mozambique, Kosovo, El Salvador, Ghana, and Liberia.

For greater impact and long-term sustainability, the USAID-led W-GDP Fund will prioritize activities that incorporate partnership with the private sector, other participants from the U.S. Government interagency, and other development partners to leverage

additional funding, resources, and development networks for greater impact.

Finally, the W-GDP will apply across USAID's wide portfolio. Pillar 3 addresses the enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, which recognizes the impact of women's health on their economic opportunities. The Agency's already extensive work on women's health issues, including through the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) Initiative of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), can thus work in tandem with USAID's economic-growth goals.

**Question:**

The White House's initiative to aid women contains a modest \$50 million to aid 50 million women, and it is to come from existing funds. How will USAID direct these funds to reach the goals of the initiative?

**Answer:**

During the first year of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP), the \$50 million W-GDP Fund, financed with resources from Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, will make the following investments:

- Create an incentive fund of \$20 million for USAID Missions and Operating Units to obtain additional resources to address one or more of the three W-GDP Pillars through new or existing activities:
  - The USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment will award the funds through a competitive call for concept notes, and the recipient Missions and Operating Units will manage the resulting programs; and
- Devote \$30 million to catalyzing private sector and interagency partnerships, such as the recently announced Memorandum of Understanding with the United Parcel Service to enhance women's skills in trade.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#9)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In January 2019, the Administration signed into law the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, which directs USAID to prioritize gender equality in its programming. What changes is USAID making to implement the legislation?

**Answer:**

The Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act codifies in statute requirements for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to integrate equality between men and women and women's empowerment throughout USAID's Program Cycle, use gender analysis to inform strategies and the design of programs, and use standard indicators. USAID will apply the requirements of the WEEE Act to strengthen its programming guidance and revise processes to track compliance.

The WEEE Act also reaffirms the three existing objectives laid out in the Agency's existing Gender Equality and Female-Empowerment Policy:

- Reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefit from resources, wealth, opportunities and services - economic, social, political, and cultural;
- Reduce gender-based violence, and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities; and
- Increase the capability of women and girls to realize their rights; determine their life outcomes; and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.

The law also enhances focus on property rights and land tenure for women, and access to education by women and girls.

USAID is determining how to best meet the aspects of the law that concern micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to determine what reporting requirements we can fulfill with existing data and what additional information is required. Once the analysis is complete, the Agency will make the most-efficient changes possible to meet the MSME aspects of the bill and draft new Agency guidance to incorporate them within our existing processes. This could include adjusting the Microenterprise Key Issue and other Agency tools that have to do with the attribution of spending within our Country Operating Plans.

Finally, the Agency has begun a process to update our Gender Policy, which will reflect the Administration's priorities and respond to the objectives outlined in the WEEE Act. We will continue to work across the Agency to best capture the depth and breadth of our efforts to meet the requirements noted in the WEEE Act.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#10)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In 2014 there was an extensive review of USAID's Maternal and Child Health programs that called it fractured and unable to meet the global goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths as it was then operating. A High-Level Blue-Ribbon Panel then gave a series of recommended reforms necessary to ensure higher levels of coordination and impact for US programs. One of the clear reforms was to streamline and make maternal and child health programs more effective to save more lives, including installing a coordinator with the power to budget, staff, and plan across maternal and child health and nutrition programs.

Why was the Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator position set to be eliminated? Is ending preventable child and maternal deaths a priority policy goal of this administration?

**Answer:**

As a result of a consultative review with affected Bureau managers, partners, and other external stakeholders, I proposed a series of structural changes across the Agency – including the elimination of the Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator position – to create a more field- driven, functionally aligned, and responsive organization. This proposed restructuring would enable the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to keep pace with the quick- changing international environment. USAID must remain dynamic and relevant by transforming its structure, workforce and programs to help advance host-country partners on their Journey to Self-Reliance.

Ending preventable child and maternal deaths will continue to be a core priority for the Global Health Bureau and the rest of USAID. In fact, I have ensured that maternal and child health is one of the three, USAID-specific Agency Priority Goals (APGs) in the U.S. Department of State-USAID *Joint Strategic Plan*. The APG is as follows: By September 30,

2019, U.S. global leadership and assistance to prevent child and maternal deaths will annually reduce under- five mortality in 25 maternal and child health U.S. Government-priority countries by an average of two deaths per 1000 live births per year as compared to 2017. After the Coordinator position is eliminated, a Deputy Assistant Administrator within the Bureau for Global Health who oversees the Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Office will take on the Coordinator's former functions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#11)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Women face many barriers to full political participation, including violence. In FY20, how will USAID work to eliminate violence against women in elections?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been a leader in developing innovative approaches to counter the violence, aggression, and systematic abuse women sometimes face when engaging in political and electoral processes. In an effort to understand and address the ways in which electoral violence creates a barrier to women's participation, USAID funded the development of the Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) Framework to identify and address the unique issues related to gender-based election violence. This assessment and methodology, piloted in Haiti, includes a monitoring tool for documenting such violence, and practical recommendations to address it. Building on this initiative, USAID is now financing the creation of a pilot tool to monitor, report, and respond to online gender-based election violence. Adapting existing social-listening tools, this project will gather information on on-line violence against women in political and electoral process and trends. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, the global tool will assist USAID and its implementing partners to recognize earlier and mitigate all forms of violence aimed at undermining the full political participation of women.

In parallel, in the event of unanticipated needs or windows of opportunity, USAID Missions can apply for additional funds from the Elections and Political Processes Fund.

Illustrative examples of anticipated FY 2020 activities include help to raise awareness of, and mitigate, violence against women in elections through financing domestic election observation and early-warning networks, civic and voter education, reporting on elections by independent professional media, codes of conduct for political parties, and the gender-sensitive administration of elections.

**Question:**

In FY 2020, how will USAID mainstream LGBTQ+ issues throughout its programming, as well as protect and empower LGBTQ+ people facing marginalization?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to inclusive development, the concept that all people, regardless of their identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies, and that their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes. This includes marginalized groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people. In the last year, USAID has launched programmatic guidance and trainings on inclusive development, and started tracking our partner countries' commitment to inclusive development through our Journey to Self-Reliance metrics. These efforts will continue in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

USAID also leads specific efforts to help protect LGBTI people in developing countries from violence, discrimination, stigma, and criminalization. We focus our efforts on funding the following: 1) data-collection and research to inform policy; 2) strategic communications efforts to reduce stigma; 3) context-specific projects in the most-difficult climates; and, 4) emergency-response grants. For example, in 2018 USAID financed the release of three ground-breaking research reports that, for the first time, allowed us to quantify anti-LGBTI stigma levels in developing countries and understand the relationship

between stigma, legal inclusion, and economic development. Another example is the provision of direct funding to a country-level project in Bangladesh that helps a local LGBTI civil-society organization advance protections from anti-LGBTI violence and discrimination.

USAID almost always does this work in partnership with other organizations. An example is the LGBTI Global Development Partnership, which works in 14 countries and leverages the technical expertise and financial contributions of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and many private-sector partners. These efforts will continue in FY 2020.

**Question:**

Please explain how, in FY20, USAID will promote access to democracy for marginalized people and civil society organizations, especially those who are or support LGBTQ+ people.

**Answer:**

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, through both the Human-Rights Grants Program and a proposed new public-private partnership co-funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and private-sector partners, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) intends to support civil-society organizations (CSOs) that work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in developing countries - particularly those in the most-difficult contexts - to advocate for protections from violence, discrimination, stigma, and criminalization. USAID supports these CSOs' efforts by equipping them with 1) valuable data and research to inform and influence policy; and, 2) strategic messaging tools they can deploy to reduce anti-LGBTI stigma and create an enabling environment for more-inclusive democracy.

USAID also provides targeted organizational capacity assistance and financial support to local organizations aimed at enabling LGBTI individuals to engage in politics in

challenging contexts. Support includes analyses of attitudes that underlie the political participation of the LGBTI community and help to counter negative public perceptions of the group. In FY 2020, USAID will continue this assistance to reduce barriers to the meaningful political participation of LGBTI communities.

**Question:**

In FY20, how will USAID ensure its Democracy, Rights and Governance programming fully considers the unique needs of women and girls, particularly in emerging democracies?

**Answer:**

The design of all democracy, human rights, and governance programs at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) must consider the unique needs of women, men, girls, and boys. For example, the application criteria for USAID's Elections and Political Processes Fund (EPP Fund) require the thoughtful integration of equality between women and men and female empowerment into the main objectives, activities, and monitoring-and-evaluation plans of all awards. Support for women's civic and political participation is also part of USAID's Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) program through an objective that promotes the participation of all citizens, especially women, in their political systems, and through a cross-cutting objective focused on the political empowerment of women and other traditionally marginalized groups. Also through GEPT, USAID provides targeted organizational-capacity assistance and financial support to local organizations that focus on enhancing the political inclusion of women. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, USAID will fund dozens of local groups in emerging democracies as they strive to reduce barriers for women to participate meaningfully in electoral and political processes.

**Question:**

How is USAID implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Act, which became law in October 2017? Specifically, how is USAID:

- Providing technical assistance, training, and logistical support to female negotiators, mediators, peace builders, and stakeholders;
- Addressing security-related barriers to the meaningful participation of women;
- Supporting the training, education, and mobilization of men and boys as partners in support of the meaningful participation of women;
- Encouraging the development of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms that are inclusive of the experiences and perspectives of women and girls; and
- Expanding and applying gender analysis, as appropriate, to improve program design and targeting?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency's for International Development (USAID) is implementing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act of 2017 through dedicated programming designed to improve the prospects for peace and security by enhancing women's participation in critical decision-making processes and protecting women and girls from violence in countries affected by crisis, conflict, and violent extremism. The Agency also funds training and technical assistance to increase the capacity of USAID's staff and partners to integrate the objectives of the WPS Act in their work.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, USAID's WPS activities supported the participation of over 5,000 women in peace-building processes through technical assistance, training, and logistical support to women negotiators and peace-builders. For example, in Burma USAID created a rapid-response fund to provide women with childcare, transportation, training, and other resources they needed to attend and influence process related to the National Dialogue on peace. The USAID-financed Women's Participation Fund in Burma helped increase women's participation in the last formal peace dialogue from 17 percent to 22 percent, and

the report on WPS issued by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2018 highlighted it as a best practice.

In fragile and conflict-affected settings, USAID's investments address security-related barriers to women's meaningful participation, and support justice and accountability mechanisms that are inclusive of the needs and perspectives of women and girls. For example, the Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) program supports inclusive political participation by women in conflict-prone environments through targeted funding to local groups in countries such as Tanzania and México and in the South African Development Community (SADC). Under the GEPT, USAID is also developing a tool to monitor and respond to growing violence against women on-line during elections.

The protection and promotion of human rights is also critical to stability and stopping cycles of violence. In Zimbabwe, USAID's programming assists local organizations to monitor the deteriorating human-rights situation, and channels resources and services to survivors of human-rights abuses, including women and youth.

The rise of violent extremism and terrorism has further complicated security challenges for women's meaningful participation in peace and political processes. In FY 2018, USAID initiated significant new programming to address the needs of women and girls affected by violent extremism and terrorism. For example, in Niger activities will increase women's leadership and participation in processes to prevent and mitigate violent extremism in vulnerable communities, as well as help communities identify and prioritize services for women and girls.

Globally, USAID continues to engage men and boys as equal partners and allies in increasing women's participation. For example, USAID funded the development of the Male

Allies for Leadership Equality (MALE) training module, which works to sensitize both male and female leaders to the importance of working together to lead political processes and democratic development. It also provides an organized approach to training men on women's rights and leadership, and demonstrates how to create opportunities for alliances and coalitions between men and women who are working on democracy and citizen-responsive governance.

USAID continues to use gender analysis as an essential tool for examining the different roles that women and men play in societies, and for designing programming that responds to their differing needs, constraints, and opportunities. The Agency requires that a gender analysis inform all country strategies and projects, including those related to WPS. The Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, which Congress passed in December 2018 and President Trump signed into law in January 2019, reinforces this requirement. In practice, gender analyses for WPS-related activities help identify key areas for the empowerment of women and girls and crucial points of entry for targeted interventions that address their specific needs.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
USAID Administrator Mark Green by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#12)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs  
Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In 2018, USAID launched the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM) to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse, and to prevent and address sexual misconduct in the workplace. What is the AAPSM's progress in leading efforts to eradicate sexual misconduct?

**Answer:**

Over the past year, the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM) has made important strides toward preventing and addressing sexual misconduct within the workplace and programs of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Our accomplishments have included updating the clauses and standard provisions of our grants and cooperative agreements with our implementing partners to ensure the codes of conduct of the recipients of our funds are consistent with international standards related to sexual exploitation and abuse; conducting comprehensive policy-gap analyses for both our internal workplace policies and partner requirements, which are influencing the development of two new policies that will be finalized this year; developing and releasing toolkits for employees and managers that include policies, resources, and tools related to preventing and addressing sexual misconduct; negotiating and signing groundbreaking international donor commitments on sexual exploitation and abuse; and conducting global consultations with USAID staff and implementing partners to raise awareness. A full accounting of the AAPSM's progress, along with the Employee Toolkit and Managers' Toolkit, is available at:

<https://www.usaid.gov/PreventingSexualMisconduct>.

**Question:**

How has USAID engaged employees and contractors to evaluate knowledge of current policies and practices, feelings toward the prevalence of sexual misconduct and faith in the institution to hold perpetrators accountable, and recommendations for changes as they relate to sexual misconduct? Will USAID conduct climate surveys to evaluate these factors?

**Answer:**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM), has engaged partners and staff through a number of fora over the past year. In March 2018, I hosted a Forum on Preventing Sexual Misconduct, which brought together senior USAID staff, the USAID Inspector General, and representatives from key implementing partners, including non-governmental organizations, private contractors, and the United Nations, to discuss these issues. I launched the AAPSM at the Forum, and then directed USAID Mission Directors around the world to conduct similar consultations with implementing partners. Participants in these consultations included more than 1,000 representatives from NGOs, 600 representatives from private contracting companies, and 150 representatives from public international organizations. The findings from these consultations informed subsequent AAPSM work, including the need to clarify roles and responsibilities, better understand on-the-ground dynamics drive sexual exploitation and abuse, provide updated policies and guidance, and to enact a broader culture change centered on respect, inclusion, and accountability within our workplace and programs.

Since then, the AAPSM has continued engaging with USAID staff and partners in a number of ways, including participating in and hosting events through the Society for International Development, the Professional Services Council - Council of International Development Companies, Industry Engagement with the International Development Ethics

Professionals (INDEP) Working Group, the World Bank's Law, Justice and Development Week, convening a technical innovation workshop with academicians and implementing partners to explore methodologies for improving detection and reporting of sexual misconduct in our aid programs, as well as conducting a USAID-specific session at the 2018 USAID Global Mission Directors Conference. The AAPSM itself is composed of a diverse group of volunteer staff from across the Agency, including USAID Missions in the field, who have been involved in developing and framing the vision and goals for our work, as well as participating in the review, revision, and implementation of new Agency policy changes and requirements. Throughout this work, Administrator Green has also been regularly communicating updates on the AAPSM to all staff and implementing partners and has consistently emphasized the importance of this issue as central to the achievement of the Agency's mission.

In recognition of the AAPSM's one-year anniversary, in April 2019 Administrator Green will direct USAID Mission Directors worldwide and Assistant Administrators in Washington, D.C., to conduct staff and partner consultations to build on the prior year's engagements. In addition, USAID will conduct focus groups in select USAID Missions around the world in early summer 2019 to further inform the AAPSM's work.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2019.

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL  
YEAR 2020**

**WITNESS**

**HON. MIKE POMPEO, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LOWEY**

The CHAIRWOMAN. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs will come to order.

Secretary Pompeo, while it has taken some time for you to come before the subcommittee, and we realize you are traveling all around the world, I do want to thank you for joining us today. It is important that this subcommittee, with direct jurisdiction over your Department's funding, hears from you on the fiscal year 2020 budget.

Before I address the President's inadequate 2020 budget request, I must respond to the Mexico City announcement you made yesterday. Your additional expansion of the Global Gag Rule compromises our ability to support comprehensive, life-saving care to those most in need. International NGOs should not be forced to choose between accepting life-saving assistance from the United States or providing legal comprehensive care with their own funds. This policy expansion could dramatically impede the effectiveness of our foreign assistance and life-saving programs. Not to mention this type of coercion runs contrary to the basic tenets of freedom that our country was founded upon. Excuse me. I hope you are good and healthy and don't have this cough.

Now, I want to address your recent comment that President Trump has ensured that the State Department has the resources it needs. Frankly, I find it hard to fathom when his first two budgets propose cuts to diplomacy and development by more than 30 percent and the current request proposes a cut of 21 percent. These are resources that the State Department needs. The State Department has never had to operate under the draconian levels proposed by the President as they have never been approved by the House even in the Republican majority.

This committee consistently provides bipartisan support to maintain United States global leadership. I am astonished that 3 years into his administration, the President still does not appreciate the merits of sustained investments in diplomacy and development.

Mr. Secretary, I have seen firsthand how United States foreign assistance alleviates suffering and promotes stability. Our efforts, as you well know, save lives, promote good will and partnership, and support American investments and national security.

If the President's budget were enacted, it would undermine U.S. leadership and stymie worldwide efforts to counter violent extre-

mism, terrorism, and disinformation. As you know, there is tremendous turmoil around the globe, including increased attacks on democratic principles such as: freedom of the press; the rule of law and the right to free and fair elections; millions of refugees and internally displaced persons throughout the world; the chaotic situation in Venezuela; the continuing reign of terror of the murderous dictator Bashar al-Assad in Syria; a rapidly expanding global population, which further exacerbates conditions that contribute to hunger and poverty, which can lead to conflict and migration; the spread of infectious and neglected tropical diseases, some of which are becoming drug resistant; and, lastly, ongoing threats posed by North Korea, Russia, Iran, and China that undermine the security and prosperity of the United States and our allies.

Mr. Secretary, not one of these dangers is positively addressed by shortchanging the federal agencies tasked with executing United States foreign policy. Additionally, I am concerned about the long-term damage this administration is inflicting on State and USAID through policies that reduce response time, result in inadequate staffing levels and low-staff morale, and prevent partnerships with some of the most capable and experienced implementers.

There is no better example than the Kemp-Kasten determination against UNFPA which undermines our effectiveness, making it harder to reach people who need us the most.

I am also very troubled that President Trump seems to view foreign assistance as a reward to our friends and its withdrawal as punishment to our enemies. Moreover, the administration's approach to multilateral engagement at the United Nations, the World Bank, and elsewhere has been reactionary and shortsighted at best.

These self-inflicted constraints compromise the quality of our efforts, make it harder to maintain American leadership in the world, create risk to our national security and are a disservice to the American taxpayer.

Our national security is strongest when development, diplomacy and defense are all well-funded and equally prioritized. As Chairwoman, I intend to work with my colleagues to reject the insufficient request and maintain responsible investments in foreign aid.

Before we move to your testimony, I would be delighted to turn to Mr. Rogers, the Ranking Member, for his opening statement.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

#### OPENING REMARKS OF MR. ROGERS

Mr. Secretary, welcome back to your old stomping grounds, the House, on the Hill. We are proud of your service here in the House when you were here, and we are delighted to see one of us has—done good.

Mr. Secretary, I firmly believe that strong investments in diplomatic and development programs are a central component of our national security. In fact, our most senior military commanders have told us time and again that these critical tools help provide the means by which we prevent the need for military intervention. That is why I was once again disappointed, frankly, after reviewing the budget request for programs funded by this subcommittee. You say in your congressional budget justification that the request

prioritizes the security of U.S. citizens, increases American prosperity, and supports our allies and partners. I believe you would see more support in Congress if the proposed funding level matched that rhetoric.

Instead, the request is a cut of nearly \$11.5 billion, 21 percent, from fiscal year 2019. Although this year's international affairs request represents some improvements from the previous two fiscal years, it is still woefully inadequate to achieve the administration's foreign policy and national security goals. I wholeheartedly agree that taxpayer dollars must be used wisely and that programs need to be more effective and efficient. Lord, yes. I am committed to working with you and the State Department to find the best ways to do that. But if we were to accept cuts of the magnitude proposed, it would make our nation less safe, and make it harder to achieve the effectiveness we all seek. In particular, deep reductions are proposed to important priorities like security assistance, global health, democracy promotion and even lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

These programs demonstrate the character of our country. Given what the world looks like right now, this approach seems detached from reality. During a time of record displacement of individuals and families, a growing number of countries facing instability and rising geopolitical tensions, U.S. leadership abroad is even more critical. The budget request we have before us will simply not get that job done.

That being said, there are some proposals in your budget I fully support and hope we can pass, including the \$3.3 billion for Israel, reflecting our steadfast commitment to Israel's security and military strength. I am also pleased to see \$1.3 billion requested for Egypt's Foreign Military Financing. Yesterday, we celebrated 40 years of peace between these two American allies, who have achieved much together, despite perpetually high tensions in that region. I appreciate your continued prioritization of these relations, Mr. Secretary.

I also note that the budget request appears to have moved beyond the proposed cuts of personnel levels we have seen in prior years. There is still a long way to go to make up lost ground from the hiring freeze but I applaud this progress, nonetheless.

Another priority is the management and oversight of the Department. I continue to believe there needs to be a position at the highest levels that brings together both operations and assistance. And you and I have had this conversation several times. But right now, these two sides of the House don't really talk. And that continues to hamper the Department's ability to address its management challenges.

Ultimately, the Legislative Branch has the responsibility to equip leaders like yourself with the resources that you need to advance our economic and security interests. And so we are eager to hear from you on these important funding issues today.

I also look forward to hearing about your travels. You have just returned from the Middle East. We are interested in your impressions while there. Iran's continued nuclear pursuits, missile development, and support for terrorist activity, weigh heavily on our minds as well as yours.

Before that trip, you were in Asia. We all want to see North Korea denuclearize and hope that the people of North Korea might one day experience freedom and prosperity. China's role in how that turns out is questionable as are their motives throughout the globe. The Chinese government's practice of predatory lending to developing countries is not just immoral, it has real security consequences for our partners in the region and beyond. I may return to that during the question period but I fear much of the world is not awakened to the reality of the potential damage China could do to international security.

You have also visited Europe this year so we would appreciate your update on how we can help assure and defend our allies and partners in Europe. The Russian bear only understands strength. We must do everything in our power to help our friends in Europe stand strong to resist rampant Russian aggression on all fronts.

Lastly, you returned from Latin America at the beginning of January. The outcome of the current crisis in Venezuela will shape the future of that region for decades to come. We must remain in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and the democratic interim government. A free and democratic Venezuela that can restore what once was a thriving economy is the first step to addressing many of the other challenges in the neighborhood, including combating transnational criminal organizations and stopping the flow of drugs into this country. We can't let Maduro and his cronies further destabilize that whole region.

Finally, before I close, I want you to know you have my unwavering support for your efforts to protect the rights of the unborn. We were not provided with the details of your announcement yesterday, but I look forward to receiving a full readout of your plans.

Secretary Pompeo, I want to thank you again for your service to our country as well as the men and women of the Department. I hope you will continue to engage with our subcommittee as we begin our work for fiscal year 2020. This is a partnership and your input is appreciated and valued. And we will be a true partner with you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

After the secretary presents his testimony, I will call on members based on seniority of members present when the hearing was called to order. I will alternate between majority and minority. Each member is asked to keep questions to within 5 minutes per round; we will be doing two rounds today.

Mr. Secretary, we will be happy to place your full testimony in the record. If you would be kind enough to summarize your oral statement, I want to make sure we leave enough time to get to everyone's questions. But Secretary Pompeo, please proceed as you wish.

Secretary POMPEO. Chairwoman Lowey, thank you. I will absolutely summarize.

#### OPENING REMARKS OF SECRETARY POMPEO

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, thank you. Distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for being with me this morning and thanks for the opportunity to discuss the

president's F.Y. 2020 budget. I am glad I am here. It is the first hearing in front of the 116th Congress and I am glad it is with you all.

In order to support the president's National Security Strategy and achieve our foreign policy goals, we this year submitted a request for \$40 billion for the State Department and USAID. It will protect our citizens at home and abroad and advance American prosperity and values. It will support our allies and partners overseas. And you should know there are difficult choices when budgets are to be made. You face these constraints too and we should always be mindful of the burden that American taxpayers have and our obligation to deliver exceptional results on their behalf.

This budget request will help us achieve our diplomatic goals in several ways. First, we will make sure that China and Russia cannot gain a strategic advantage, in an era of renewed Great Power Competition; we will continue our progress towards the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea; and we will support the people of Venezuela as they work toward a peaceful restoration of democracy and prosperity in their country.

We will also continue to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran's maligned behavior and we will help our allies and partners become more secure and economically self-reliant. And I will also make sure that our world-class diplomatic personnel have the resources they need to execute American diplomacy in the 21st century.

I look forward to continuing to work with each of you on these key foreign policy priorities and many more issues as well. I want to allow enough time for questions, so I will keep these remarks short.

With that, I look forward to taking questions from you, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and other members of your committee. Thank you.

[The information follows:]

**SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO  
WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED  
PROGRAMS  
ON THE FY 2020 BUDGET  
MARCH 27, 2019**

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the Administration's FY 2020 budget request for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

To support our National Security Strategy and achieve our foreign policy goals, the President has submitted an FY 2020 budget request of \$40 billion for the State Department and USAID.

The proposed request will allow us to protect our citizens at home and abroad, advance American prosperity and values, and support our allies and partners overseas.

It will promote partner countries' economic and security self-reliance as they begin to transition away from U.S. assistance programs, which the American people have generously underwritten for decades.

We make this request mindful of the burden on American taxpayers, and our obligation to deliver exceptional results on their behalf.

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In an era of great power competition, the State Department and USAID's work is key to our security, the protection of our freedoms, and the promotion of American values.

China is proactively applying its power and exerting its influence in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Under President Trump's leadership, the United States is responding decisively to China's aggressive actions. The United States' future security, prosperity, and leadership depends on maintaining a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific. To advance the Indo-Pacific strategy, the budget request nearly doubles U.S. foreign assistance resources targeting this crucial area compared to the FY 2019 request.

Russia poses threats that have evolved beyond external or military aggression, and now include influence operations targeting America and the Western world. This budget prioritizes countering Russian malign influence in Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia, and further strengthens the Department's own systems against malign actors.

Our diplomatic efforts toward the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea are the most successful that have ever been undertaken. We remain committed to that goal. This budget provides for our diplomatic outreach to continue, and to continue implementation and enforcement of sanctions until we achieve our objective.

We know that the Islamic Republic of Iran's authoritarian regime will continue to use their nation's resources to proliferate conflict in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and beyond. It will continue to

bankroll terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

The United States will therefore work together with our allies and partners to counter Tehran's aggressive actions to undermine peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

As the people of Venezuela continue to fight for their freedom, the budget request includes funding to support democracy and prosperity in Venezuela. The budget also requests new authority to support a democratic transition in Venezuela, including transferring up to \$500 million to foreign assistance accounts.

The budget also delivers on the President's commitment to optimize the effectiveness of our outdated and fragmented overseas humanitarian assistance. It ensures the United States will remain the world's largest single donor of humanitarian assistance. The proposal maximizes the impact of taxpayer dollars, helps more beneficiaries, and delivers the greatest outcomes by consolidating our humanitarian programming in a new bureau at USAID. This budget request also preserves the State Department's lead role on protection issues, as well as the U.S. refugee admissions program. Further, through available funding in 2019 and 2020, the United States will have on average approximately \$9 billion available per year to support overseas humanitarian programs, maintaining the highest level of U.S. overseas humanitarian funding ever.

President Trump has made the protection of religious freedom a key priority at home and abroad. The Fiscal Year 2020 budget supports our efforts to continue U.S. leadership in the promotion of global religious freedom and the protection of persecuted religious and ethnic minorities all

around the world. This July, the State Department will host the second annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom.

American assistance is helping to reverse the devastation and suffering caused by ISIS and associated terrorist groups. But much work remains to be done. Working by, with, and through local partners and community leaders, our assistance programs clear explosive remnants of war to help keep families safe, restore access to critical health and education services, improve economic opportunities, and more.

As we work to promote economic growth, the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget includes a request for \$100 million for a new Fund at USAID for the White House-led Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. Through the Fund, we will work to find and scale proposals that advance women's economic empowerment across the developing world, in support of the Initiative's goal of reaching 50 million women by 2025.

There are few efforts as important to this Administration and to the safety and security of the American people as border security. The State Department and USAID budget request will strengthen visa vetting, and improve our targeting of illicit pathways that transnational criminal organizations use to traffic people, drugs, money, and weapons into our nation.

President Trump has made it clear that U.S. foreign assistance should serve America's interests, and should support countries that help us to advance our foreign policy goals. This budget therefore maintains critical support for key U.S. allies, including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and

Colombia, among others.

The FY 2020 Request also includes \$175 million for a Diplomatic Progress Fund. These funds will be used to respond to new opportunities arising from potential progress in diplomatic and peace efforts around the world.

Finally, the diplomatic challenges we face today are compounded by rapid advancements in technology and an ever-changing media environment. We need our colleagues to be safe, prepared, and ready to take on any challenge at a moment's notice. The FY 2020 budget will fully fund State and USAID's current workforce levels, enabling us to take on emerging policy challenges. We are also modernizing our human resources, IT infrastructure, and organizational structures to stay on the cutting edge of 21st century innovation.

We must continue to put American interests first and remain a beacon of freedom to the world. With the support of Congress, and through the strategic, efficient use of resources, this budget will do just that.

Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. There are so many questions and I know our members are eager to have a conversation with you.

Firstly, I want to say I really do appreciate the time you have spent with allies in the Middle East in an effort to strengthen our partnerships. However, I do have concerns regarding the direction of our policy under this administration.

Let me start with an issue I have worked on during my entire career in Congress, Arab-Israeli peace. Do you support a resolution to this conflict that results in two states with two peoples living side-by-side in peace and security and mutual recognition?

Secretary POMPEO. A year while I have been the Secretary, I have the simple, realistic goal of providing a vision for the Israelis and the Palestinians to find their path forward. What that path will be will certainly be up to them. But we have been at this a long time, as you described it, we have been at this decades, to try and resolve this incredibly complicated issue. I think we have some ideas that are new, and fresh, and different and we hope that those will appeal not only to the Israelis and the Palestinians, but to the larger set of threats that have prevented this conflict from being resolved over the past years and decades.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I appreciate your commitment, I appreciate your answer, and I do look forward to working with you because I remember being on the White House lawn when Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat were shaking hands. The contours of any agreement have historically focused on borders, settlements, Jerusalem refugees and mutual recognition. Are these still the parameters around which you believe the two sides would return to the negotiating table?

Secretary POMPEO. I guess I would say two things. First, those are the parameters that were largely at hand in the discussions before and they led us to where we are today, no resolution so we are hoping that we can actually broaden the aperture, that we can broaden this debate. The goal, it is a goal founded in the facts on the ground and a realistic assessment of what will get us a good outcome. How can we make the lives of the Palestinian people better? How can we do the same for the people of Israel? And how can we find a path forward so that this historic challenge that has presented conflict and risk throughout the Middle East for decades can be resolved?

The CHAIRWOMAN. I appreciate that answer, and I want to make it very clear, given the demographics in the West Bank and Gaza and given Israel's longstanding democratic principles, wouldn't you agree that a two-state solution is the best way for most people, for both people, to coexist peacefully and with dignity?

Secretary POMPEO. If you will permit me to demur again, you will see this administration's vision. And then ultimately, it will be the peoples of those two lands that resolve this and make that decision about how it is they will come together and what the contours of that resolution will look like. Our mission set is to help them with new ideas, fresh ideas to create a real opportunity that America and others who have tried to resolve this have not been able to do for years, and years and years.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. I know we will be continuing that discussion.

I want to address one other issue quickly, because by the end of fiscal year 2019, the United States will owe approximately \$1.1 billion in arrears to the United Nations, roughly \$750 million of which comes from fiscal year 2017, 2018, 2019 and \$328 million prior to fiscal year 2001. The failure of the United States to pay its bills has delayed payments to countries whose troops support peacekeeping forces, raising concerns about the sustainability of the U.N. peacekeeping system. And just three months ago, the United States supported the General Assembly's new scales of assessment, which slightly lowered the U.S. peacekeeping contribution to 27.89 percent for the next three years. Yet, the fiscal year 2020 budget request would support a rate of only 16.2 percent, and this doesn't reach the assessment rate agreed upon in the 1990s, not to mention what the U.S. just agreed to. Why don't we make good on the agreements that we just made?

Secretary POMPEO. So, Madam Chairwoman, we are working our way through this. I have had a handful of discussions with Secretary General Guterres on this issue.

It is the case that this administration is trying to get others to step up, particularly I think you mentioned with respect to U.N. peacekeeping costs, others to step up and share this burden. We think that is important. We have been working on this. We continue to work at this.

The leadership at the U.N. acknowledges that there has been a historic imbalance with respect to how this has been done and our efforts continue. We still pay far and away the largest share of those forces. We have done so for decades. We did so last year as well. And I am confident we will do so again this year.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. ROGERS, we are delighted to hear from you.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, it was about 30 years ago that I led a delegation to Indonesia, and one of the stops we made was Bali, and we had a rare meeting with the man known as the Prince of Bali. He was known that way because he would have been the King of Bali had they not been absorbed into Indonesia. But a sage, a wise, old man, he was probably at that time in his mid-80s. He was one of the founders of SEATO. And he agreed to meet with us, which was a rare occasion for him, in his compound, because he was worried about a decreased presence of the United States in his region. We had a long talk over cigars after a wonderful meal. But he had the theory that China was out to assemble all of the countries and people whom they deemed were Chinese descendants, which included Bali.

Now we are seeing that prophecy come to life. The military preparedness that China has invested in the Indo-Pacific is overwhelming. They are able to bully many of these peaceful Asian countries with economic enslavement with what is it called? The Belt and Road Initiative, the economic investment that they make in a country and then jerk out that financing at a later time. What are we doing in Indo-Pacific to be sure that we protect the people

like the Prince of Bali and all of the millions of people in that region from being dominated by the bully China?

Secretary POMPEO. Mr. Ranking Member, I think he was ahead of his time in recognizing this threat. And I think the United States and indeed, the Western world didn't pay attention to this in the way that was necessary. We are hopeful our administration has made substantial steps in—that. You saw it in our National Security Strategy. We changed the way we think about China from a national security perspective.

We all know the important economic relationships that the United States has with China. And happy to compete around the world with them when it is fair and transparent and under the rule of law. But the increasing risk that China poses to the United States and the West is real, and it is even more true in their backyard. And I hear that each time I travel throughout Asia or South-east Asia. They want the United States there.

So we have put forward what we have called our Indo-Pacific Strategy, and it has a handful of components to it. Certainly, one piece is the capacity of our military to be able to ensure that we have free and open navigation of waterways there. But there is also an enormous component that is diplomatic. It is America being present. It is us assisting our companies, ensuring that when there is a bid tender in Indonesia or Vietnam or in Australia or Japan or South Korea that the competition's fair and free, and that the Chinese showing up with that diplomacy or, worse yet, corruption and bribery isn't something that drives the rule of law and transparency out of the way.

We are committed to and I will be travelling to Asia, at least I plan to twice here before the middle of the year to continue to work to develop this. We work through ASEAN. It is central to this effort. The ASEAN nations are more aware of this risk today, and we also have the mission to make sure that we share with them our understanding of these threats and help them understand the facts as they really are.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, the Prince of Bali was concerned 30 years ago that we would vacate the region and leave them at the mercy of the Chinese. So the American presence there was what concerned him. And I heard the same story that you have as well, of course. Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, you name it, they have the exact same feeling toward China that I found on Bali.

Our military people tell me that this has to be a whole-of-government approach that we make in Indo-Pacific; that the State Department, USAID, all of the agencies of the federal government, including the military, must be present there in a unified, holistic approach to the problem. Do you agree with that?

Secretary POMPEO. I do.

Mr. ROGERS. I think It is important that we maintain that South China Sea presence that we have historically. I think that is very symbolic to the Asian people that we are there, and we intend to be there in defense of their freedom so I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your service and your travels. Welcome back to your old home.

Thank you.

Secretary POMPEO. One last thing to say. The legislation that you all passed last year, the BUILD Act, and now resourcing the

BUILD Act will prove an important component of our efforts that you just talked about, the need that we have to ensure that countries understand that America is there and present and we will continue to be so.

Mr. ROGERS. Good, thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and Mr. Ranking Member.

And thank you, Secretary Pompeo, for being with us today.

I wanted to ask about refugee funding. I am concerned that a 24 percent across-the-board cut is not only irresponsible but dangerous to our national security. As you know, there are currently more people who have been forcibly displaced than any other time in our history—68.5 million according to UNHCR. At least a whole generation of children have been born and will live their formative years in refugee camps. Since the president has dramatically reduced the role of the U.S. as an option for resettlement, the role of the U.S. government in this context has become increasingly political and diplomatic. I am concerned that decoupling refugee programming from the diplomatic efforts of the State Department by transitioning almost all MRA money to the International Humanitarian Assistance Bureau will reduce the effectiveness of U.S. diplomacy on refugee issues. How do you envision the balance between the diplomatic and development roles required in U.S. engagement on refugee issues?

Secretary POMPEO. Appreciate that question. There is a lively debate about how that ought to proceed. I have come to my conclusion. The State Department needs to be at the front of that, needs to be needs to be incredibly involved in those, need to be incredibly well-connected so that we execute the U.S. policy on this appropriately. I will say today I believe that is happening. I will give you an example from the last—what is today? Wednesday, the last 5 days I was in Lebanon talking about approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees that are in Lebanon today, the burden that places on Lebanon, the cost, the risk that presents to Lebanon and its democracy and it was the State Department leading that discussion about how we can get the conditions right on the ground inside of Syria, how the United States and our Arab and Western partners can get the conditions right on the ground in Syria, such that those refugees can return to their homes.

And that is the mission set that Lebanese people want. I frankly believe it is best for those individuals, as well. But we have got to make sure that the conditions are right, and it is something that the United States Department of State will be at the front of.

Ms. MENG. I appreciate you saying that you are prioritizing it. I am concerned that we will not be able to do that if so many resources have been stripped from the State Department. Have duties of PRM already begun being transitioned to USAID?

Secretary POMPEO. You know, I don't know the answer to—I want to make sure I give you an accurate answer to that. If I may get back to you, I would prefer to do that.

Ms. MENG. Yes, that would be great.

Secretary POMPEO. It could be that not in a significant way, but it could be that there is a handful of things that—that have hap-

pened that you might characterize that way. I want to make sure and give you a real picture of what it is we are actually doing.

Ms. MENG. Okay, great. Thank you so much.

My second question, I will try to do this quickly. How does the State Department intend to target the critical issue of women's economic empowerment while cutting fundamental women's health and education programming. Does this not ensure that WGDP will fail to be sustainable over the long term?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, we created it, and we intend to urge you all to fund it. And I hope the next administration, whenever that comes, will continue to build on this, as well. We believe this is an important program for women across the world.

The whole team has been involved in this: the State Department; the White House with Ivanka Trump; DHS; DOD; it has been a whole-of-government approach from our administration to build this program out to make sure that we have the infrastructure in place that is appropriate, and then to resource it in a way that meets not just enough money, but make sure that whatever money we have, we are able to use effectively to achieve the aims of the program.

Ms. MENG. Yes. Well, as you know, this is a bipartisan—

Secretary POMPEO. It is.

Ms. MENG. Program and goal that we share here in Congress. Over a hundred countries place restrictions on the types of jobs that women can hold so this Initiative's emphasis on eliminating these barriers to participation and creating more enabling environments is a worthwhile one. So thank you.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. MENG. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair, for convening this important hearing.

Mr. Secretary, good morning. Thank you. Nice to see you.

First of all, let me commend you for taking diplomacy on the road not just abroad, but here in America. It was great to see you in Iowa talking about the importance of diplomacy to America. I would have preferred that you had done that in Nebraska, but close enough.

Secretary POMPEO. I would—in Kansas. I owe you one.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay.

Secretary POMPEO. All right.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. It is the neighborhood, so but again, great job. We really appreciate you coming out.

Last summer you convened a ministerial of foreign leaders to speak to the issue of religious pluralism and the respect for human dignity, the sacred space of conscience and the exercise of that right. Around the same time, at the behest of the vice president, I traveled to northern Iraq, along with Ambassador Sam Brownback, as well as Mark Green, USAID Director, to look at the dynamics of how our substantive aid that had been shifted to help the religious minority communities there who have been so decimated by the genocide of ISIS, how that aid could be sustained. I came

back from that experience with three words in my mind: It is possible, it is urgent, but it depends on security.

You and I have had this conversation before, but I would like to take just a few moments to unpack it a little bit more publicly. In response to that last piece, the security piece, I am very shortly—perhaps even today introducing a Northern Iraq Security Resolution, along with my good friend Anna Eshoo, a Democrat from California. We have worked very closely with the Foreign Affairs Committee and, I am hopeful that the United States Congress rallies around this concept of simply laying down a marker that urges, with international community help, the Iraqi central government, and the Kurdish government to integrate Christians and Yazidis and other religious minorities, Islamic minorities, into the regularized security forces with some degree of authority to protect Nineveh and Sinjar.

If we don't do this, all of this aid is not going to be sustainable. There are willing international partners. There are certain sensitivities, sensibilities to this all over the world, among the Iraqis, among the Kurds, other international partners, with you, with the Vice President's Office, with the administration so I would like your response to this concept, again, of the United States just laying down a marker saying this is an important long-term strategy to restore the ancient tapestry of religious pluralism that used to thrive, particularly in northern Iraq, as well as Baghdad, but has been so decimated. And without that, we are going to lose that rich tradition, there is going to be more pressure for outmigration. Can the Iraqis ever achieve peace without this fundamental concept of tolerance and the space for religious pluralism?

Secretary POMPEO. You and I have had a chance to talk about it some. I am happy that you raised it here this morning. The State Department and I can absolutely agree that this is a priority. I look forward to seeing the legislation. I haven't had a chance to see the legislation that you and Ms. Eshoo are going to present. I will be happy to work with you to see how we can effectuate that.

Our mission set has been pretty clear to try and work with the Iraqi government to help them understand how important this is to get to the political resolution of a free, independent, sovereign Iraq. It is central that every religious minority be respected, have their opportunity to have their voice heard. And so, yes, I think this is a priority. It is a priority for the individuals affected, the religious minorities affected. It is a priority for the people of Iraq. And it is certainly important for American values, as well.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you for that response, Mr. Secretary.

You just recently traveled to the Middle East. I want to turn to the question of Egypt and our relationship there. The Ranking Member, Mr. Rogers, rightfully pointed out the importance of this relationship and we are at the 40-year mark of a peace treaty that has held between Israel and Egypt.

In 1979, I entered the Sinai Desert as young man, and on this pile of twisted concrete and rubble which, sadly, is so typical as seen now throughout the Middle East, were scrawled the words in spray paint both in English and in Arabic. This had been the scene of the fighting in the 1973 war, and it said, Here, was the war. Here is the peace. That was a really important formative moment

for me. This peace treaty, which at times has been cold, but has come at great sacrifice for both the Egyptians and the Israelis, brokered by the United States, is a template, a model. So Mr. Rogers', as well as your own, highlighting the importance of the relationship with Egypt, particularly in terms of the budget to me, it is a very essential priority because as we talk about potentially restoring Egypt's rightful place as a leader in the Arab world, without a strengthening of that relationship and quickly, I am afraid we may miss a critical moment here but there, again, is possibility.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you. I agree. If you saw on this trip to the Middle East, I did not visit Egypt. I did on the previous one, where I gave some remarks in Cairo that talked about that very issue in language very similar to what you just described. There are challenges in Egypt. There are human rights challenges in Egypt. We don't shy away from talking about those but that is an important strategic relationship, it is there, a linchpin of the Middle East and they have been a good ally in the counterterrorism fight as well.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. Appreciate it. And for your service.

Let me just start by saying this, my concern for your budget proposal is not so much what is in it, but really the cuts that are being made which some of my colleagues have pointed out.

And Representative Lowey is a very kind person. And I think to call the budget inadequate is being very kind, because I am going to just say, I think it is embarrassing and dangerous.

Okay. Now, so I have had my cathartic moment. Because I don't mean to be unkind. So I am going to start with something hopefully we can agree with. And that is, I am going to make a general statement, when women succeed, the world succeeds. And so, when women and girls are better educated, when they are healthier, when they are free from violence, not only are their families better off, but we find that their communities and there is more prosperity and it is more secure. Would you agree with that general proposition?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. Wholeheartedly.

Ms. FRANKEL. All right. Good so we are on the right track here. So and I also want to say this. I am very interested in your proposal on economic empowerment, which I want to have you get into it more, with the \$100 million Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative.

But I do want to follow up with Representative Meng's comments. And I want to say this because I really want you to take this to heart. I don't want to be mean-spirited, but I really hope you will take what some of us are saying and really think about this because some of these cuts on women's programs are going to undermine what you and Mrs. Ivanka Trump want to do in terms of getting women more economic power.

You are slashing international family planning programs by more than half. You are eliminating all assistance to the U.N. Pop-

ulation Fund, which makes efforts to end child marriage and female genital mutilation and seeks to have healthy babies born. You are erasing the reproductive rights sections from the annual Human Rights Report. You have been pushing to remove reference to sexual and reproductive health care at the annual U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. Yesterday, you expanded the inhumane Global Gag Rule. I am telling you, your administration is abortion-obsessed. You are so obsessed with it that the side effects are devastating to health and are going to continue to devastate the health of women around the world.

So before I get into that, let's just go back to some good news, I think. Which is, could you explain exactly what this new program, the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, is? And I would like to know whether you have had to take money from other gender-based programs to fund it.

Secretary POMPEO. So I appreciate the question. We have not had to do that. We may—I want to leave open the possibility, we may conclude that there is a better way to use other resources to more effectively deliver what this program is designed to do. And if we do, we may make a decision to do that. We will obviously ensure that Congress is fully informed and knows as we move money around.

Look, the mission statement is really clear, when the president announced this in the Oval Office now, a couple months back. It is to do precisely what you described, it is to find the methods by which we can create not only laws, but cultures in countries where women are empowered, women are free to work, to raise their families in the way that they want to and have all the opportunities that we are counting on women to be able to have here in the United States, and have them all around the world.

There will be lots of streams to this program, if you saw the announcement. I think almost every Cabinet, I think HHS was there, I think Commerce was there, State Department was present. There will be programs that will be rolled out. They are not fully fleshed out yet, to be sure, but will be rolled out all across the United States government to deliver against the primary objectives that the president set out that day. And I think he enunciated it pretty well and there was that wonderful bipartisan support thematically, for those objectives.

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, I would just say this and I am going to have to have, I guess, a second round of questioning on some of the issues I brought up. But it is very important, really and you agreed with me, that if you want women to be economically prosperous, they have to be healthy, correct?

I just want to stress that your budget and your actions by this administration is devastating the health of women around the world.

And with that—and I am sorry to say that. Really, I am.

Secretary POMPEO. I will say you suggested that you wouldn't be kind. You have been very kind. We simply disagree on that point.

Ms. FRANKEL. All right, all right. I will kindly yield back to—  
The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. FRANKEL. The chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Secretary, it is great to see you. And I hope your family is well. And we appreciate your service to our country. And, again, we are just really glad to have you here today.

First, I want to thank you for the announcement that came out of the State Department yesterday. The Mexico City Policy, which prohibits U.S. government funds from going to NGOs that perform abortions, was expanded to include NGOs that provide financial assistance to abortion providers. American tax dollars are not allowed to fund abortions in this country, and countries around the world should be no exception. I am glad that the Trump administration has made the commitment to expand upon this Reagan-era rule. And I thank you for your leadership in protecting the unborn.

In regard to the State Department's budget request, I too am glad to see that women's economic empowerment was made a priority. And so to build upon my colleague's—some of her statements, as you know, the State Department's request included a hundred million for the new program in USAID called the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. And in my role as a member of Congress, I have had the privilege and have been fortunate enough to travel to several countries many of which are seriously lacking in policies conducive to economic freedom for a woman and her ability to be financially independent.

And so I wanted to ask you—and I know you just said that some of these programs are being developed as we speak but in which countries do you foresee that we will be focusing these investments?

Secretary POMPEO. So we have not set out yet how we are going to prioritize. But as a matter of logic, you can imagine these programs going in many places, certainly in countries throughout Africa, countries in the Middle East as well, places that just don't have the history of empowering women, allowing women to behave in the way that—engage in activity the way we know every human being has the right to be.

Mrs. ROBY. I appreciate that. And, of course, a lot of the work that I have been fortunate enough to be able to engage in, is in Afghanistan, and where as we have seen many, many gains for women, we also know how fragile it is as well. And so as you move forward in developing these programs, I hope that you will continue to make us aware of exactly what this looks like. We know that the success of women is a key indicator of the success of a country. And so, I hope that you will keep us informed.

The only other thing I would build upon as it relates to this question is making sure that we have also mechanisms in place to ensure that the beneficiaries of these investments are held accountable. And so, if you have any comments about that. I think some of the frustration in the past has been we make these investments in an attempt to offer opportunity, but then we are not able to measure—or we don't come back and measure real outcomes. And so, if you want to just comment on that.

Secretary POMPEO. I welcome the opportunity. It is a very valid criticism, and not only of programs that relate to women's empowerment, but of U.S. government and I will speak for the State Department programs as well. We as taxpayers, invest lots of

money and it is difficult to, 5, 10 years later to identify the effectiveness of those resources. You see it in IG reports, you see it—workings at the State Department. More importantly, you see it in the world, you see this money and you see the relatively little change has been achieved.

We are going to try in that program that you were referring to, the Global Women's Empowerment Program. But I and my team are trying it in every program we have, whether it is foreign assistance or humanitarian assistance, that we are providing, to ensure that when we do that, we have an objective, there are criteria, there are outcomes that are measurable, even if not always quantifiable, but measurable in a way that we can determine whether we achieved the goals that we set out to do. There is nothing sadder than to look at a history of a program and see that you have asked the taxpayers for hundreds of millions of dollars over years and years and years and the situation is no better or worse along the key criteria that were intended to be achieved.

Mrs. ROBY. I appreciate that very much. And I thank you again for being here today.

And, Madam Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

And before I turn to my colleague Ms. Lee, I just want to make a very, very simple statement.

Reference to this mysterious global abortion industry puts abortion politics at the center of every health program, rather than advancing the effectiveness of programs that saves lives. U.S. taxpayer dollars are not used to subsidize or promote abortions, period. I want to say that again. U.S. taxpayer dollars are not used subsidize or promote abortions, period.

Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Thanks, Mr. Secretary. First let me ask you about the HIV-AIDS accounts. Of course, you know, the United States—we have had long-standing bipartisan leadership on global health, especially on global HIV and AIDS epidemic. At the end of last year, we passed a PEPFAR extension. It was legislation that I authored with Congressman Chris Smith and President Trump signed it into law. And that was to reauthorize PEPFAR for 5 years.

Additionally, Congressman Smith and I sponsored a bipartisan letter that was cosigned by 137 members in support of a strong United States contribution to the Global Fund's upcoming Sixth Replenishment Conference. At the same time, we know that our progress on preventing new infections is stagnant and that tens of millions of people will need sustained access to antiretroviral therapy over the next decade. A 2018 report by the Lancet Fund found stagnant or reduced funding coupled with a weakened global resolve to end the disease could result in a backsliding of our gains and allow the epidemic to rebound.

The administration's 2020 budget request cuts the PEPFAR budget by 29 percent and proposes a new structure for the Global Fund pledge that would change the maximum U.S. share from 33 percent to 25 percent. Now, public reports have indicated that the administration intends to implement at this significantly lower match unless Congress mandates it.

So this administration has put, of course, additional resources which we are pleased about—into the domestic HIV epidemic, but you are stepping back now from our leadership on the global side. It is really robbing Peter to pay Paul.

So, Mr. Secretary, given the significant needs that we know exist, how does the U.S. expect to maintain its long-standing leadership role in addressing global health challenges with these steep cuts? As well as why in the world would you make a decision to reformulate the 33 percent for the Global Fund which we have maintained through eight Congresses and three administrations?

Secretary POMPEO. This administration is absolutely committed to the mission set that you have just described. It has been—to your point, it has been a bipartisan effort from certainly my time in Congress and through today.

There is no nation, including in the most recent fiscal year and including in the fiscal year ahead, that has been as generous and has asked their citizens to contribute as much to ending the scourge of AIDS, in not only the United States, but around the world. We will continue to lead. We will continue to be part of this program. I get updates from our team constantly. I have seen what we think that the 2- and 5- and 10-year outlook, we think we have been effective. This is one of the programs, I was just talking with Mrs. Roby. This is one of the programs where I think we can show demonstrable effectiveness for taxpayer dollars. And there comes a time in every program when you have to begin to think, you have been at this a long time, is there a way that you can deliver on this better? That is the objective that we have set out in our budget. Our aim, our mission, I think is shared, but we are always having to make decisions about how to apply resources against the problems set. And that is what we did on this one as well.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Secretary, I think, because of what you just said, we are making progress, why would we pull back now and reduce our contribution to PEPFAR and the Global Fund, when in fact the American people want us to succeed, and every report that we have, shows that if we pull back, the infection rates will increase and we won't succeed?

Secretary POMPEO. We are going to succeed.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Secretary, with this type of a cut, we haven't seen any plan that would show that we are going to make sure that new infections don't emerge and that we are able to get this epidemic under control. But hopefully we will be able to get—go back to the drawing board on this.

Also, let me just ask you about your 2020 budget, which proposes to cut bilateral aid to many of our key partners in Africa by at least 10 percent. This is after a well-documented track record of controversial statements, of course, from the president, identifying certain—\*\*\*—countries, and, quite frankly, attitudes toward the Continent generally.

Let me give you an example of what I am talking about. The budget would cut bilateral assistance to Ghana by 56 percent; Ethiopia by 33 percent; Mozambique by 14 percent, a country which is facing a huge challenge in the wake of the cyclone that killed more than a thousand people; South Sudan by 44 percent; South Africa by 71 percent, mostly in critical global health funds. Given these

cuts, it is difficult to believe that the administration's Africa strategy is sound. And even, it almost demonstrates that the president meant what he said when he identified countries \*\*\*\_\*\*\* countries so I would like to hear why you made these cuts.

Secretary POMPEO. First of all, the predicate of your question is, in my judgment, fundamentally unsound. I am deeply aware of the State Department's Africa strategy, led by Tibor Nagy, wonderful officer in our Department. We have re-looked not only at Africa but every country, in terms of evaluating where we can most effectively achieve the United States' interests. This is what we are using taxpayer dollars, it is America that we are tasked with keeping secure and safe.

And you have to make decisions. You have to demonstrate priorities. You have to ask your partners to step up. You have to ask your bilateral recipients of this aid, they have to step up and demonstrate that they are using your dollars and resources in the ways that you would intend them to do. And they have to take on economic challenges and security challenges in their own country, and get the politics right in their nation. And we have evaluated each of these criteria, both inside of the countries and how it fits inside the American strategic security objectives, and we are reallocating foreign assistance in that way. It is that straightforward.

Ms. LEE. Do I have?

Thank you. Okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. We will come back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Come back.

Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary POMPEO. Good morning.

Mr. PRICE. Glad to have you with us. I want to return to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of the guiding schools of thought on all sides I think, for years, has been the need for the U.S. to facilitate direct negotiations between the two parties. And in fact, you acknowledged that this morning in your answer to Mrs. Lowey.

So now, outside the framework of any negotiations, outside the framework of any anticipated final status agreement, this administration has made a series of moves.

One, you moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem unilaterally, apart from the kind of broader agreement previous administrations have sought.

Two, you closed the Palestinian embassy in Washington, D.C.

Three, you shut down the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, the main U.S. eyes and ears on the ground in the West Bank and the main interlocutor for communicating with the Palestinians.

Four, you cut off all U.S. contributions to UNRWA, closing schools in Gaza and exacerbating the severe humanitarian crisis there.

Five, you cut off all assistance to the West Bank, even assistance going through American-led implementing partners on the ground, for things like food security, education for children with autism, I have an explicit example of that from some people working with a

school in Bethlehem on that autism challenge, water treatments, oncology medicine, as well as programs that bring Israelis and Palestinians together for a dialogue and conflict mitigation.

Now you are about to unveil a long-awaited peace agreement that you have drafted, no doubt with demands to follow, that the Palestinians be grateful for that plan and regard the U.S. as a fair-minded arbiter who respects their aspirations. Can you tell me how this is supposed to work? Am I missing something?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. Yes, you are.

Mr. PRICE. Well, please, tell me.

Secretary POMPEO. You are missing the history. Those things that you identified, the recognition of Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel, the homeland for the Jewish people, the decision to take the Israeli sovereignty, to recognize Israeli sovereignty, those are all things that are different. What went before didn't work. I think you would have to acknowledge that. Decades of trying the old way failed to resolve this conflict. It just—

Mr. PRICE. The idea of—

Secretary POMPEO. I met with each of the—if I may, just one more moment.

Mr. PRICE. Yes.

Secretary POMPEO. I met with each of the individuals who have been involved with this, at different times, over different times in my life. I have talked to them about the complexity of the situation. And to a person, they would acknowledge that the efforts that they made, the theories that they used, the strategies they developed failed to achieve the outcome that I think you and I share.

Mr. PRICE. So you are satisfied that this administration has reached out effectively to the Palestinians and has assured them of your good faith and your goodwill, and that the Palestinian reaction to this is somehow off-base?

Secretary POMPEO. Our vision will demonstrate our commitment, that we want Palestinians to have a better life as well. And I personally have had a number of interactions during my time in the Executive Branch with the leadership inside of the West Bank. I hope they will view us as a fair arbiter. We want a better outcome for both Israel and the people living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well.

Mr. PRICE. What does closing their embassy in Washington have to do with being a fair arbiter? Or closing, I think, equally serious is closing that consulate in Jerusalem. That basically cuts off diplomatic ties in both directions. And—

Secretary POMPEO. I would just—

Mr. PRICE. And the Hope Flowers School has an autism program that this country has supported and that many people are invested in, and all of a sudden, that funding's removed. When you have to pave over an infrastructure project in Jericho because the money is running out, is that demonstrating the kind of—and you know in the case of Venezuela, you have been very persuasive about the need to show empathy and support for ordinary people. I don't know how that lesson is lost—it appears to me, honestly, Mr. Secretary, that it has been lost on the Palestinian community.

Secretary POMPEO. I appreciate your view. It is different from mine.

I was just in that space. I was just in—at the facility that you referred to. Our connectivity—the people at the State Department that have worked on this issue in the West Bank for years are continuing to work on it.

Mr. PRICE. So how do you assess the Palestinian response to closing their embassy and closing our consulate and cutting off all this aid, freezing the aid and then cutting it off? They are somehow supposed to be grateful for this?

Secretary POMPEO. What we are aiming to do is resolve a decades-long conflict.

Mr. PRICE. And this is the path forward, you are confident, to totally marginalize and alienate the Palestinian side?

Secretary POMPEO. I am very confident that what was tried before failed. And I am optimistic that what we are doing will give us a better likelihood that we will achieve the outcomes that will be better for both the people of Israel and the Palestinian people as well.

Mr. PRICE. Well, we certainly share that objective. And we will await the response on all sides to your peace plan. And also hope for a very measured response if that plan is criticized from the Palestinian side, as surely one can anticipate it will be.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Secretary, before I turn to Ms. Torres, just following up on Mr. Price's question, when should we expect the Jared Kushner peace plan that has been talked about and worked on?

As someone, similar to Mr. Price, who's worked on this issue for my whole career, I hope we don't have to wait another 20 years. Could you tell us when we will see the Jared Kushner peace plan?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. I think we can say in less than 20 years. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. How about being more precise?

Secretary POMPEO. I just prefer not to be more precise. I am very hopeful that we will present our vision before too long.

I am not trying to evade. I don't know precisely when and how it is we will present this. We have been working on it a while. We want to make sure we have it as complete and as effective, as good as we know how to do. When we get there, we will unveil it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, shall we say, many of us are cautiously optimistic that we can see some kind of a breakthrough. As I mentioned before, I do remember sitting on that White House lawn when Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin were shaking hands. So I would like to join you on that lawn again, or any place you suggest.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. I would love to be there with you as well.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Torres.

Ms. TORRES. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your attendance and for that quick laugh. As the founder and co-chair of the Central America Caucus, I have been very focused on addressing the root causes of migration from that region. Providing foreign assistance is an important part of the answer, but it simply isn't enough. And if we are going to make progress on the very tough issues this region is facing: corruption, gang violence, and poverty, severe pov-

erty—we need a comprehensive approach. And I know that you agree with that.

For one, we urgently need an ambassador to Honduras, preferably someone with diplomatic experience and expertise in the region. We also need high-level engagement, regular meetings with the region's leaders to make sure that they are making progress on their commitments under the Alliance for Prosperity. And sometimes, we need to take tough actions when these leaders do things that are contrary to our mutually agreed goals for the region.

So, I was surprised to see that on September 1, 2018, the day after Guatemalan officials decided to misuse J8 Jeeps that U.S. donated to them for the purpose of counternarcotic efforts at the border of Mexico, and utilized these vehicles in an effort to intimidate our U.S. embassy diplomats. And I was surprised to see that on September 1st, a tweet from your account stating that our relationship with Guatemala is important, and we greatly appreciate Guatemala's effort in counternarcotics and security. Now, your budget request includes \$256.3 million for the Central American Regional Security Initiative. Combating corruption in the Northern Triangle has been a major priority for the U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America. Can you tell me, how does your budget request prioritize the fight against corruption in the Northern Triangle?

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you. Thank you for your question. Thanks for your attention to this important place that frankly, I think doesn't get the focus that it needs. You see the challenges at our southern border, you see challenges more broadly, not only in Mexico but in South America, that result from ineffective governments in the Northern Triangle countries in Central America. So not only State Department but other elements of the United States government, DHS, DEA, and others are all focused on taking the RSI, the Regional Security Initiative, and delivering against it.

I think Secretary Nielsen's actually down in the region today. I think she was flying—I think to Honduras today, to work on a number of issues that surround borders there and security there and political stability there. My team will join her in many of those meetings.

Our priority really is to find the leaders in that region that are prepared to do the things, the difficult things, things that haven't been done for an awfully long time under different administrations, different administrations in the United States as well, and convince them that getting more stable, more democratic outcomes there can truly benefit the people of their country and lead to stability in the region.

We know we have a role where we can assist them from a security perspective in countering transnational criminal organizations that are moving people and drugs out of there into the United States through multiple methods, and we are committed to doing that. And we think we have got this resourced in a way that is reasonable. And as President Trump has made clear, we are going to reinforce success. Where we see progress, where we see good programs, effective leadership, we will continue to assure that we apply resources against them.

Ms. TORRES. I agree that we need to encourage them. But at the same time, we don't need to encourage bad behavior, especially

when they try to intimidate our diplomats in that region. I think that that was a slap in the face to us as Americans and I think that we should have responded accordingly by removing those vehicles and not rewarding them by giving them four additional vehicles after that incident occurred. How are we going to deal with these presidents that are refusing to hold themselves accountable and to allow the attorney generals to investigate massive corruption in the region?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, we have seen challenges on all sides in each of these countries, both from the leaders and sometimes from the investigators too. The U.N. has a role, you are probably referring to CICIG in Guatemala as well and their role. You saw decisions we have made where we didn't see the transparency and the rule of law from those folks in the way that we needed to see that too. Look, it is difficult, you know this as well as I do. We are trying to find those who are prepared to set up truly transparent rule of law, democratic institutions, and support them.

Ms. TORRES. My time is up, sir—

Secretary POMPEO. We hope the people in the country will support them as well. And you should know too, I take it as a priority to make sure and protect my diplomats and officers that work under chief of mission control, even those that aren't State Department officials, to ensure that we do right by them every day. I think we did that there in Guatemala as well.

Ms. TORRES. I sent you my questions and concerns ahead of time and I hope to be able to continue that—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes ma'am.

Ms. TORRES. Dialogue in the next round. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We are going to go for another round. And I appreciate your time. Keep thinking you should be on a plane someplace.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to be—

The CHAIRWOMAN. Is it not nice—

Secretary POMPEO. To be sitting—

The CHAIRWOMAN. To be here?

Secretary POMPEO. Right here.

The CHAIRWOMAN. That's right.

Secretary POMPEO. Exactly. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. This is an issue I have been concerned about for a very long time, so it is not just you and this administration. The Russian government is engaged in a concerted effort to undermine democracy, weaken multilateral institutions including NATO, and reverse economic independence and prosperity in Europe and Eurasia. I am extremely concerned about increased corruption, democratic backsliding in the region.

The fiscal year 2020 request would cut assistance to the region by approximately 55 percent. I am sure that cut would turn things around but that is something we could discuss. What message does this send to Russia and our allies and partners about U.S. resolve? What is the State Department doing to counter the malign influence of Russia in Europe and Eurasia including through support to civil society, human rights, and the rule of law? Does the State Department have a counter Kremlin strategy similar to that of USAID? Tell us about your view of what Voice of America is doing,

what the BBG is doing? They have a budget of about \$800 million if I am correct and \$250 million is for Voice of America. Are we just watching the change in Europe and the anti-American, anti-U.S. observations or is there something that we are doing to counter this?

Secretary POMPEO. Boy, a handful of questions there. Let me just talk about what we are doing and then you can guide me to what you would prefer to talk about. The threat you identify is real. It is the case that Russia has interfered in elections here in the United States. It is going to try and interfere with one in Ukraine in a week and the half or so that is left and weeks that are left before government formation, but they are not the only country. There is lots of countries. China's done similar things. Iran has done similar things as well. But with respect to Russia, I think we have demonstrated our commitment, and I think Vladimir Putin gets that. I think we have demonstrated our commitment to pushing back against the threats that he poses to Europe and the West.

I can cite along a long litany of not only the sanctions that exceed what any other administration has done, not only the kicking out of 60 Russian spies from the United States, the increase in the United States defense budget is certainly not something that the Russian leadership can be happy about. In fact, that we are exporting crude oil and natural gas all around the world. Competing with Russian crude and natural gas is something I can tell you the Russians are deeply concerned about.

The list goes on with respect to the seriousness we have taken, the risk that this presents to the United States, and we have done so all the while trying to places and I did so as CIA Director as well, trying to find places where we can find a shared, overlapping set of interests with Russia so that we can get better outcomes. If we can get to a better outcome in Syria by talking and working with them, if we can find ways to ensure that Americans who are flying on aircraft travelling around the world aren't harmed by Chechens out of Russia and the surrounding region, those are good things and things the administration has not only—it is not only a good thing that we are dealing with the Russians on them it is necessary and proper.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, I think the Global Engagement Center is still in existence.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. It is.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Do they do anything?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. They do.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Tell us about it.

Secretary POMPEO. Let me talk about broadly you mentioned both the BBG and the Voice of America. You put the Global Engagement—

The CHAIRWOMAN. Voice of America's really part of the BBG—

Secretary POMPEO. Right, and then I mentioned the Global Engagement Center. Each of which has a mission of overt communications, talking about sharing, spreading American values, countering propaganda that comes from all across the world. The Global Engagement Center, we now have Lea Gabrielle on board leading the charge. She has a couple of primary missions. Russian is one of those primary missions and we are happy to give you a briefing

on what she is doing and what our team at the Global Engagement Center is doing. We think this will be important. You all have funded this quite well and we appreciate that.

I want to come back, though, to the BBG. It is a challenge. It still has a leadership challenge because we all know the history of the BBG Board and how it came to be fractious and had become political. We still have not resolved that situation and I would urge to get a CEO of that organization in place so that the BBG will have the right leadership so that they can do the traditional mission perhaps in a different information environment than we did back in the Cold War that can perform its function in a way that is important and noble and reflects the enormous resources that American taxpayers have put towards that and I am very concerned about it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And I would like to schedule a briefing. This is an issue I have been working on for a long time. I am not blaming just this—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Administration. I have met with many people. At one point we were off in L.A. and we thought the movie industry could give us some advice and spread our message of democracy and hope and freedom, but frankly I think it is just getting worse.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. I would be happy to have Ms. Gabrielle, and speak with you or your staff or however you think that would be appropriate.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I would like to do it and invite as many of the members who are interested.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Secretary, as you know, some 3.5 million Venezuelans have fled their country, and of those more than a million have gone to Colombia, and I am worried about what effect the Venezuelan problem is going to have on the whole region. Is your budget request sufficient to manage the humanitarian needs and the other challenges spilling over from Venezuela?

Secretary POMPEO. It is a fair question. I think what are things to say about where they are today, I think the resources are likely sufficient but I think the best analysis is there will be another 2 million refugees from Venezuela or displaced persons from Venezuela. They will go somewhere, many to Colombia, some to Brazil, some to other nations in the region. It could be that we will come back and say we need additional assistance to address that need. We are trying to resolve that, right? We are trying to work with the Venezuelan people to ensure that Maduro leaves and we can begin to create—and this will be—just so we are all eyes wide open, this will be a years-long undertaking to provide the assistance in Venezuela to get the Venezuelan people back on their feet, the decimation that has taken place long before U.S. sanctions. Right, we are now years and years into the Maduro decimation of this country but we think we have got the resource level about right today.

I do worry. Along that border, along that Colombian-Venezuelan border, ELN, FARC are using this uncertainty, this movement of

peoples, this movement of goods and narcotics across that region to rebuild and strengthen. So that is not just a State Department function. There are other elements of the USG that will have a role in that but I do worry about the increased risk from the FARC and from ELN in that region as result of the chaos that Maduro has created.

Mr. ROGERS. Well finally, we have gotten the new president in Colombia on the right track and returning to aerial eradication of coca. I mean, we obviously support him heavily in that effort, yet I worry that any progress we have made with the new government on counter narcotics could be jeopardized by the chaos next door in Venezuela. What do you think about the effect of the counter narcotics effort?

Secretary POMPEO. So we are concerned about it, and President Duque is concerned about it, too. He shared that with President Trump when he visited here and he shared it with me when I was in Colombia now a couple months back. He is concerned that about that as well. I guess there is three things to say, one: it is why the urgency can resolve the situation in Venezuela is so strong; second, it is why we have to continue to support President Duque and Colombia in their efforts, these counter-narcotics efforts, which have truly, I don't know the most recent numbers from the past weeks, but over the past years have escalated dramatically, much of that has moved here to the United States; and then finally, it is why the work that the State Department's done to build out this coalition, the OAS has been spectacular on the issues in Venezuela, the Lima Group, which largely, South American-led, but America's been an important partner in ensuring that the Lima Group gets this set of issues right.

We need to continue to work with our friends and allies in the region to deliver better outcomes for Colombia. The risk that this issue of coca gets away from us is very real.

Mr. ROGERS. Quickly, on another topic, we have significant work ahead of us to counter Chinese espionage and technology theft. It will require extensive cooperation with our European and other allies like Japan and South Korea. I believe this will require deepened intelligence sharing and stricter review of foreign direct investment, export controls, communications procurement policy. Are we on the same page as the European Union is now regarding China?

Secretary POMPEO. So it is mixed to be sure, the State Department has led a U.S. government-wide effort to share what we know, the threats as we see them, to make sure that not just France and Britain and Germany but every country all throughout Europe understands the risks as we see them and to provide our best wisdom on how to prevent those risks, the security risks that are presented.

There are deep commercial issues here, as well. Big telecom providers find it lucrative to deal with Chinese businesses and put Huawei or ZTE equipment inside their infrastructure and networks. We have done our best to share with those businesses and the countries in which they reside the threat that we see from engaging in that, some of them simply have come to believe that they can mitigate these risks in ways that we just don't believe are pos-

sible. When you have telecommunications that are deeply connected to state-owned enterprises inside of China, we don't see that there is a technical mitigation risk that is possible and we have communicated to them and we are very hopeful that the Europeans will begin to move further in our direction in their understanding of those risks.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, a close American ally, Italy, has signed on to the Belt and Road Initiative of China. And apparently, China is making a big push into the European Union. Seeing that it is individualized, rather than a massive unified place, which is open country for them, China. Do you think that we can finally get the E.U. to stand up tall against China?

Secretary POMPEO. I think we have made progress and I know that we are going to continue to push.

Mr. ROGERS. Good enough. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair. Along the line of reasoning that Ranking Member Rogers just said, Mr. Secretary, your agency and USAID, we give, together, give about \$25 billion a year in humanitarian assistance, antipoverty programs, global health. How much does China give? It is a hypothetical. I don't mean to put you on the spot.

Secretary POMPEO. A very, very small number. It would be—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So one of the largest economies—

Secretary POMPEO. It would be a tiny fraction of this.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. So one of the largest economies of the world that has been progressing through our trade relations, through trade relations with the others, takes minimal or no responsibility for the world's development wellbeing. The point here is I think the world is rapidly catching on that they are predatory lenders, without taking full responsibility for the broader ideals of an echo system of development.

And in that regard, I am going to weave a little tale here. I want to follow up on Ms. Torres's comments.

Our immigration debate is one that is obviously complex and difficult but part of the solution is to move it off the one-yard line and to get back upstream into the countries where there is significant pressure either because of unrest, crime, or just economic need for people to leave. And so several years ago we shifted a number of funds to the Northern Triangle to try to work constructively on systems of justice and systematic economic reforms to create the conditions in which people can thrive there, which is a part of our broader immigration policy and I agree with this.

You mentioned the BUILD Act, though, tying back to the proper echo system for development. China runs around the world building large infrastructure projects with their own labor, taxing the internal resources of countries, particularly in Africa, leaving large debt behind in those countries. We are running around the world trying to help people who are sick, trying to attack the structures of poverty, trying to create food security and the types of micro-development assistance which lead to long-term stability and just government, just economic outcomes and just governance.

The BUILD Act is hopefully, an attempt for us to re-create and reimagine what development systems ought to be because we have

got our own problems frankly with fragmentation. So could it be one of the pathways, particularly in the Northern Triangle, in which we think about the ecosystem of development more creatively, rather just a large terminal or a large road and calling it development but how we get underneath the structures of the deep wounds and structures of poverty and assist economically but also assist with stability so that people can have flourishing lives where they live?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I believe that the model, the BUILD Act model—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Is it a significant pathway for that kind of—

Secretary POMPEO. It is significantly different than the way we have done before in multiple dimensions, not the least of which is, it involves the private sector, as well. We have watched other countries tie their government to their private sector in ways that we would never do and we are proud that we have this separation in the United States. I am not suggesting for a moment we should behave the way they do with their governments' state-owned enterprises but being connected, having understanding, having American values talked about explicitly in the way we engage in the world I think is incredibly important. I think the BUILD Act is a very good model for that.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Well, sometimes the market doesn't function properly.

Secretary POMPEO. That is right.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. It needs capital assistance from public sources to actually springboard into viable partnerships with the private sector who should be virtuously committed to again the long-term ecosystem of proper economic well-being and development, and I think this is getting us there. I do see it as one pathway for reform of the fragmentation that we have. The ideal of again correcting market failure but leveraging the best of the market in private outcomes so that there is continuity and sustainability of the initial aid. Sometimes we do the right thing by trying to build out a school but when our soldiers or troops leave, it reverts back to what it was and it is not sustainable.

So, anyway, I am sorry for the speech here, but I am trying to immerse myself in this space and I actually need to talk to you, Ms. Lowey, about this. We want to convene a mapping strategy with key principles in this area. All the way from the World Food Program to the World Bank, to the International Agriculture Fund and others—

Secretary POMPEO. The IMF, others who are involved in these financing relationships.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. To try to rethink whether or not we are overlapping, we are too fragmented and more creative, imaginative ways to approach a whole variety of poverty assistance programs worldwide.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes sir.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, I asked you earlier about countries in Africa and the deep cuts that are being made by this budget. Now I would like to ask you about the cuts proposed for the Western Hemisphere, which I believe you proposed about one-third of the U.S. assistance to Western Hemisphere countries be cut. Again, these countries include countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. We know there are very real challenges that the region faces from the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and the migration challenges it has created in the region, to the recent civil unrest in Haiti, to the vulnerability of countries in the Caribbean. So these significant cuts, which cut across the board in your proposed budget for the western hemisphere appear to be at odds, quite frankly, with the State Department's own policy to promote economic growth and prosperity and democratic governance.

I am sure you know that China, and I know these countries very well, China is filling the void in many ways that have historically been neglected by the United States. In addition, I am concerned that your budget again—you are pulling PEPFAR funding from several countries in the Caribbean and with your intent to not continue such policies. It is already done this in countries like Haiti, where only 35 percent of 30,000 people living with HIV were accessing retroviral therapy.

So I would think we would go in the opposite direction and try to help these countries in terms of economic growth, in terms of development assistance and given the geopolitical issues that our country has with China, I think that we would see what China is engaged in, in the Caribbean countries and really, in many ways send a signal that we do care about this region.

My second question, and I will just ask you very quickly with regard to Cuba, I want to know what impact has the reduction of staff at the U.S. Embassy had in Havana on embassy operations, and I would like to know the status of the 26 members of the U.S. embassy community stationed in Havana in terms of the health injuries, including hearing loss and cognitive issues.

What is the status of the investigation into these unexplained health injuries? We have been following this very closely and there seems to be no conclusion yet, and yet the efforts toward at least people to people exchanges, and moving towards some semblance of private sector and people involvement in Cuba has been stopped, and the health issues have been used as a rationale for beginning to pull out, quite frankly.

Secretary POMPEO. I will try and take your first question at least in part. You began by talking about Chinese import or Chinese influence in the Caribbean region. It is real. It is an attempt to undermine Western democracy and Western values in those countries.

We are the first administration to actually take this issue seriously and those issues long predate this administration. We have confronted it. You can look at State Department demarches, you can look at our State Department mission statement. You can look at the priorities that I set out when I had ambassadors from all across that region in the world into the State Department in January this year. We understand and are directing our foreign assistance directly aimed at competing every place that China is trying to compete. It is a fact that we will never show up with as much

money as China is going to show up with. That will never be the basis of the competition. If it is, we will fail. Rather we——

Ms. LEE. Mr. Secretary, I am not asking us to show up with as much money. I am asking us why are we cutting where we have never really invested.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. We are going to make sure. I agree, the previous administration failed to invest there, I will concede that. We are very focused on this issue. I want to save a bit of time to talk about the very important issues you raised in your second question if I may.

I was and remained very concerned about those who have suffered health incidents in Cuba. We have expended enormous resources. We more broadly than just the State Department have expended enormous resources to identify the cause of this issue and importantly to take care of the broadly defined needs of those who have been injured by these health attacks.

We have not been able to resolve this yet. Some of the best minds not just in government but across the global medical system have not yet been able to identify and connect up so that we can find the cause so that we can go attack the problem set. It has proven incredibly vexing. I continue to worry for the officers that we have there. We have—we are doing all that we can to make sure that they do not suffer health incidents as well. We have a reduced staff there as a result of this.

It absolutely reduces our capacity to perform our diplomatic function there. We have asked the Cuban government to help us. They have done nothing to help us identify the cause of this. They say they had nothing to do with it and in some cases, they have suggested we are making it up or it is not real.

My Deputy John Sullivan, runs a Health Incident Task Force that meets each and every week to talk about the status of every dimension of this, how we are keeping our current officers safe, do we have the right staffing level, have we provided the resources to assist those who have been injured, are we doing the right thing to protect not only ours but other Americans that travel to the country? We are incredibly focused on this issue, but it remains a real concern.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Price.

Or Ms. Meng is next?

Ms. MENG. I wanted to ask about Iran and Syria. We have seen over the last several years of the conflict in Syria that Iran has managed to entrench itself deeply within Syrian territory. What more can the United States do to stem Iran's involvement in Syria? And in the context of your administration talking about the U.S. retreating, how will a retreat from Syria affect Iran's presence?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, we are not retreating, and had the previous administration not refused to take any action that might have upset the apple cart with respect to the JCPOA, we would not have the problem today not only with Iran and Syria but Iran's support of the Houthis in Yemen, Iran's running militias inside of Iraq, Hezbollah's influence in Lebanon. The list goes on.

When we took office, Iran was on the march. We have done a number of things to try and turn that around: first of all, we ac-

knowledge that the permanent pathway to a nuclear weapon that was the JCPOA made no sense for the United States of America; second, we have put on historic sanctions which are having an impact and I don't know if you all saw the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, now it has probably been 6-, 8-, 10-days ago rattling his tin cup around the world begging for money. That is a good thing. When Hezbollah can't pay its soldiers, when its people in the field are dying, that is a good thing for freedom and stability in the Middle East.

We are working with allies and partners. We convened 60 plus nations in Warsaw to talk about the threat from Islamic Republic of Iran. We had Israel and Arabs working together to find ways to resolve this threat that the Islamic Republic of Iran presents to the Middle East and the world. We are incredibly focused on it, we are going to stay at it, and I am confident that the Iranian people will be the ultimate beneficiaries of the work we are doing. I am confident the Iranian people will get what they so richly deserve. This is a nation with a rich history, a highly educated population, and a country that deserves better than the kleptocracy that is the Khomeini regime.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. President Trump, your president has been very clear in wanting to retreat, so, you know, I was just confused and I thank you for clarifying.

Secretary POMPEO. Well, you are just wrong about that.

Ms. MENG. The president was very clear in wanting to retreat.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to respond to that if you would like. I mean, this is untrue.

Ms. MENG. We can pull video clips but my next question if I could finish—

Secretary POMPEO. I liked to say, if you give me just 30 seconds—

Ms. MENG. If I could finish my question because I am running out of time.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MENG. In talking about rebuilding Syria, how are we ensuring that rebuilding efforts aren't benefiting Assad or Iran? What kind of messaging are we delivering to entities who are wanting to participate?

Secretary POMPEO. That is a good question. Let me answer your previous comments as well. So we have along with the Europeans made very clear that we will not provide reconstruction dollars to areas that are under the control of the Assad regime and that we are supporting Geir Pederson in his U.N. efforts to implement U.N. Resolution 2254. Ambassador Jeffrey is hard at work at that every day to get a political resolution inside of Syria as a precondition to U.S. dollars, frankly European dollars too, and we are hopeful the Arab countries will agree, it makes no sense when Assad is in control to begin to do rebuilding. We will still do humanitarian assistance in certain places where there is desperation, but it is our full intention to get the political resolution.

And I want to pivot to talking about our strategy. It is not retreat. The previous administration invited the Russians into Syria. I mean, it is just a fact. This administration took down the caliphate along with great partners we developed to defeat coalition of

some 80 countries that took down the last inch of real estate owned by ISIS.

The threat from radical Islamic terrorism remains. It is not going away. It is in West Africa. It is in Asia. It is in lots of places. It remains in the Middle East. We are determined to do this. We will move force levels. Sometimes we will increase, sometimes we will decrease but to describe what this administration has done, the complete destruction of the caliphate, where there were—you remember the pictures, people in cages, heads cut off on beaches. We took that down. To describe that as retreat, it is just not an accurate description of—

Ms. MENG. I am just repeating what I have seen in the media and we can have a whole other discussion—

Secretary POMPEO. I think you ought to be—

Ms. MENG [continuing]. On Iran and Syria and the support of Russia under this administration as well.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, let's return to the Northern Triangle. This is a critical issue I think that needs serious attention. When we see people fleeing their home countries, women, children, families fleeing violence and corruption, we naturally look to the humanitarian conditions, the economic conditions in their home countries, what is driving the migration.

Now, in the previous administration, late in the previous administration, with the support of Congress and as you know, General Kelly, then at Southern Command played a critical role in this, the U.S. greatly increased assistance to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. You also know that consistently now, three budgets in a row, the Trump administration has proposed to cut this assistance by something like 30 percent. Now, the president has actually publicly threatened to cut all assistance to the Northern Triangle essentially as punishment for the ongoing outmigration that we need to figure out how to mitigate. Let me just quote the tweet. This is from the president, Honduras Guatemala and El Salvador are doing nothing for the United States but taking our money. Word is that a new caravan is forming in Honduras and they are doing nothing about it. We will be cutting off all aid to these three countries taking advantage of the U.S. for years.

Now we have a news report saying that the funding that we have voted and as you know, the Congress has largely restored the funding that the president wanted to cut in the intervening years, well that money now is sitting there undistributed. This is quoting one of your State Department officials, we have paralysis moving this funding through the Northern Triangle because people don't know what the president wants, one State Department official said, that is a quote.

Secretary POMPEO. Do you—

Mr. PRICE. I am quoting, no one wants—

Secretary POMPEO. Can I have the name—

Mr. PRICE. Wants to do something—

Secretary POMPEO. Of that person?

Mr. PRICE. No one wants to do something that looks like they are not following his guidance. It is being slow walked. The paperwork impasse threatens to undermine efforts to address the root causes of migration from the region, the official added. Okay, what can you say about that? We have had in the past bipartisan agreement that these root causes need to be addressed. The president apparently doesn't like that way and now the aid that we have voted is being held up. I mean, is there anything inaccurate about these reports? What is U.S. policy? Guess that is the basic question that comes through all this.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to take the basic question. I must say, I would strongly prefer that we all avoid using unnamed sources from the media to make argument, I just think that is not constructive. I will always talk about the things we are doing in the places—

Mr. PRICE. Well, since you make a point of it—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. PRICE. You know, it is very common practice to have officials quoted in that way. Now, maybe your official was out of line, but is your official, as quoted here, is that incorrect?

Secretary POMPEO. Let me talk to you—I am happy to about to talk about the policy. President Trump has made it very clear that we are going to make sure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are going to achieve the outcomes, it is not enough to talk about them, it is not enough to feel good about them, it is not enough to be able show how much money we spent. Indeed, none of those are metrics that deliver.

You talked about all the money that is been spent over the past years, previous administration and the first couple years of this one, and you then said we still have an enormous problem. That is proof of its own that this has not been affective. And so our mission, the mission President Trump has given to me, Secretary Nielson's as we are trying to address these sets of issues, is developed a set of programs that reward effective outcomes, that reward good leadership to get us to a place where we actually achieve the outcomes. This is about reality, not—not feeling good that we spent money. It is about delivering on these programs, it has proven vexing, both that administration and this one, to stand up, effective governance. To your point you made a mention of caravans, we have people coming across the border today from these countries in numbers and in groups, it was onesies and twosies, mostly single males, that has now changed dramatically, it is now families coming across in significant numbers, in the dozens and dozens.

I think this is evidence that the policies that we had before have not been effective and so we are trying to take the money that you have appropriated and the taxpayers have graciously provided, to actually achieve important outcomes for the United States. That is the president's policy.

Mr. PRICE. Well, we would certainly welcome some indication of what that policy consists of. You know, you seem to be saying, let me check you on this, you seem to be saying that because this is a vexing problem because we have not solved it that our efforts to solve it have proved very, very challenging and very, very difficult, that therefore the rational response is to become punitive about

these countries, to cut off aid entirely or to hold up the aid that has been approved and what your official says, seek clarification. That is what we are seeking this morning, clarification. What is going on?

Secretary POMPEO. I hope I didn't use the word, punitive, I didn't intend—

Mr. PRICE. Well, I—

Secretary POMPEO. I may have misspoken.

Mr. PRICE. You don't think the tweet is punitive? The quote?

Secretary POMPEO. I think our policy is aimed at getting an effective outcome and that is what we are trying to achieve. We are making very clear to the leaders of those governments, not just their presidents, not just the most senior leaders, we are making clear throughout their immigration teams, their security teams, their economic teams that we have expectations for how their behavior must change in order to continue to maintain U.S. taxpayer support. That seems eminently reasonable.

Mr. PRICE. Word is that a new caravan is forming in Honduras and they are doing nothing about it. We will be cutting off all aid to these three countries, taking advantage of U.S. for years. You would not define that as a punitive statement?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not going to comment on—my evaluation, you asked me about U.S. policy and I have done my level best to articulate it for you, this morning.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I do want to express my appreciation to Mr. Price for referencing that aid. In fact, I have been very concerned for a while having been part of Vice President Biden's Task Force, and I remember it very clearly. I cannot say we were successful, but I don't think we can give up, and I look forward to continuing the discussion, Mr. Price, and with you, Mr. Secretary, about what more can we do to deal with the root causes, because these root causes and the effect of these causes directly impact what is happening at our border. So I do hope Mr. Price and this committee can work with you and see if these programs can be more successful in addressing root causes more successful in those regions of origin. So I thank you, Mr. Price, for referencing it.

Ms. Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Secretary, you, and I, I think we are getting along very well right now because we did agree that when you educate girls and women and they are healthier, it is better for the world. Let me find something else we can agree on. It is wrong to torture, to rape women, who are merely protesting for their human rights. Would that be wrong?

Secretary POMPEO. I want to make sure I don't get a double negative, that would be wrong.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. FRANKEL. All right. There we go. We have agreed on something else. But seriously, I want to ask you about what is going on to some of the women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia.

We know that there are some—many—who were protesting for the end of the ban on women driving and for abolishing the Male

Guardianship System, they had been thrown into prison where they are being subject to torture, rape, electric shock, sleep deprivation, really no justice occurring there. And I would like to know what if any interaction the State Department has had to try to alleviate what this situation?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes ma'am. We have had interactions at I think nearly every level about specific cases that we are aware of as well more generally the policies that we have every hope and expectation that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will engage in. When I say every level, I have had this conversation with the most senior leaders, including the king and the crown prince and my counterpart the foreign minister. I know my team has had similar ones. I know our team on the ground, I hope I will get an ambassador confirmed in Saudi Arabia before too long, his directive for me will be to continue to talk about these things in a way that we have done for—I think this predates me, but certainly for my entire—

Ms. FRANKEL. Are you putting any pressure on them to do something? I mean—

Secretary POMPEO. We have seen some progress, right, we have seen—

Ms. FRANKEL. We have?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, oh, sure. Oh, absolutely. I absolutely think—

Ms. FRANKEL. But their women—

Secretary POMPEO. There has been some progress.

Ms. FRANKEL. Are still being tortured. All right, well listen, I just want to say this. I think it is very important that you put as much pressure as possible to stop that—the torture that is going on to these women.

All right, I am going to find something else we can agree on. I know this.

Secretary POMPEO. We are three for three.

Ms. FRANKEL. We are three for three, now we are going to go four for four, and that is that we can't—and I don't mean—listen, I am going to say this as an expression, we can't wall off the world. I am not talking about south of the border, okay. One of the reasons, not just humanitarian reasons that we go into let's say places like Africa to stop the spread of disease, whether it is HIV, Ebola, tuberculosis, all kinds of horrible things, because we know these diseases spread. Correct?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am. Global—

Mr. FRANKE. Sure.

Secretary POMPEO. Pandemic, is always a real risk.

Ms. FRANKEL. All right so this is why I want to go back to the discussion that some of us had about the Global Gag Rule, what I called this ultra-obsession that your administration has with abortion.

It is one thing we don't use federal funds for abortion, I may disagree with that but the fact of the matter is your new interpretation of what was called a gag rule now is harming organizations that are doing just general healthcare, whether it is contraceptive care or HIV or just maternal care. And I am going to give you an example, there is an organization called AMODEFA, I think I said it right, which is the only private health provider in Mozambique,

and they have lost funding due to the expansion of the Global Gag Rule, estimated that it affects 500,000 people who are receiving care for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, because they are closing their doors.

So here's my question to you is, what kind of analysis have you done or you are doing to see or to understand the effect of cutting off these funds?

Secretary POMPEO. So I appreciate the question, we do disagree on abortion, and I will take that as a fact in how I respond to this. I cannot see how—first of all you call it a gag rule, no one's stopped from speaking anywhere.

No, the gag implies—

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, let me just—

Secretary POMPEO. There is no place that can't speak.

Ms. FRANKEL. I don't want to cut you off but you know—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. FRANKEL. You have taken it so far that an organization that doesn't even do abortions if are asked a question where they can get an abortion, they are not allowed to be told. They are not allowed to even have a pamphlet lying around that gives women alternatives. So yes, it is a gag.

Secretary POMPEO. Oh, it is?

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay, well, maybe you want to look into it.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to look into it. But there is no one being denied their right to speak. They can say what they want—

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay, well, how about getting the healthcare?

Secretary POMPEO. What they can't do is take U.S. taxpayer funds and perform abortions or abortion related services.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay. Listen—

Secretary POMPEO. These are the activities, and we have continued to provide—there are not a single dollar reduction with respect to women's healthcare that is associated with the president's Mexico City Policy and all the ways that we are implementing that, not one single dollar reduction, it is perverse to think, when I think about places like China where most of the abortions that take place are women, it is perverse to me to say—

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, listen—

Secretary POMPEO. That denying abortion somehow—

Ms. FRANKEL. Let me just reclaim my time, because—

Secretary POMPEO. Somehow harms life, I—

Ms. FRANKEL. Let me just reclaim my time—

Secretary POMPEO: Yes.

Ms. FRANKEL. To say this. Some of things we agree. I mean, I don't believe in forced abortions, Okay? But I don't believe in forcing women to have children if they don't want to have children.

But here's the thing, I am urging you, I am begging you to please do an analysis of how this gag rule is affecting healthcare around the world because you and I both agree that when women succeed, the world succeeds.

And with that I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And with that, I turn to Ms. Torres.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you.

We are back to Central America. I am concerned about the reliability of some of our security partners in the region, specifically in the Northern Triangle and I want to make sure that we aren't sending good money, you know, after bad. I am not confident that Honduras government is a reliable partner in the fight against narco-trafficking. They recover less than one percent of what is trafficked through the country, that is not even the cost of doing business for a narco-trafficker so on that note, are you aware that on November 26, 2018, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York indicted Juan Antonio Hernandez Alvarado, President Hernandez's brother, on drug trafficking charges?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. TORRES. So—

Secretary POMPEO. I didn't know the date, but I knew of the indictment, yes, ma'am.

Ms. TORRES. So according to the indictment, Mr. Hernandez had access to cocaine labs in Honduras and Columbia. This cocaine was tagged or marked, stamped T.H. for his initials, Tony Hernandez. Are you confident that President Hernandez was unaware that his brother is an alleged narco-trafficker?

Secretary POMPEO. May I answer that for you in a different forum, please?

Ms. TORRES. That's okay.

Secretary POMPEO. But here's what I will try to answer the question that you are getting to with respect to the policy—

Ms. TORRES. I am happy—

Secretary POMPEO. But we do have real concerns.

Ms. TORRES. Do a—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. TORRES. A classified briefing on this.

Secretary POMPEO. Just, there is ongoing—anyway, I would just prefer to do that, if that is acceptable?

Ms. TORRES. I can respect that. I am very concerned that we continue to work with people and invite them to ground-breaking ceremonies for our U.S. Embassy buildings, when we should not be doing business with these people and we should be holding them accountable for the crisis that is happening on our southern border.

We have to be serious about holding these three governments accountable for what they are doing, forcing young children and women out of their countries. Look, I was one of those kids, my parents didn't see a future for me in Guatemala. They sent me to the U.S. to live with my father's oldest brother. No parent should have to make that decision. No child's future should be robbed from being able to have a successful life where they were born. And I think we can agree on that. And I hope that we will continue to pay attention to the region and hold people accountable, including the State Department.

The State Department is severely underfunded. I don't blame them for some of those missteps that they have taken, but at the same time, we have to put on a serious face in front of these people. The attacks against CICIG, while we may disagree on press releases that might have been sent, and it wasn't from them, it was the Attorney General's Office. You and I know that CICIG is an investigative body. Their charge is to investigate corruption and

hopefully someday that these governments will be able to do their own investigations. That is not happening, not with Morales, it is not happening with Moxie, with President Hernandez in Honduras. I am hopeful that in El Salvador, with the new president, we will have an opportunity to do better, but we can't do better with the new administration when we are showing a terrible example of continuing to support bad actors in these two other countries.

Secretary POMPEO. I am sorry. You didn't ask a question.

Ms. TORRES. I didn't. But I would like you to respond and commit. Last year we passed an amendment in the NDAA, which required the State Department to provide Congress with a report, a report that includes a list of corrupted elected officials. They were supposed to do this 180 days after the NDAA was enacted. To my count, it is 226 days now, long overdue. Can we expect that sometime in the near future?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I will look into that. I was unaware that we had a due out and it was overdue. And I will absolutely look into that and get you a response on when we believe we can complete that task.

Ms. TORRES. It is.

Secretary POMPEO. That legally required task.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you. And I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. Before I turn to Mr. Rogers, I want to thank you Ms. Torres for your comments.

And I do want to say, Mr. Secretary, I think there is about \$1.2 billion left in that account from it was called the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America. We had appropriated \$4 billion and there is about \$1.2 billion left in the account. I would hope that we can continue this discussion. It would be good to know, from your perspective, what we have accomplished, what remains to be accomplished, a great deal, and what we can do about it. I am not sure it is just another \$1 billion, that is a lot of money, but I would like to see, from you a review of all of our actions that have frankly addressed the serious challenge in the region.

Secretary POMPEO. We will provide that to you and your Committee and to the Ranking Member.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, Syria. I understand the top U.S. objective there is the enduring defeat of ISIS. I assume that means not only the destruction of the caliphate which has occurred but also preventing a return of the conditions that allowed ISIS to arise in the first place.

During testimony before Congress earlier this year, the U.S. Commander of CENTCOM said, and I quote, the coalition's hard won battlefield gains must be secured by continued interagency efforts on mobilizing the international community to prevent a return of the conditions that allowed ISIS to arise. To accomplish that goal, what sort of sustained efforts, political, diplomatic, military would be required of us and our partners in Eastern Syria?

Secretary POMPEO. So with your permission let me extend to Eastern Syria and Western Iraq, the place that the caliphate existed as a contiguous institution. It will take efforts in each of those

two places that have mostly a political and diplomatic component to them so there will be an element of diplomacy, pure political diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction aid; we will need to continue the defeat ISIS coalition which we cannot only bring people but resources, money to this challenge, the reconstruction in these places is going to be an enormously costly undertaking.

Second, there is the political piece which is the work that we need to do. I will meet with the Speaker of the House equivalent from Iraq who is travelling here to the United States this week. I will meet him this week to work with the political leadership in Iraq, to assist them with building our their own, the Iraqi Security Forces so that they can maintain control and keep their own countries secure so that ISIS can't arise.

And it is not just ISIS, right? In Idlib and in Syria we have got all other forms of radical, we have got Al-Nusra Front, the list is long, so this threat of terrorism in the region remains. It is going to take a political resolution in Syria to create the conditions where Syria can both begin to rebuild and begin to build out its security forces as well; it is an enormous undertaking.

Mr. ROGERS. But you don't request any funds for Syria in your budget.

Secretary POMPEO. We don't. We are not there yet. We can't operate in two-thirds in Syria today and we won't operate while Assad continues to be there and wreak the devastation that he has until we have got a pathway where we have a political resolution. So we believe we have the resources to continue to do the work in the Eastern third, the northeast part of Syria, the work frankly with the Kurds and the Turks so that we get an outcome there that is stable and lasting as well that underwrites the capacity to take U.N. Security Council 2254 and implement it. That is the mission statement and we believe we have the resources to do that. And by the way, there are also resources that aren't inside the State Department budget, right. Your quote was from someone at CENTCOM if I remember correctly. Our DOD resources will be a central component of that as well.

Mr. ROGERS. In the short term, how are we going to help our friends, the Syrian democratic forces? How do we help them cope with the large number of captured foreign fighters?

Secretary POMPEO. I am glad you asked this question. This challenge of foreign terrorist fighters that reside today mostly in Eastern Syria although some are being transported to other places is a real threat. I had a pretty senior military leader who reminded me that he did not want his children and grandchildren fighting these same terrorists, the same human beings because we detained them. He risked his life to get them and that we were risking putting them back out on the street.

The State Department has led an effort to repatriate these places to countries where they have justice systems and the capacity to hold them for an extended period of time but I am mindful some of the terrorists that were captured early on in this fight after 2011 had 20-year prison sentences, they will be getting out pretty soon. This risk of foreign terrorist fighters and their reentry when they have not changed their ways and their desire to destroy America, destroy the West and commit acts of Jihad is a very real challenge.

Mr. ROGERS. Are they are of many different nationalities?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, we have repatriated to countries in Northern Africa. We have repatriated to Arab countries. We have asked every country to take back those that are own and then we have many that we won't be able to return for a host of reasons, and we have got to find a solution which we have not yet done. The State Department and Department of Defense are working closely with the Iraqis and others to figure out the best way to ensure they don't return to the battlefield. It is a real challenge.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Secretary, you have been very generous with your time with us today. We thank you very much.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. I appreciate that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Secretary, I, too, want to thank you again for spending this time with us. I would like to ask you if you think the State Department has gotten its swagger back, do you have adequate resources to fund your important work both here and overseas? And as we contemplate your budget for 2020, if there are specific requests, we would be happy to assist you in your very important work. So has the State Department gotten the swagger back?

Secretary POMPEO. I hope so, but I will leave that to others to judge. I will leave those here in America and those around the world to make that decision. I hope they have. It has been an incredible privilege to lead amazing diplomats, civil servants, foreign service officers, and local employed staff around the world who are doing remarkable work while I have been the Secretary of State. I have been so fortunate to be their leader. I hope I have helped them perform their function better, and that is what I really meant, if we get swagger back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I appreciate that and I must say I am honored to be Chair of this Subcommittee, it's a choice and all of us who serve on this Committee made this important choice so we want to be sure that we are responding to your requests, to the urgent needs. I know we can't solve all the problems of the world but we certainly would like to work with you to address the many, many challenges we have.

So in closing—

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

And this concludes today's hearing. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned.

And I thank you very much—

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. For being with us.

Secretary POMPEO. Thanks for conducting a very professional hearing.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Secretary POMPEO. I appreciate it. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned.

[Questions and answers submitted for the record follow:]

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is the purpose and impact of these cuts? How have these cuts affected the United States' ability to influence a future two-state solution between Israelis and the Palestinians?**

**Answer:**

In August 2018, following an interagency review, the Administration redirected FY2017 Economic Support Funds originally planned for the West Bank and Gaza to high-priority projects elsewhere, to ensure these funds were spent in accordance with U.S. national interests and provided maximum value to the U.S. taxpayer. Separately, at the request of the Palestinian Authority, as of February 1, we ceased providing any assistance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip under the authorities specified in the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018. The Administration remains strongly committed to achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and the Palestinians that offers a brighter future to all.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Last year, the Administration announced it would cut off all U.S. aid to UNRWA, which provides education, health care, and humanitarian assistance to more than five million Palestinians. **Since this decision, has the total suspension of aid reduced the United States' ability to push for critical reforms within UNRWA and, most importantly, reduced our ability to reach those in dire need? Is the State Department monitoring to what extent other countries in the region, particularly UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, are providing assistance to help offset the US cuts and whether any such assistance has also contained stringent oversight over their use?**

**Answer:**

For years, the United States has urged UNRWA to seek out new voluntary funding streams, increase financial burden sharing among donors, and find ways to reduce expenditures. We reiterated this when we made our final \$60 million contribution in January 2018, and communicated the need to institute such reforms directly to UNRWA, as well as to the regional and international stakeholders who make up UNRWA's largest contributors. While several donors, such as the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, increased contributions to UNRWA in 2018, UNRWA continues to operate with an unsustainable business model. Palestinians deserve better than a service provision model that operates in permanent crisis mode.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The House Oversight and Reform Committee has reported that former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and other senior officials pushed the transfer of highly sensitive U.S. nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia, despite objections from ethical and national security officials.

**What is the Department's assessment of the Committee's report? Is the Trump Administration currently considering such a policy? What would be the short- and long-term consequences of allowing Saudi Arabia nuclear weapon technology? Lastly, what is the State Department's position on providing Saudi Arabia nuclear weapon technology?**

**Answer:**

Saudi Arabia is a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and has a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Saudi Arabia has undertaken obligations never to acquire nuclear weapons and to apply IAEA safeguards to all peaceful nuclear activities. We are in conversations with Saudi Arabia about concluding a civil nuclear cooperation agreement, which would provide a legal basis, in conjunction with licenses issued by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, for the transfer of nuclear material and equipment for peaceful purposes. We are not considering the transfer of nuclear weapon technology to Saudi Arabia, which is prohibited by domestic law and the NPT.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is the State Department's assessment on whether the Iranian regime is continuing to abide by the requirements under the JCPOA? If our European allies were to follow the United States and withdraw from the Iran deal, and the agreement is ruptured with Iran, is it the assessment of the Department that Iran could be pressured to return to the negotiating table with the P5+1 to work out a different arrangement? If Iran would not return to the negotiating table, what then is the policy this Administration would pursue?**

**Answer:**

We will never allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. We are concerned that Iran has retained the archives of its past, covert nuclear weapons program. We have now imposed the toughest sanctions ever on the Iranian regime to deprive it of the resources it would need to pursue any renewed nuclear weapons program and other malign behavior. We will continue to apply pressure to bring the Iranian regime to the negotiating table to conclude a comprehensive deal that more permanently addresses the full range of our concerns.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Is the State Department being consulted about plans to pull most of the US troops out of Syria? If so, what steps is the Administration taking to bolster our Kurdish allies and prevent an attack by Turkey on their forces? Once most of the US troops are withdrawn, what leverage will the IS have to prevent a slaughter in northeast Syria where millions of civilians are trapped between government forces trying to regain control, the remaining ISIS militants, and the al-Qaeda backed militants?**

**Answer:**

The United States is keeping a residual force in Syria as part of the continued Defeat-ISIS Coalition mission, helping root out ISIS remnants, and preventing ISIS from regaining momentum including through facilitating stabilization and humanitarian assistance in liberated areas. Our goals remain the enduring defeat of ISIS, a lasting political solution in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2254, and the removal of Iran and its proxies from Syria. The territorial defeat of ISIS does not constitute its enduring defeat. While engaging Turkey to ensure a stabilized northeast, the President has been clear that Turkish forces should not militarily engage with the Syrian Democratic Forces, including its Kurdish component.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is the Administration doing to support women and girls who had been enslaved under ISIS' brutal rule, particularly US-led efforts to reach the Yazidi community? What counter extremism efforts is the Department undertaking regarding the hundreds of former jihadist fighters who joined ISIS and are now being held by Syrian Democratic Forces? What safeguards are in place in Iraq and other countries to prevent these militants from escaping and becoming major security threats?**

**Answer:**

The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS is supporting Iraqi and UN programs to reintegrate and protect women and girls, including Yazidis, enslaved under ISIS. This includes efforts to gather evidence of ISIS accountability through \$2 million in support to the UN Investigative Team against Da'esh as well as projects that provide psychosocial support, legal aid, and livelihoods assistance to help survivors recover from trauma. The Coalition also advises and assists with the security of detention facilities in Iraq and Syria, and supports these efforts with an extensive U.S. campaign to persuade countries of origin to repatriate foreign terrorist fighters held by the Syrian Democratic Forces for prosecution or other accountability measures.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Earlier this year, CNN reported that American-made weapons sold to Saudi Arabia and the UAE had fallen into the hands of Al Qaeda-linked fighters in Yemen as well as hardline Salafi militants. If the United States has not authorized Saudi Arabia or the UAE to transfer US-made equipment in Yemen to a third party, **how have such transactions occurred? What quantity and value of weaponry has been transferred? Is the Administration pressuring Saudi Arabia and the UAE to take concrete steps to prevent any future transfers of US-made weapons to extremists in Yemen? If these transfers continue, would such behavior justify suspending US arms sales to these countries?**

**Answer:**

The Department did not authorize transfers of U.S.-origin weapons from Saudi Arabia or the UAE to Yemen or other proxy militant forces in Yemen. We continue to investigate these allegations and are coordinating closely with our partners to determine whether U.S.-origin weapons or other defense articles were transferred to unauthorized end-users in Yemen without the Department's written consent. If the articles were intentionally transferred without the Department's written consent, we will coordinate within the interagency to determine the appropriate next steps for any repercussions or procedures to mitigate future transgressions.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Has the Administration considered revisiting its Kemp-Kasten determination towards UNFPA, or at least looked at exemptions for severe humanitarian situations? What kind of investigation has the State Department conducted to ensure its information is correct and not based on rumor?**

**Answer:**

The U.S. government continues to prioritize the prevention of, and response to, violence against women and girls, and maternal and child health care in humanitarian settings. The Department's Kemp-Kasten determinations in FY 2017 and FY 2018 were made based on the fact that China's family planning policies continue to involve the use of coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization and that UNFPA partners on family planning activities with the Chinese government agency responsible for these coercive policies. The Department will continue consulting with UNFPA to carefully assess its programs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#9)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In November, the White House announced that as part of its implementation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, it would not issue waivers to several of the poorest countries, thereby cutting off health and development assistance. Implementers have been in limbo since December waiting for word on the fate of their programs. **What is the process for making programming decisions? How does cutting off health and development assistance advance the anti-trafficking agenda in the worst performing countries?**

**Answer:**

I have directed my leadership team to take a common sense and consistent approach to implementing the restrictions under the TVPA in accordance with the November 29, 2018 Presidential Memorandum. There is an ongoing process to consider certain limited cases in which it is in our foreign policy and national security interest to continue assistance that would be subject to the TVPA restrictions by relying on available authorities. The restrictions will be applied in a way that is mindful of the impact on peoples' lives, particularly vulnerable populations in greatest need.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#10)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The Administration's goal of bringing more allies and partners to the table to address today's growing threats is laudable. But, given that the National Security Strategy highlights the "indispensable" nature of our diplomats in preventing conflicts and keeping us safe, **how do you reconcile this discrepancy in resources with not only the threats we currently face but this Administration's own strategy to confront those challenges?**

**Answer:**

The Administration views State and USAID as critical to national security, but is also committed to restraining overall non-defense discretionary spending. The President's Budget Request for FY 2020 supports more effective American diplomacy, prioritizes embassy security and the protection of staff, and provides for strategic partners and diplomatic progress. It also makes our programs more effective while increasing the share other donors contribute to lessen the burden on American taxpayers. The FY 2020 Request focuses resources on key Administration priorities, including the Indo-Pacific Strategy; countering Russian aggression and malign influence; and protecting and assisting religious and ethnic minorities.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#11)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

We continue to hear from NGO implementing partners of delays in receiving FY 2018 funding including new programming as well as incremental funding of already existing programs. This was also a problem with FY 2017 funds. These delays and disruptions adversely impact the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. supported programming. Implementing partners are often forced to bridge the funding gap with their own funds and, in a few cases, the programs had to scale down and NGOs feared that they needed to shut down operations. For some partners, they've been told by the administration that the delay is due to a congressional notification that we often have not yet seen. **Can you commit to me that you and Administrator Green will disburse funds more quickly this year than in the two prior years and that if there are problems, you will inform this committee?**

**Answer:**

Administrator Green and I are committed to working to ensure that the Department of State and USAID provide funds to partners as quickly as possible for programs that advance U.S. foreign policy objectives while assuring compliance with applicable legal and other requirements. We will continue to keep your staff apprised as we work through this process.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#12)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Women face many barriers to realizing their human right to full and equal political participation around the globe. **In FY 2020, how will the State Department use its resources to ensure that women can participate equally in political and electoral processes?**

**Answer:**

In FY 2020, the Department of State will continue to ensure that appropriated funds advance women's equality, and leverage women's leadership in political, electoral, economic, and security spaces. The Administration's Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) initiative recognizes that global stability is only realized when women and men alike are able to participate economically and politically at all levels. In addition, through the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017, we are working with women and men to prevent and respond to violence at the polls, on physical and sexual harassment attacks against female politicians, and other barriers to electoral participation.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#13)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**How is the State Department using its resources to implement the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Act, which became law in October 2017? Specifically, how is the State Department: Providing technical assistance, training, and logistical support to female negotiators, mediators, peace builders, and stakeholders; Addressing security-related barriers to the meaningful participation of women; Supporting the training, education, and mobilization of men and boys as partners in support of the meaningful participation of women; Encouraging the development of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms that are inclusive of the experiences and perspectives of women and girls; and Expanding and applying gender analysis, as appropriate, to improve program design and targeting?**

**Answer:**

I support the full empowerment of women and girls as a priority for achieving U.S. foreign policy goals. The Department harnesses bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, public diplomacy, and foreign assistance programming to advance the meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making in addressing conflict and promoting security. Through targeted diplomatic and programmatic interventions and activities, the Department aims to lift barriers and prevent harmful and discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect women. The U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Strategy establishes strategic objectives and calls for an implementation framework to efficiently and effectively direct policy and programmatic efforts.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#14)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**In FY 2020, how will the State Department use its resources to mainstream LGBTQ+ issues throughout its programming, as well as protect and empower LGBTQ+ people facing marginalization?**

**Answer:**

Under my leadership, the Department has been clear and consistent in affirming that human rights are universal, and that no one should face violence, criminalization, or serious forms of discrimination because of their LGBTI status or conduct. The Department will continue to provide strong U.S. programmatic and emergency support for LGBTI human rights defenders and civil society organizations working to combat violence, serious forms of discrimination, and criminalization faced by LGBTI persons around the globe.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#15)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Over the last several years, in a number of places around the globe, LGBTQ people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured, and even killed, just for being who they are. We've seen it in Chechnya, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and other places. Last year, the U.S. refused to join a statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council calling for the perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. **Why did the U.S. refuse to sign that statement? What specifically is planned to help LGBTQ people in Chechnya, Egypt and other places targeted by abuse?**

**Answer:**

The statement referenced was a joint statement made during the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council, from which the U.S. withdrew in June 2018. We are not participating in any UN Human Rights Council sessions, including by signing onto or aligning with any statements. The Department continues to affirm that human rights are universal, and that no one should face violence, criminalization, or serious discrimination because of their LGBTI status. We will continue to stand up and speak out in support of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons in all corners of the globe, including Chechnya and Egypt, and to press to hold perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses to account. Additionally, the Department will continue work to counter violence, serious discrimination, and criminalization of LGBTI conduct or status.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#16)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Amidst significant proposed cuts, how does the President's proposed budget ensure that we're able to comprehensively address well-evidenced barriers to girls' education, a goal of the Joint Strategic Plan, in both humanitarian and development contexts, including for example, child marriage, early pregnancy, menstrual hygiene management needs, gender-based violence, and harmful social norms that de-prioritize girls' education?**

**Answer:**

I support the full empowerment of women and girls as a priority for this Administration. The Department harnesses bilateral and regional diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, public diplomacy, and programming to encourage counterparts in other countries to support advancement of quality education for women and girls. The Department has committed to taking certain concrete steps to reduce child, early, and forced marriage; prevent gender-based violence, human trafficking, and HIV in adolescent girls and young women; and encourage governments to take steps to deliver quality education. We will continue to leverage all available resources and Department tools to advance this goal.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#17)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage is an important moment to advance efforts to ensure universal and affordable health coverage for all. But recent reports that the U.S. is removing references to sexual reproductive health in international documents are worrying. **How will the U.S. respond to efforts to insure family planning and reproductive health remain part of any document?**

**Answer:**

The Administration shares the aspiration of increasing universal access to health care. We remain committed to the commitments laid out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. As has been made clear over many years, there was international consensus that these documents do not create new international rights, including any “right” to abortion. This Administration seeks to find consensus with a wide group of Member States on clear terminology that would better capture our common commitment to meeting the health care needs of all, while protecting and respecting the sanctity of life around the globe.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#18)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The President's budget request asks for \$1.8 billion for the Indo-Pacific Strategy. That's quite an ask when the strategy is still a mystery despite repeated attempts by myself and my staff to read it. Before appropriating this large sum, I'd like to see a copy of the strategy to evaluate how taxpayer dollars will be spent. **When will a copy of the Indo-Pacific Strategy be available for review? Would the funding be targeted to a certain strategic pillar, such as economic growth, security, or governance, or would it be focused towards certain countries?**

**Answer:**

I submitted a Report entitled "Indo-Pacific Strategy, Its Implementing Policies and Plans, and Estimate of Resources Required through 2025" to your Committee on March 15, 2019. The strategy provided on March 15 included an estimate of resources through 2025 across the three pillars of the strategy. The Administration's FY 2020 Request includes \$791.4 million for the economic pillar, \$279.6 million for the security pillar, and \$175.7 million for the governance pillar. The FY 2020 Request also included \$566 million in Diplomatic Engagement funding to support the strategy. We will continue to seek opportunities to keep the Hill fully informed of our plans to implement the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita M. Lowey (#19)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

With the passage of the BUILD Act, the new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) will operationalize, if all goes to plan, this October. **How is the State Department preparing for the transition of the DFC, particularly on maintaining strong linkages among the DFC, State, USAID, and other agencies?** The budget requests an additional \$50 million for State and USAID to transfer to the DFC for use on various projects such as technical assistance, feasibility studies, and credit subsidies. **Will there be interagency coordination to determine how this \$50 million is used?**

**Answer:**

The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation's (DFC's) success will require strong linkages to the State Department and USAID to complement and be guided by U.S. foreign policy, development, and national security objectives. The Department of State has been participating in an interagency working group focused on DFC transition to date. Once effective, the DFC's Chief Development Officer will leverage many existing resources of OPIC and the expertise of USAID, the State Department, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to ensure that DFC projects have lasting development outcomes. We anticipate strong interagency coordination in planning the use of \$50 million in requested transfers.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Nita Lowey (#20)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Our democracy and governance programs not only promote our values such as freedom, human rights, and transparency but also our national security by strengthening weak civilian institutions that allow for transnational crime to influence peace processes, regional security, and democratic reform. I believe the Administration agrees, having identified governance as a pillar of the Administration's \$1.8 billion Indo-Pacific strategy. But the President's budget request cuts democracy, human rights and governance programs by \$1 billion. **How will this monstrous cut impact our democracy and transparency programs? Further, how does this not undermine our previous and current investments in democracy and good governance, which we all know are not quick fix problems but require institutional change, sustained investment, and time?**

**Answer:**

The Department's democracy, human rights, and governance programs, including rule of law, good governance, and anti-corruption programming are critical for defending national security and asserting U.S. leadership and influence. While lower than FY 2019 enacted appropriations, the FY 2020 budget request reflects the Administration's priorities to advance peace and security, expand American influence, and address global crises while making efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Hal Rogers (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is your assessment of Hezbollah's power and influence in Lebanon?**

**Answer:**

Hizballah exploits institutional weaknesses within the Lebanese state and uses its ever-present threat of violence to expand its political power and force other parties to conform to its agenda. It holds three of 30 cabinet ministries and 11 of 128 parliamentary seats. However, fractures are emerging in Hizballah's support foundation. U.S. sanctions against Iran and Hizballah have reduced Tehran's support for Hizballah and hurt Hizballah's finances. Hizballah has been forced to take the unprecedented steps of soliciting donations from supporters, scaling back its social service provision, reducing salaries, and furloughing its employees.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Hal Rogers (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The fiscal year 2020 budget request for Lebanon includes \$50 million for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). **What is the capability of the LAF following several years of significant investment from the Foreign Military Financing Account, in addition to DOD resources? What is their capacity to be a meaningful counterweight to Hezbollah?**

**Answer:**

The U.S. investment in the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has paid dividends for U.S. policy interests in the region. Our more than \$2 billion in training and equipment since 2005 has transformed the LAF into an effective counterterrorism partner that capably expelled ISIS from the country. Following the defeat of ISIS, the LAF has increasingly deployed more troops to the south and to the border regions in an effort to assert greater Lebanese government control over Lebanese territory. An expanded LAF presence in Hizballah's traditional heartland is a meaningful counterweight to Hizballah, directly challenging its narrative as a guarantor of security.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Hal Rogers (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**How would you assess the LAF's independence from Hezbollah?**

**Answer:**

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is independent of Hizballah and the LAF's leadership acts autonomously to implement its own decisions under the guidance of Lebanon's civilian leadership. However, the LAF – like all Lebanese institutions – must contend with Hizballah's efforts to gain influence. The LAF places a high priority on maintaining its exemplary track record with USG-provided equipment and fully complies with end-use monitoring requirements that mitigate the risk of any assistance being diverted to Hizballah. Prior to the provision of assistance, the United States vets recipients for human rights violations and Hizballah affiliations.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Hal Rogers (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**How would you assess the LAF's willingness and capacity to disarm Hezbollah?**

**Answer:**

The primary mission of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is to preserve Lebanon's security and to extend Lebanese government control across Lebanese territory. It is unlikely that the LAF, which operates under guidance from Lebanese civilian leadership, would be ordered to disarm Hizballah given the destabilizing violence that could erupt from such a step. The LAF cannot take action to disarm Hizballah absent an order to do so from Lebanon's civilian leaders.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Hal Rogers (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The fiscal year 2020 budget request for Cuba democracy programs is \$6 million. This represents a cut of \$14 million from the current level. In fact, additional funds were made available by USAID above the annual \$20 million in fiscal year 2017 to address the significant demand for such programs in Cuba. **What is the justification for such a significant reduction? Which agencies and offices would program the \$6 million?**

**Answer:**

Foreign assistance, to include levels for Cuba, was reduced from enacted levels globally. The Administration's FY 2020 request provides a sustainable level of democracy support. Advancing democracy and human rights in Cuba remains the Administration's priority through U.S. foreign assistance to Cuba, and we are committed to ensuring U.S. democracy assistance in Cuba achieves results. The programming agencies include USAID's Cuba Office; the State Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Hal Rogers (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is the current analysis of the Cuba democracy program implementation by USAID, State/DRL, and State/WHA? What measurable impact has been achieved by WHA-run programs with FY 2016 and FY 2017 funding? If such programs are lacking in successful outcomes, is there consideration of providing resources once administered by WHA to more effective and efficient programs such as those managed by USAID?**

**Answer:**

Cuba democracy programs utilize the diverse and unique skill sets of both the Department of State and USAID to further the promotion of democracy, civil society, and independent voices in Cuba. Together, we provide support to fledgling civil society organizations and individuals, increasing their capacity to report on and carry out human rights issues and program and increase the free flow of uncensored information to, from, and within the island. As a result, Cuban civil society can hold the Cuban government accountable for human rights violations in international fora, lead community efforts to improve democratic principles, and provide concrete alternatives to repressive Cuban government policies.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

UN humanitarian agencies are playing an essential role in responding to the crisis in Yemen, where nearly 75% of the population is reliant on some form of humanitarian aid. The World Food Program (WFP), for example, is working to reach 12 million people per month with food and nutritional assistance, while UNICEF is working to ensure access to clean water and education for children and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has integrated nutrition assistance for pregnant women into its reproductive health and safe delivery services. Nevertheless, violence and a lack of access allowed by the parties to the conflict remain significant obstacles to reaching more people. **What concrete actions is the administration taking to convince the Saudis and Emiratis to do more to ensure humanitarian access for the UN and international NGOs?**

**Answer:**

Hudaydah and Saleef ports remain open and operational, and humanitarian actors are continuing to import assistance for tens of millions of Yemenis utilizing these key entry points. The Administration engages the Saudis and Emiratis at all levels on this issue – through private bilateral engagements and other opportunities, such as meetings of the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism stakeholders and the Yemen Quad (United States, UK, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE). We will continue to urge all parties to the conflict to adhere to the Hudaydah Agreement and increase humanitarian and commercial access to all of Yemen's ports of entry and throughout Yemen so that critical food, fuel, and medicine reaches the neediest Yemenis.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 1, 2019 the U.S. military announced that its annual large-scale joint exercised conducted with South Korea every spring would not be held, just days after the latest round of U.S.-DPRK negotiations failed. **Has President Trump's decision to end joint US-ROK military exercises affected diplomatic negotiations on the peninsula?**

**Answer:**

We made an Alliance decision with our Republic of Korea (ROK) ally to conclude our legacy exercises in favor of newly designed field training programs. This decision reflects not only the close coordination we have with the ROK, but a firm commitment by this Administration to make every effort to support diplomatic efforts to achieve the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea. Our men and women in uniform on the Korean Peninsula ensure our diplomats speak from a position of strength, and I thank them for that.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 1, 2019 the U.S. military announced that its annual large-scale joint exercised conducted with South Korea every spring would not be held, just days after the latest round of U.S.-DPRK negotiations failed. **To what degree were East Asian allies consulted before announcing this change?**

**Answer:**

These types of decisions are discussed, vetted, and agreed upon at all levels of government and over the course of many months with our allies. This was an Alliance decision made between both the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to continue to support diplomatic efforts. The United States is closely coordinating with our ROK and Japanese allies on our combined defense posture. Our force posture remains appropriate and sufficient to meet our commitments to the defense of both the ROK and Japan.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 1, 2019 the U.S. military announced that its annual large-scale joint exercised conducted with South Korea every spring would not be held, just days after the latest round of U.S.-DPRK negotiations failed. **What is State's strategic vision for continuing to pursue negotiations with DPRK?**

**Answer:**

The United States remains ready to proceed – in parallel with denuclearization – with concrete steps to transform the U.S.-North Korea relationship and establish a lasting and stable peace on the Korean Peninsula. The United States envisions a bright economic future for North Korea, the region, and the world.

The international pressure campaign on the DPRK has been instrumental in creating this diplomatic opening. Its effectiveness was made evident by North Korean appeals for sanctions relief. Even as diplomacy proceeds, it is critical that partner nations continue to apply diplomatic and economic pressure on the DPRK, including through the full implementation of UN sanctions. As the President has made clear throughout this process, he expects international pressure on the DPRK to continue until denuclearization is achieved.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency within the Department of Homeland Security is seeking to close all of its international field offices and may transfer many of their functions to embassies and consulates. **Does the State Department have adequate personnel, physical space, and budgetary resources to absorb these functions?**

**Answer:**

The specific USCIS functions the Department of State will absorb will be determined in the months ahead. The Department will assess personnel, physical space, and budgetary requirements during the planning process for our assumption of the functions overseas that are now managed by USCIS. We are committed to working with USCIS to ensure a smooth transition of services in the coming months. In order to fully recover the Department of State's costs for absorbing USCIS-related functions, the Department of State will calculate the cost for additional personnel, physical space, and other resources and seek reimbursement through an Economy Act Interagency Agreement with USCIS.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency within the Department of Homeland Security is seeking to close all of its international field offices and may transfer many of their functions to embassies and consulates. **What effects, if any, would a transfer of the duties of these field offices, including those pertaining to family reunification, enabling adoptive children to join permanent families in the United States, and considering parole requests from individuals outside the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons, have on the provision of these functions?**

**Answer:**

The Department of State will coordinate closely on any changes in USCIS' presence overseas if an interagency agreement is reached. The Department of State already carries out some USCIS functions at over 200 posts overseas, as we have for many years, and we are prepared and able to expand that program. Should USCIS overseas offices be phased out, we anticipate a smooth transition and will continue our clear communication with U.S. citizens abroad and those seeking USCIS services.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The UN works to advance human rights through a number of tools, including more than 50 special procedures, experts with mandates to promote universal human rights through country visits, expert-level reporting, and supporting the work of local advocates on the ground. Considered independent from the UN, these human rights monitors do not receive a salary and are expected to serve in their personal capacity. Existing independent experts have mandates from the UN Human Rights Council to investigate member state practices on an array of issues, including freedom of religion and belief; freedom of expression; combatting human trafficking; and protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Since January, the administration has stopped cooperating with UN special procedures, upending decades of established practice whereby the State Department has responded to queries from mandate-holders and facilitated country visits. **Could you clarify State's stance on this issue?**

**Answer:**

We continue to cooperate with UN special rapporteurs but prioritize our interactions to ensure engagement maximizes the promotion of U.S. objectives. In February, the Department met twice with the special rapporteur for extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, at her request, to discuss the Global Magnitsky program, as well as her inquiry into the killing of Jamal Khashoggi. Over the past several months, Department officials and our missions to the UN in New York and Geneva have also met with numerous mandate holders, including the independent expert on the Central African Republic and the special rapporteurs on Burma and freedom of religion or belief, among others.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Grace Meng (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The UN works to advance human rights through a number of tools, including more than 50 special procedures, experts with mandates to promote universal human rights through country visits, expert-level reporting, and supporting the work of local advocates on the ground. Considered independent from the UN, these human rights monitors do not receive a salary and are expected to serve in their personal capacity. Existing independent experts have mandates from the UN Human Rights Council to investigate member state practices on an array of issues, including freedom of religion and belief; freedom of expression; combatting human trafficking; and protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Since January, the administration has stopped cooperating with UN special procedures, upending decades of established practice whereby the State Department has responded to queries from mandate-holders and facilitated country visits. **Are you concerned that authoritarian regimes—including those in Tehran, Pyongyang, and Caracas—will simply use this as justification for their own efforts to stonewall independent experts?**

**Answer:**

We continue to cooperate with UN special rapporteurs. We prioritize our interactions to ensure engagement maximizes the promotion of U.S. objectives. By contrast, autocrats need no excuses to ignore concerns about the abuses they commit. The special rapporteurs on Iran and North Korea, whose work the U.S. endorsed, have never been permitted entry to those countries. Venezuela's dictatorial regime long denied entry to legitimate rapporteurs, dating back to late President Hugo Chávez, only welcoming one: Alfred de Zayas in 2018. The United States sponsored the resolution creating the mandate of the special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, thus projecting key U.S. values abroad.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Educational and cultural exchange programs are one of the best bangs for your buck. These programs reach not only the program participant, but every community the participant touches. They help to clarify misconceptions and eradicate stigmas of different cultures; and they help Americans become proficient in critical languages that our success in intelligence, diplomatic and economic activity depends on. Strategic resourcing in language, regional expertise, and cultural studies is critical to our nation's economic competitiveness and national security.

The President's budget request even states that these programs "are central to the Department's diplomatic engagement efforts" AND "meet U.S. national security and foreign policy goals and target geographic areas and societal actors not easily reached."

Yet, the President's budget proposes to cut Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs by 55.8%. **Please explain the reasoning behind this proposed cut.**

**Answer:**

The Administration's budget request makes efficient and effective use of available resources. The State Department's overall mission to engage foreign publics on behalf of the United States remains unchanged.

I will continue to prioritize engagement with emerging world leaders through USG-sponsored exchanges. The FY 2020 budget request continues support for core global programs such as Fulbright and the International Visitor Leadership Program, while focusing resources on programs that support Administration initiatives. Academic, professional, youth, and cultural exchange programs will remain effective foreign policy tools.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Further, the FY2020 budget justification documents state that “Fulbright” is “of highest priority to the U.S.” **How do you justify cutting “high” priorities by 47 percent? And this is just one example of “high priority” programs you cut by nearly 50%. How do you intend to sustain these high priority programs at lower funding levels?**

I’ve heard some from the Administration say this cut was to eliminate redundancy; however, State Department exchange programs are vastly different than other exchange programs, and the President’s budget request eliminates the Department of Education’s educational exchange and language programs.

**Answer:**

I will direct the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to continue focusing available resources on programs such as the Fulbright and the International Visitor Leadership Programs that provide global reach and allow for broad flexibility in addressing foreign policy themes. These and other foundational programs will remain models of demonstrated effectiveness even with reduced funding. ECA oversight of its exchange programs begins with setting goals that advance U.S. foreign policy and includes monitoring throughout program implementation to ensure the highest quality performance. ECA also conducts long-term impact evaluations of its programs and tracks and engages alumni to ensure return on investment.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

We have heard concerns that the consolidation of the humanitarian accounts and the removal of refugee programming from the State Department will result in a lack of prioritization of refugee crises and issues, at a time of unprecedented global forced displacement. We have also heard concerns that decoupling refugee programming from the diplomatic efforts of the State Department will reduce the effectiveness of U.S. diplomacy on refugee issues. With the rhetoric from the President regarding refugees and the dramatic reduction in refugee resettlement in the United States, these concerns are not unfounded. **What do you say to these concerns, and what is the Administration's long-term financial and diplomatic commitment to addressing the needs of refugees globally, particularly for shelter, protection, education and other vital sectors?**

**Answer:**

The FY 2020 budget request preserves the State Department's lead role on humanitarian policy and refugee resettlement as well as its lead role on advocating for States to comply with their international refugee law obligations and to protect refugees and other conflict-affected people. A new proposed high-level, dual-hat leadership structure under my direction will also elevate humanitarian assistance within the USG to promote coherence in our response.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

At the request of several congressional committees, the State Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) is investigating allegations that senior department officials have engaged in politically-motivated targeting of career personnel. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently indicated that the State Department OIG's attempts to interview an important DHS witness who was employed at the State Department when the alleged prohibited personnel practices may have occurred have been unsuccessful. Some Members of Congress have also expressed concern that the State Department has not responded to congressional requests for information and documents on these matters. **Has the State Department's response to these allegations been consistent with applicable laws and regulations, including the Inspector General Act (P.L. 95-452, as amended)? What impact have the allegations had on the State Department's efforts to recruit and/or retain personnel?**

**Answer:**

Yes. The Department takes seriously any allegations of prohibited personnel practices, including retaliation against career personnel for their real or perceived political affiliation. In March and June 2018, the Department took action to ensure such allegations were investigated by referring them to the Department's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC). The Department is cooperating with the ongoing investigations and will take appropriate action upon receipt of OIG and OSC recommendations and findings. Prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated and the Department is not aware of such allegations having any impact on recruitment or retention. The Department is also engaging in good faith with relevant committees of Congress in seeking to accommodate pending requests related to these allegations.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Among the State Department's stated priorities for Worldwide Security Protection in FY2020 is funding to enhance the State Department's cyber monitoring capabilities. **What is the current threat environment facing the State Department's information technology systems? How will this requested funding enhance the State Department's capabilities to monitor and respond to such threats?**

**Answer:**

The Department's threat environment continues to grow more challenging as cyber adversaries advance in sophistication and seek to take advantage of our increasing attack surface given the accelerated pace of IT modernization, especially in cloud and mobile computing. Our global digital footprint, complex supply chain, and high-profile diplomatic efforts increase the opportunities and incentives for malicious nation state cyber activity. Protecting our information and IT infrastructure is one of my highest priorities, and the \$242 million included will be used to strengthen our cybersecurity posture through new and expanded programs in the areas of cloud security, vulnerability scanning, network monitoring, threat detection, and incident response.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The President's budget request proposes several major changes to the funding and implementation of U.S. humanitarian assistance, including consolidating the humanitarian accounts and shifting all State Department humanitarian programming into the new Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance at USAID, among other proposals. **How, specifically, will these proposed changes improve the delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance? What evidence has been gathered that these proposed changes are necessary, or that such changes will not reduce the quality of U.S. humanitarian assistance? What consultations have been held with U.S. humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies, who are responsible for implementing much of this assistance?**

**Answer:**

Consolidation of all overseas humanitarian assistance into the new Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance at USAID is intended to optimize internal coherence in U.S. humanitarian assistance. The FY 2020 budget request restructures our overseas humanitarian programming to enable the U.S. to respond seamlessly to evolving humanitarian needs. The FY 2020 request preserves the State Department's lead role on humanitarian policy and refugee resettlement as well as its lead role on advocating for States to comply with their international refugee law obligations and to protect refugees and conflict-affected people.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Increasingly, we are seeing examples of this Administration using humanitarian assistance, whether it be providing or terminating assistance to vulnerable communities, for political ends. Recent examples include: cutting assistance to the West Bank and Gaza, and just this weekend, we saw the provision of humanitarian assistance in Venezuela become political. USAID's website says the following, "USAID will not walk away from our commitment to humanitarian assistance, and we will always stand with people everywhere when disaster strikes, for this is who we are as Americans." **How do you reconcile using humanitarian assistance as a political instrument with USAID's mission and the American values of helping the world's most vulnerable?**

**Answer:**

The well-established principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence are critical to enabling humanitarian organizations to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and minimize the costs of conflict, disasters, and displacement. USAID, as part of the USG, supports our humanitarian partners as they apply these principles. Furthermore, USAID recognizes the importance of needs-based humanitarian assistance. The United States, via USAID and the State Department, has been providing humanitarian assistance since FY 2017 to help people who have fled the chaos in Venezuela, and we will continue to help relieve the suffering of Venezuelans, both inside and outside Venezuela.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The needs of liberated areas in Iraq and Syria are arguably enormous in light of the destruction of vital infrastructure and widespread population displacement. **While the Administration is seeking to encourage increased foreign government investment in the recovery of these areas, should the United States invest more in the recovery of these areas? Have foreign donors been forthcoming, and if not, what risks might arise?**

**Answer:**

The United States, along with our partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, recognize that stabilization initiatives, explosive remnants of war (ERW) removal, detention operations, and assistance for persecuted minorities in Iraq and Syria are critical to ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS. Since its inception, the Coalition has provided over \$1 billion to the UN Development Program's Funding Facility for Stabilization in Iraq. In northeast Syria, the Coalition has contributed over \$325 million for stabilization and early recovery activities since April 2018. In addition to stabilization efforts, international donors raised \$30 billion in pledges for Iraq at the Kuwait Reconstruction Conference in February 2018.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#9)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Some critics believe that the Administration has not responded strongly enough to concerns that Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales is undermining anti-corruption efforts, including efforts to expel the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala or CICIG. **How do you respond to that critique? What are the Administration's priorities in Guatemala?**

**Answer:**

The United States has clear interests in Guatemala, including addressing the drivers of illegal migration, advancing free and fair democratic elections, promoting the rule of law and strong democratic institutions, and supporting the government's sovereign efforts to address endemic corruption and impunity, which threaten Guatemala's future economic security and stability. The Department works closely with the Guatemalan government on these U.S. priorities and sought reforms of CICIG to provide greater transparency and accountability. When CICIG's mandate ends in September 2019, the United States will continue efforts to fight corruption in Central America's Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#10)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Last year you announced a new performance-based Global Accelerator to End TB, in order to catalyze investments to end tuberculosis. As a part of this you announced a performance-based measurement system to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars achieve results and USAID awarded \$35 million to the University of North Carolina to assist in the development of these measurements. **Can you tell us more about this exciting work and update us on the progress being made?**

**Answer:**

In September 2018, USAID launched the Global Accelerator to End Tuberculosis (TB) to support countries to meet the target endorsed at the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting of treating 40 million people by 2022. The Accelerator focuses on 25 countries with high burdens of TB where USAID can invest in local communities and partners to deliver performance-based results towards the global target. In September 2018, USAID announced the first award of the Global Accelerator to End TB, a \$35 million five-year, project that is implemented by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in partnership with John Snow, Inc. More information can be found at [www.TBDIAH.org](http://www.TBDIAH.org).

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#11)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

We have seen a proliferation of project delays caused by the Administration's interpretation or reinterpretation of various conditions placed on aid in statute in areas related to, for example, human trafficking, terrorism, and immigration. We commend the Administration for taking such issues seriously, however, we are concerned about the increasingly opaque process through which the Administration certifies which countries have or have not met such conditions. **Can you commit to providing regular updates to the Committee on how such conditions and certifications are being interpreted and processed by the Administration?**

**Answer:**

Yes, the Department is committed to keeping the Subcommittee informed of our policies in these areas and working with you to make sure our policies are clear.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative David Price (#12)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The fight against Al Qaeda and ISIS have long-been spearheaded by the Defense Department. And it seems that throughout the years, this effort has become more and more like playing whack-a-mole, as terrorist organizations morph, change, and move. **Do you think there's a role (or a larger role) for USAID to play in creating a more sustained effort to help those areas where AQ and ISIS are known to have a presence?**

**Answer:**

Supported by defense and diplomatic colleagues, USAID has several roles to play as the United States confronts the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al Qaeda, and similar organizations. Where the United States military and its allies defeat these groups on the battlefield (as in Iraq and Syria), USAID provides services in areas that these groups would otherwise seek to influence in the absence of a viable government, ensuring an enduring defeat. USAID's broader commitment to stabilization in areas experiencing violence, including from terrorist organizations, was encapsulated in the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review, which articulates USAID's role in the nexus between defense, diplomacy, and development to stabilize areas at risk for violence or a resurgence of conflict.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#1)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019 you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **NGOs have already reported that compliance with the Global Gag Rule has increased their administrative costs due to adding complicated compliance mechanisms. How much will this broad interpretation increase this burden for these NGOs? How much will this new compliance burden affect the amount and quality of health services this funding is intended for?**

**Answer:**

Recipients of U.S. foreign assistance are responsible for complying with a number of USG requirements. I am confident that we can continue to work with NGO partners to meet our critical global health goals while preventing U.S. taxpayer dollars from subsidizing abortion. We will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure they understand how to comply with the policy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#2)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **Has the State Department looked into how this broad interpretation will impact programs across the development sector?**

**Answer:**

In the six-month review of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) policy, we found that less than one percent of prime partners had declined to agree to the PLGHA term in their awards. In those rare instances, State and USAID have worked to minimize any potential changes in services. The Mexico City Policy does not change overall funding levels, nor does the Secretary’s recent announcement.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#3)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **Have you discussed with our global partners what it means to their development programs to have them bound by a policy from a government they do not receive funds from?**

**Answer:**

This Administration will do all we can to protect and respect the sanctity of life all across the globe. We will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure they know what complying with the policy entails.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#4)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **As long as the Mexico City Policy is in place, will you commit to conducting comprehensive and annual reviews that study impacts on people’s health, such as maternal well-being, incidence of HIV/AIDS, and infectious diseases, instead of merely looking at implementation?**

**Answer:**

We have worked closely with our interagency partners to implement the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy, examine progress in carrying it out, and monitor its effects. The six-month review released in February 2018 called for further analysis when more experience would enable a more thorough examination.

The Department of State is working with USAID and interagency partners to complete that review. The United States is a leader in assistance for global health, including in its monitoring, evaluation, and use of data for learning. I will continue to support robust efforts to review and evaluate U.S. foreign assistance programming.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#5)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **Where there are service disruptions due to the Mexico City Policy, will you commit to review any requests for exemptions and what criteria will you use to determine potential exemptions?**

**Answer:**

In consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, I may authorize case-by-case exemptions to the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy. Factors may include, but are not limited to, the existence of a public health emergency that impacts global health assistance; the possibility of extreme and irreversible service disruption if the exemption were not granted; whether there are other partners qualified to execute the program; or other extenuating circumstances that warrant granting an exemption.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#6)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **Will you also commit to making all stakeholder comments public – not just those that support the Mexico City Policy?**

**Answer:**

In conducting the six-month review, we welcomed comments from all sides of the issue. We do not plan to publish stakeholder comments, as we did not inform stakeholders that their comments would be disseminated when they submitted them. Stakeholders are free to make their own comments public.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#7)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **How much funding is impacted by the four prime recipients who refuse to comply with the Mexico City Policy?**

**Answer:**

USAID identified three centrally funded prime partners that declined to agree to the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy as of September 30, 2017. Under centrally managed awards for voluntary family planning, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Marie Stopes International (MSI) declined to agree to the policy. Started in 2014, these family planning awards’ total estimated costs (maximum amount of funding that USAID could have obligated into the award) were \$71.8 million for IPPF and \$74.0 million for MSI. The third prime partner declined in connection with a small-grants initiative; the total estimated cost of the award was \$500,000. The fourth prime recipient was a recipient of funds from DoD.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#8)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced that the State Department would be acting to “implement this [the Mexico City] policy to the broadest extent possible.” Under this broad interpretation, a foreign NGO in compliance with the Mexico City Policy would have to track the funding they flow-down to a subgrantee from other bilateral or private donors for activities related to any number of development issues and ensure those subgrantees are not engaged in any of the prohibited activities even though they don’t receive any U.S. global health assistance. **How many people did the four prime recipients who refuse to comply with the Mexico City Policy previously serve and what measures are you taking to ensure the same number of women and girls receive life-saving health services?**

**Answer:**

Under its prime award, the International Planned Parenthood Federation reported that it served 19.6 million new users or adopters of contraceptive methods in the project’s priority countries for voluntary family planning between 2014 and 2017. Marie Stopes International reported serving 1.76 million clients with voluntary family-planning services between 2014 and 2017 under its prime award. The third prime recipient’s activities focused on sourcing new development solutions and it did not provide health care or directly serve beneficiaries. When a partner declines to agree to the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance term in its award, USAID transitions its activities to other qualified partners while minimizing the disruption of services.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#9)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Since May 2018, Saudi Arabia has arrested prominent women's rights advocates, many of them longtime supporters of ending the ban on women driving and abolishing the male guardianship system. Some have been reportedly subjected to torture, including sexual violence, beatings, electric shocks, and sleep deprivation. **Since these women were first detained, you have met on numerous occasions with senior Saudi officials. Have you urged them to immediately and unconditionally release these human rights defenders?**

**Answer:**

I have urged the Saudi Arabian government to avoid overly broad interpretations of criminal behavior that lead to arbitrary arrests and detentions. Department officials and I have also pressed the Saudi Arabian government to address reports that detained activists have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, and inhumane treatment. The Department will continue to underscore to the Saudi Arabian government the need to ensure fair trial guarantees, freedom from arbitrary detention, transparency, and rule of law in all cases.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#10)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Since May 2018, Saudi Arabia has arrested prominent women's rights advocates, many of them longtime supporters of ending the ban on women driving and abolishing the male guardianship system. Some have been reportedly subjected to torture, including sexual violence, beatings, electric shocks, and sleep deprivation. **What actions is the State Department taking to hold accountable those involved in perpetrating the alleged abuses?**

**Answer:**

The Department of State shares your concern regarding reports of arbitrary confinement, sexual violence, and torture of women's rights activists in Saudi custody. I and other Senior State Department officials have raised these concerns numerous times with Saudi leadership at the highest levels. We will continue to urge the Saudi Arabian government to ensure fair trial guarantees, freedom from arbitrary detention, transparency, and rule of law.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#11)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Can you assure us that the State Department will consult Afghan women moving forward and ensure that they have a seat at the negotiating table in peace talks?**

**Answer:**

Achieving sustainable peace in Afghanistan is an ambitious goal, requiring a politically and socially inclusive approach that brings in all stakeholders. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad is talking to all relevant parties to the conflict in Afghanistan and working to create the conditions for the Afghan government, other Afghan leaders, members of civil society, and the Taliban to come together and negotiate a political settlement. We recognize that women's meaningful participation in peace processes results in peace agreements that are less likely to fail and will continue to encourage women's participation in national and local peace efforts in Afghanistan.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#12)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The President's budget requests no funds for the empowerment of adolescent girls. **Does the State Department have the resources to implement the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls?**

**Answer:**

I support the full empowerment of women and girls as a priority for this Administration. The Department harnesses bilateral and regional diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, public diplomacy, and programming to encourage counterparts in other countries to support progress toward the advancement of the status of women and girls. Through its ongoing implementation, the Department has committed to taking certain concrete steps to reduce child, early, and forced marriage; prevent gender-based violence, human trafficking, and HIV in adolescent girls and young women; and encourage governments to take steps to deliver quality education. We will continue to leverage all available resources and Department tools to advance this goal.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#13)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Where are U.S. contributions to UNFPA fiscal years 2017 and 2018 being reallocated to, and which specific programs are these funds supporting? Will all transferred funds go to our existing international family planning and reproductive health programs?**

**Answer:**

USAID has invested the FY 2017 funds originally intended for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in innovative and cost-effective approaches to improving women's health, including voluntary family planning and maternal and reproductive health activities, with a focus on priority countries with the lowest incomes and highest rates of maternal mortality. USAID also programmed a portion of the funds to prevent cervical cancer in Malawi and Mozambique as part of integrated programs to improve women's health. USAID intends to notify the FY 2018 funds allocated to UNFPA in women's health, including activities in voluntary family planning and maternal and reproductive health.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#14)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Has there been a lapse in reallocating UNFPA funding to other family planning programs? If so, what is the health impact?**

**Answer:**

USAID has assured me there has not been a lapse in reallocating the FY 2017 funding, originally intended for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), to other voluntary family planning programs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#15)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Will the Administration consider a humanitarian exemption for UNFPA for its work in critical settings such as refugee camps?**

**Answer:**

The USG continues to prioritize the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence, and maternal and child health care in humanitarian settings. In terms of humanitarian funding, State and USAID will continue to work with other UN agencies and NGOs that have been able to expand their programming to provide maternal and neonatal health care, including emergency obstetric care, and services for survivors of gender-based violence in emergency settings.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#16)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Does the Administration plan to conduct a more thorough determination for fiscal year 2020, including visiting UNFPA programs and speaking to their staff?**

**Answer:**

The State Department will continue consulting with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) to carefully assess its programs. I believe we have sufficient information to make a determination in FY 2020 without sending a delegation to visit UNFPA's programs in China. Successive administrations have strongly condemned the birth-limitation policies of the Chinese state. The Department has made numerous interventions over the years to urge UNFPA not to partner with the Chinese government on its abusive family planning program, which includes coercive practices that prevent women and couples from exercising their right to decide for themselves the number, spacing, and timing of their children.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#17)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced the State Department would withhold funding from the Organization of American States (OAS) under an alleged violation of the Siljander amendment, which prohibits the use of foreign assistance funds to lobby for or against abortion. Repeatedly at the UN, including last week at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of the State Department and U.S. Mission to the UN have made statements that “we do not support abortion.” **Can you explain how these statements directly made by employees of the U.S. State Department are not considered to be lobbying against abortion, and thus a direct violation of the Siljander amendment?**

**Answer:**

Consistent with longstanding practice, the United States routinely describes its foreign policy position on issues before multilateral bodies including on issues related to abortion.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#18)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced the State Department would withhold funding from the Organization of American States (OAS) under an alleged violation of the Siljander amendment, which prohibits the use of foreign assistance funds to lobby for or against abortion. Repeatedly at the UN, including last week at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of the State Department and U.S. Mission to the UN have made statements that “we do not support abortion.” **With the announcement of withholding funding for OAS based on an allegation of violating the Siljander amendment, does the State Department intend to release justification of how they came to this determination to be lobbying against abortion, and thus a direct violation of the Siljander amendment?**

**Answer:**

As I stated in remarks to the press on March 26, information came to our attention that an organ of OAS (the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) had engaged in abortion-related advocacy. In light of U.S. concerns regarding these activities, the Department has withheld the estimated U.S. share of possible OAS expenditures on the activities.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#19)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced the State Department would withhold funding from the Organization of American States (OAS) under an alleged violation of the Siljander amendment, which prohibits the use of foreign assistance funds to lobby for or against abortion. Repeatedly at the UN, including last week at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of the State Department and U.S. Mission to the UN have made statements that “we do not support abortion.” **Per recommendations in reports previously published by the GAO and the State Department Inspector General, has the State Department developed additional guidance defining what actions constitute lobbying for or against abortion, including explicitly outlining what actions are prohibited?**

**Answer:**

Consistent with the Department of State’s federal assistance directive, the standard terms and conditions for federal assistance awards to NGOs prohibit the use of funds under the award to lobby for or against abortion. All federal assistance personnel are encouraged to review with their recipients the Department’s standard terms and conditions for assistance awards at the outset of the awards to ensure that the recipients are familiar with and able to comply with all of the standard terms and conditions.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#20)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced the State Department would withhold funding from the Organization of American States (OAS) under an alleged violation of the Siljander amendment, which prohibits the use of foreign assistance funds to lobby for or against abortion. Repeatedly at the UN, including last week at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of the State Department and U.S. Mission to the UN have made statements that “we do not support abortion.” **Has the State Department developed guidance and training on compliance with the Siljander amendment and disseminated to all entities that must comply? If so, where is this information publicly available?**

**Answer:**

Consistent with the Department of State’s Federal Assistance Directive, the standard terms and conditions for federal assistance awards to NGOs prohibit the use of funds under the award to lobby for or against abortion. All federal assistance personnel are encouraged to review with their recipients the Department’s standard terms and conditions for assistance awards at the outset of the awards to ensure that the recipients are familiar with and able to comply with all of the standard terms and conditions, which are available to the public on the Department’s web site at: <https://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra/c11811.htm>.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#21)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

On March 26, 2019, you announced the State Department would withhold funding from the Organization of American States (OAS) under an alleged violation of the Siljander amendment, which prohibits the use of foreign assistance funds to lobby for or against abortion. Repeatedly at the UN, including last week at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of the State Department and U.S. Mission to the UN have made statements that “we do not support abortion.” **How will these funding cuts to OAS affect the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights’ ability to protect all Americans throughout the Western Hemisphere against human rights violations?**

**Answer:**

The United States remains the top foreign assistance donor to the OAS, and I am confident that the OAS and the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR) will continue to carry out their important work to support democracy and human rights throughout the hemisphere. We take seriously our obligation to ensure activities implemented with U.S. funds remain consistent with the Siljander Amendment and all U.S. laws. In light of concerns regarding certain IACHR activities related to abortion, the Department now includes the standard provision prohibiting the use of funds for abortion-related activities in federal assistance awards to the OAS and has withheld the estimated U.S. share of possible OAS expenditures on these activities.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#22)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In the 2017 and 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the “Reproductive Rights” subsection was renamed “Coercion in Population Control.” **Why did the State Department remove information and data on barriers to maternal health, contraception and reproductive rights from the Human Rights Report this year?**

**Answer:**

In the 2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the “Reproductive Rights” subsection was renamed to “Coercion in Population Control” in accordance with the requirement of U.S. law that we report on “wherever applicable, practices regarding coercion in population control, including coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization.” Additional material on maternal mortality, contraception, and similar issues is available via hyperlink in the text of each country chapter and in an appendix to the Reports.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#23)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In the 2017 and 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the “Reproductive Rights” subsection was renamed “Coercion in Population Control.” **Do you believe that denying women lifesaving services like contraception and maternal care are human rights violations?**

**Answer:**

I support the Administration’s efforts to address the maternal health and voluntary family-planning needs of women around the world. The United States remains the largest donor to women’s health around the world, and the President’s FY 2020 budget request includes significant funding for voluntary family-planning programs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#24)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In the 2017 and 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the “Reproductive Rights” subsection was renamed “Coercion in Population Control.” **Do you believe that denying abortion care for rape survivors is a human rights violation?**

**Answer:**

I support the Administration’s efforts to address the maternal health and voluntary family-planning needs of women around the world. The United States remains the largest donor to women’s health around the world, and the President’s FY2020 budget request includes significant funding for voluntary family-planning programs. However, there is no international right to abortion.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#25)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

In the 2017 and 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the “Reproductive Rights” subsection was renamed “Coercion in Population Control.” **If we are no longer monitoring the full range of reproductive rights in this report, how will we address actors that curtail women’s rights and commit acts of violence against them?**

**Answer:**

We advocate that governments have an obligation to protect, respect, and uphold the dignity and fundamental freedoms of all people, including women, and we document violence and other human rights violations and abuses against women in the Reports.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#26)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The Yemeni crisis is in many ways a children's crisis. According to NGO Save the Children, 85,000 children may have died from malnutrition in Yemen since 2015 and one in every 10 children in Yemen is now displaced. The UN has just stated that 2018 saw a 51 percent increase in killing and maiming of children and that more than 4 million children cannot currently access education. **What is the USG's strategy to ensure children's unique needs are prioritized in the short-term, while laying the groundwork for a stable future?**

**Answer:**

We remain deeply concerned about the impact of the humanitarian crisis on the lives of Yemen's children. The United States has provided more than \$1.3 billion in humanitarian assistance since October 2016, including food security assistance comprised of nutritional products to counter malnutrition, medical care, safe drinking water, and other support. We also provided \$26 million to support basic education in the past two years. We urged the Saudi-led coalition to provide \$70 million for monthly cash stipends for teachers. Conflict is the primary driver of the humanitarian crisis. Only a political solution can bring an end to the conflict and ensure a safe, secure, and prosperous future for all Yemenis – and children in particular.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#27)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Each year, 12 million girls are married before they turn 18. This has enormous negative impacts on their health, economic and physical security, and usually means the end of their education, adding to the 130 million girls who are not in school but should be. According to UNICEF, the root cause of this issue is gender inequality – the fact that girls are not valued as much as boys. The President’s budget for the State Department requests funds to combat and end gender-based violence. **How much of these funds will be allocated toward combating child marriage, addressing the needs of already married girls and addressing the root causes of child marriage globally?**

**Answer:**

Preventing and responding to child, early, and forced marriage continues to be a priority for the Department and USAID. The President’s budget request for FY 2020 allows USAID to continue ongoing programming in this area through our nearly \$70 million allocation across all accounts for programs to prevent, and respond to, gender-based violence, including child marriage.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#28)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The White House's initiative to aid women contains a modest \$50 million to aid 50 million women. **Is this new funding over and in addition to existing funds to support gender equality and women's economic empowerment globally?**

**Answer:**

I support the National Security Presidential Memorandum officially launching the new Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative. USAID and the Department of State have provided an initial \$50 million in FY 2018 funds for the new W-GDP Fund while continuing to provide support for existing gender equality and women's economic empowerment programs globally. In addition, we expect to work with other donors and partners on this initiative, and U.S. efforts are intended to catalyze private sector investment as well. We expect the resources supporting this initiative to exceed the USG funding.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#29)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**How will the initiative be carried out within the State Department in order to reach its goal of empowering 50 million women by 2025?**

**Answer:**

We will support the ambitious target of 50 million women reached with existing programs, as well as by mobilizing with the private sector and civil society organizations that are focused on the priority areas of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative. The three pillars are as follows: (1) women prospering in the workforce; (2) women succeeding as entrepreneurs; and (3) women enabled in the economy. The W-GDP initiative will work through Departments and agencies to prioritize programs focused on women's economic empowerment and those that engage external groups, such as the private sector, in order to increase progress on empowering women by inspiring others to join our efforts.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#30)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

The White House's initiative to aid women contains a modest \$50 million to aid 50 million women. **How will the State Department direct these funds to reach the goals of the initiative?**

**Answer:**

I support the ambitious target of reaching 50 million women. We will prioritize this work with existing programs, as well as working closely with the private sector and civil society organizations. USAID and the Department of State have provided an initial \$50 million in FY 2018 funds for the new W-GDP Fund while continuing to provide support for existing gender equality and women's economic empowerment programs globally.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#31)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What are the various channels for employees to report sexual harassment or assault? Is there a central repository of the relevant policy and process information available to employees? How is that information circulated?**

**Answer:**

Employees may report sexual harassment or assault in a number of ways, including via an internal State Department harassment-reporting link, by notifying any supervisor, or contacting the Office of Civil Rights. The Foreign Affairs Manual explains the policies for harassment reporting and investigations, and is available to all employees both domestically and overseas, and the public at large. All posts are required to display EEO/harassment information in a public place. A victim of sexual assault may reach out for help from the Diplomatic Security (DS), Regional Security Officers who are the law enforcement first responders at post. Any victim can also contact a duty special agent, 24/7 in the DS Office of Special Investigations to report an assault.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#32)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**Is the Department's training on anti-harassment policies and procedures provided to all new employees, including contractors? How frequently is the training provided? What is the enhanced training for supervisors?**

**Answer:**

We ensure that all employees receive training on harassment policies, rights, and responsibilities at all levels of employment, starting with orientation. Within one year of becoming a supervisor, employees are required to receive training that highlights their unique responsibilities. Employees in certain positions receive additional, specialized training, including Chief of Mission, Regional Security Officer, Human Resource Officer, and all employees departing for Priority Placement Posts (PSP) and unaccompanied posts. Many posts and bureaus require annual refresher training for all employees – including contractors and locally employed staff – and an online training will be available to all employees within the year.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#33)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**How many people work in the Office of Civil Rights? At what levels? Is the Office of Civil Rights sufficiently staffed to respond to the reported increase in sexual harassment complaints in 2018? What is the average caseload of an employee? What were the 2016 and 2017 staffing numbers? Does the Department need additional resources to staff the office? Has the Office of Human Resources experienced an increase in workload due to these referrals? If so, is it sufficiently staffed?**

**Answer:**

When fully staffed, the Office of Civil Rights has 27 full time employees, ranging from the GS-4 to SES levels. In 2016, the employee count was 30; in 2017, the count was 24; in 2018, the count was 20. We are in the process of hiring and plan to be fully staffed as soon as possible. We have seen an increase in reports due, in part, to the emphasis we are placing on mandatory reporting for supervisors and increased awareness for all employees; the Bureau of Human Resources (HR) has experienced an increase in workload over the past five years, especially in 2018, also due to this awareness. While HR's Conduct, Suitability, and Discipline Division experienced significant staff turnover in 2017, we have successfully recruited and added staff beginning in late 2018.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#34)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is the average time to investigate cases of sexual harassment? What is the average time to investigate cases of sexual assault? For cases of sexual harassment, how long does it typically take for the Office of Human resources to take action after receiving the results of the investigation conducted by the Office of Civil Rights?**

**Answer:**

Harassment and sexual assault investigations and the Bureau of Human Resources' (HR) disciplinary timelines vary by case complexity. The Office of Civil Rights makes every effort to complete all investigations as promptly as possible, not to exceed 180 days. When appropriate, the Office of Civil Rights coordinates with managers to ensure corrective measures are taken, even while an investigation is pending. When the Department receives a report of sexual assault, Diplomatic Security Office of Special Investigations confers with the Department of Justice and other federal law enforcement agencies as appropriate. HR prioritizes review of such cases, and can initiate action in as short as a few weeks.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#35)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**How does the Department currently track and report on sexual harassment and sexual assault? When will the Department begin providing and sharing aggregate data so employees have access to this information?**

**Answer:**

We utilize an internal electronic database to track harassment reporting, which allows for some data analysis; we are currently creating a more sophisticated data management program. We make aggregate data available to all employees annually. The Office of Civil Rights includes harassment reporting statistics in Equal Employment Opportunity briefings to Department employees. Pursuant to the Department of State Authorities Act of 2017, we report all allegations of sexual assault involving Department employees to the Department of State Office of the Inspector General. Diplomatic Security (DS) reports sexual assault case statistics to the Bureau of Human Resources on a quarterly basis. DS internally tracks all reported cases of sexual assault via DS Investigative Management System.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#36)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What is the full range of disciplinary action for credible claims of sexual harassment or assault? Are pending and adjudicated complaints considered in future promotions or pay increases? Is data collected on disciplinary action by category of offense? Is it possible to publicly communicate disciplinary measures in aggregate?**

**Answer:**

The discipline process for Foreign and Civil Service employees are laid out in the Foreign Affairs Manual. Actions can range from a letter of reprimand to suspensions without pay to separation for cause. Disciplinary decisions are included in the official performance file of Foreign Service employees, and remain for a set time or for a specified number of reviews by tenure and/or promotion boards. If necessary, the Director General will also take action to stay the recommendation of a tenure or promotion board for reasons of misconduct or suitability. Reprimands are also placed in the personnel file of Civil Service employees. Suspensions are documented through personnel actions.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#37)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

**What resources and support are available for employees who report facing sexual harassment or assault?**

**Answer:**

The Office of Civil Rights offers guidance and referrals to any employee who requests assistance. The Bureau of Human Resources is also available for guidance and referrals, and the Office of the Ombudsman offers conflict resolution services. The Department offers professional counseling services for various personal and mental health matters, including those facing sexual harassment or assault. Employees have the right to initiate the EEO complaint process to seek legal remedies. Congressionally mandated for all U.S. federal law enforcement agencies, Diplomatic Security's (DS) Victim Resource Advocacy Program provides advocacy support and immediate needs assistance to victims of crimes that are investigated by DS, including victims of sexual assault and harassment.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#38)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Over the last several years, in a number of places around the globe LGBTQ people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. The United States refused to join a recent statement delivered to the UNHRC calling for perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. **Given that several other nations signed who are not members of the UNHRC, why did the U.S. refuse to sign that statement?**

**Answer:**

The statement referenced was a joint statement made during the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. In June 2018, the United States withdrew from its elected seat on the Council and no longer participates in its sessions. As such, the United States does not sign on to joint statements that are developed specifically for delivery in the Council. However, we will continue to work to advance human rights at the UN and in regional fora, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In the case of the abuses in Chechnya, the U.S. has done exactly this.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by  
Representative Lois Frankel (#39)  
House Committee on Appropriations  
March 27, 2019**

**Question:**

Over the last several years, in a number of places around the globe LGBTQ people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. The United States refused to join a recent statement delivered to the UNHRC calling for perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. **What in specific will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Chechnya, Egypt and other places to ensure they are not targeted for abuse?**

**Answer:**

The U.S. has imposed Russia Magnitsky sanctions on nine individuals known to be responsible for certain gross violations of human rights in Chechnya, including three involved in the 2017 abuses against LGBTI persons – head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov, speaker of the Chechen parliament Magomed Daudov, and local police chief Ayub Katayev. As the human rights situation in Chechnya continues to worsen, we are examining additional responses, including potential further sanctions actions. We will continue to raise concerns with the Russian Federation about human rights violations in Chechnya, as well as in Russia more broadly. Additionally, the Department of State will continue to work to protect LGBTI persons from violence, criminalization, and serious forms of discrimination around the world.

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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable  
Grace Meng  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

MAR 29 2019

Dear Ms. Meng:

In the hearing March 27, you asked whether any functions of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) had been transferred to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Secretary said he wanted to double-check but would let you know. This letter serves as a follow-up to your question.

This correspondence confirms that no functions or responsibilities of PRM have moved out of PRM to USAID. The Department is mindful that section 7073(b)(3) of the FY 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL 116-6) precludes the use of any funds to "downsize, downgrade, consolidate, close, move, or relocate" PRM, or any activities of PRM, to another Federal agency.

We hope this information will be helpful. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Elizabeth Taylor", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mary Elizabeth Taylor  
Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Legislative Affairs

cc Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey



WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2019.

**UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO COUNTER RUSSIAN  
DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE**

**WITNESSES**

**JOHN F. LANSING, CEO, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA**

**LEA GABRIELLE, SPECIAL ENVOY AND COORDINATOR OF THE GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**JIM KULIKOWSKI, COORDINATOR FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE TO EUROPE, EURASIA, AND CENTRAL ASIA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**ALINA POLYAKOVA, DIRECTOR FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND FELLOW AT THE CENTER ON UNITED STATES AND EUROPE FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAM, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION**

**NINA JANKOWICZ, GLOBAL FELLOW, THE KENNAN INSTITUTE AT THE WILSON CENTER**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LOWEY**

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good morning. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

I am pleased to welcome John Lansing, the CEO of the United States Agency for Global Media; Lea Gabrielle, special envoy and coordinator of the State Department's Global Engagement Center; and Jim Kulikowski, who used to sit right over here—welcome—assistance coordinator for Europe and Eurasia at the Department of State, for today's first panel.

For our second panel we will be joined by Alina Polyakova, director of the Project on Global Democracy and Emerging Technology at the Brookings Institution, and Nina Jankowicz, global fellow at the Kennan Institute.

Since World War II the mission of the United States international broadcasting has been to provide accurate news to those abroad who lack access to a free press and accurate information. But in today's interconnected world information spreads more rapidly than ever before.

While the United States is committed to advancing democratic principles, including freedom of speech and the press, Russia and others who do not share our values continue to utilize communication tools, from traditional print to social media to targeted ads, to do harm.

Russian interference in the 2016 election was perhaps the most resounding wakeup call to this threat. Three years later, the United States still lags in responding to malign foreign influence in the information space. Technological advancements, such as deepfakes and synthetic videos, have made these risks even greater.

Our goal today is to better understand these threats and how our investments in the United States Agency for Global Media, or USAGM, are informing, engaging, connecting people around the world, and how those audiences receive, perceive, and share content.

It is also helpful to understand whether our efforts through the Global Engagement Center, or GEC, to counter propaganda and disinformation from international terrorist organizations and foreign countries are effective.

I should read that statement again because that is really our concern. We appropriate many millions of dollars, and it is important for us to understand whether our procedures are effective.

In fiscal year 2019 Congress appropriated \$808 million to the United States Agency for Global Media and more than \$55 million to the Global Engagement Center. This included significant resources for a 24-hour Russian language television and digital news network for Russia, countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and around the world.

In the House-passed fiscal year 2020 appropriations we provided funding to support data-driven programming and efforts to counter propaganda and extremist rhetoric. The United States has some of the best technology and marketing minds in the world. However, Russian disinformation campaigns only seem to be growing stronger.

So it is clear to all of us that we have to adapt, innovate to effectively deliver programming and inform audiences. This is critical as disinformation has the potential to weaken democracies and to fan the rise of nationalists and anti-European Union sentiments in the region.

We just can't continue to operate in a vacuum. The United States must utilize all our tools of public diplomacy to get our message out and win hearts and minds.

To achieve this goal we need a broader strategic dialogue backed by research that considers audience reach, media consumption, behaviors, evolving information technology practices, and perception of messaging from various sources.

To make significant progress against malign influence we must consider how we can leverage the vast expertise and reach of the private sector in partnering to combat disinformation campaigns. So I truly welcome your thoughts today on all these topics.

Before we hear your testimony I would like to invite my ranking member, Mr. Rogers, to make remarks.

#### OPENING REMARKS OF MR. ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for calling this very timely hearing. I want to join you and the others on the panel to this hearing, and we look forward to hearing the testimony in what I hope will be an interesting discussion on a very important topic.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge Jim Kulikowski. Jim K, as we call him, served this committee knowledgeably and adeptly as deputy staff director and chief counsel for the full committee, among several other distinguished positions, during his 24 years of service with House Appropriations.

Jim was a shrewd negotiator. We could always count on him to ensure House priorities came out on top in conference with our Senate brethren and sisters.

So we are glad to see you back here in a new capacity and warmly welcome you back to the committee.

During my time chairing this subcommittee I had the opportunity to lead several of our members on two trips to all corners of Europe so we could see firsthand what Russia was up to. At each stop we were confronted with the Kremlin's malign activity in one form or another. It is pervasive throughout Europe, Eurasia, Central Asia, as well as the Arctic.

On the last trip we went to Lithuania. There we had extraordinary conversations with several of their legislators, and members of civil society as well, who describe to us in detail a sophisticated disinformation campaign that they called Russian active measures.

We were reminded that efforts by Moscow to discredit the United States and weaken the West are not new. In fact, these nefarious techniques date back to the former Soviet Union and include tactics such as written or spoken disinformation, efforts to control media in foreign countries, use of front organizations and other proxies, blackmail, personal and economic, and political influence operations.

Those examples of Soviet era tradecraft still resonate with us today. As our Baltic friends explained, what is new is the transition to digital and online communication and Russia's relentless efforts to sow division by exploiting these new social media platforms.

During the Cold War the Reagan administration established the Active Measures Working Group, an interagency body consisting of the old U.S. Information Agency, CIA, FBI, State Department, and several elements of the Department of Defense. As one study has noted, quote, "The purpose of this group was to respond comprehensively to disinformation, to define it, to create institutions to tackle it, and to draw attention to it at the highest level."

I raise this perspective because the U.S. and our European friends are the targets of a ruthless adversary in the Russian Bear, one bent on suborning our democracies and undermining our historic trans-Atlantic alliance. That cannot be disputed.

Perhaps a similar interagency effort and strategic communication strategy is required today if we are to successfully combat the Kremlin's influence and disinformation campaigns both here in the U.S. and abroad. While our subcommittee focuses on the funding of what must be a broader national strategy, I welcome a discussion on these and related matters.

Lastly, Madam Chair, there are numerous adversaries that require our time and attention when it comes to countering disinformation and malign influence, but this subcommittee felt it was important to focus on Russia.

The countries and regions facing attacks and other forms of aggression from the Kremlin remain one of our top priorities. We have included funding and policies in our annual appropriations bills on a bipartisan basis to demonstrate this, and we want to continue to provide you with the tools and resources that you need to ensure the U.S. is doing everything it can to shore up our allies

and partners in combating Russian aggressions in all its forms. We look forward to hearing your thoughts today.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

After the panel presents their testimony I will call on members based on seniority of those members present when the hearing was called to order and I will alternate between majority and minority.

We will be doing two panels today, and I want to ensure all members will have an opportunity to question all the witnesses. Therefore, each member is asked to keep their questions to within 4 minutes per round, which includes the response from our witnesses.

Mr. Lansing, Ms. Gabrielle, Mr. Kulikowski, we will be happy to place your full testimonies into the record, if you would be kind enough to please summarize your written statement. I want to make sure we have enough time to get to everyone's questions.

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF MR. LANSING

Mr. Lansing, please proceed.

Mr. LANSING. Thank you, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the efforts of the U.S. Agency for Global Media to counter Russian disinformation.

USAGM is an independent agency that provides accurate, objective, and professional news and information to parts of the world that do not have the benefit of a free and open press. We accelerate that mission through the work of our five networks: the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting.

Our programs reach a measured, unduplicated audience of 345 million people on a weekly basis in more than 100 countries in 61 languages on a wide range of all broadcast and digital platforms.

Your hearing today could not have come at a better time. We are living through an explosion of disinformation, lies, and distortion spread by those very same authoritarian regimes that our networks report on.

The weaponization of information that we are seeing is real, and the Kremlin is one of the primary aggressors on this front. Based on my observations, Russia's goal is to destroy the very idea of an objective, verifiable set of facts. From their perspective, in a world where nothing is empirically truthful, any lie will do, and if everything is a lie, the biggest liar wins.

It is not an understatement to say that the information battlefield may be the fight of the 21st century. While the Kremlin seeks to control information, our journalists are on the front lines, often risking everything to shine a light on the truth. Those efforts create security concerns for our journalists and increasingly dangerous operating environments for USAGM personnel.

Nevertheless, we are meeting the challenge head on. We reach Russian-speaking audiences through direct programming and expanded distribution of our new 24/7 Russian language digital and TV network known as Current Time. Current Time is a play on words. The most famous media brand in Russia, in Russian, is

known as “time,” and Current Time in the U.S. would be like saying “60 Minutes” or the “Real 60 Minutes.” So Current Time is like the real news to Russian speakers.

I am proud to share with you the incredible arc of success we are seeing with our groundbreaking network, which launched in 2017 thanks to your support. Current Time’s aim is to reach Russian speakers anywhere in the world, not just within the boundaries of Russia, and to engage younger, savvy audiences with a heavy emphasis on digital and social media content so that they can share it with people within the Russian Federation.

The network covers social, economic, and political issues that the state media ignores, such as protests, and challenges Russian viewers to form their own opinions.

Our impact in Russia is clear. Due to Russian restrictions on broadcasting inside the country, Current Time operates with a fresh, digital-first, cross-platform strategy to reach around the broadcasting platforms not available to us in Russia.

Of Current Time’s 520 million video views—that is right, 520 million video views—on social media last year, more than half came from within the Russian Federation. That wasn’t true 2 years ago. But we are aiming higher than that with our global distribution strategy. When Russian speakers anywhere in the world tune in to Current Time, here is what they might see.

[Video shown.]

Mr. LANSING. These efforts are part of our strategic focus on global language-based programming rather than limiting ourselves to national boundaries. We launched a similar effort in Farsi earlier this year, and we are currently developing a similar 24/7 network in Mandarin that we hope to launch in the spring of 2020.

In addition, VOA and RFE/RL jointly lead two highly impactful fact-checking websites known as Polygraph.Info in English and Factograph in Russian. The sites evaluate Kremlin-controlled disinformation on an hourly basis and immediately separate facts from fiction, adding context and debunking lies.

Now looking to the future, USAGM will continue to prioritize Russian-language broadcasting and programming in other languages that will combat the Kremlin’s sustained disinformation campaigns. Our work is providing an alternative to the false narratives and manipulated information disseminated by a regime that blocks a free press and is afraid of the truth.

We provide journalism based on fact, balanced in perspective, and adhere to professional journalistic standards. This is something that Russians living in Russia rarely see if it weren’t for the USAGM, journalism that reflects the values of our society, freedom, democracy, and hope. This is a core tenet for us, honest and truthful journalism as a catalyst for change, and it represents our best weapon on the information battlefield.

All of us at USAGM are passionate and committed to ensuring that the global work we do delivers on our mission for the United States Government and the American people. We cannot do this without the support of Congress, and we are particularly thankful to this committee and the Appropriations Committee in general.

Mrs. Lowey, we are grateful for your support of our work, and we value your oversight role and your advice here today. Thank

you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The information follows:]

**Statement of John Lansing  
CEO and Director  
U.S. Agency for Global Media  
Before the  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
“United States Efforts to Counter Russian Disinformation and Malign Influence”**

**July 10, 2019**

Introduction

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the efforts of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) to counter Russian state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation. I serve as the Chief Executive Officer and director of USAGM, where I oversee all operational aspects of U.S. international media comprising five networks: the Voice of America (VOA); Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL); Radio Free Asia (RFA); the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), which include Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa; and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting’s (OCB) Radio and TV Marti.

USAGM Overview

The mission of USAGM is to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. We produce news on all media platforms, and our programs reach 345 million people on a weekly basis in more than 100 countries and in 61 languages.

USAGM provides consistently accurate and compelling journalism that reflects the values of our society: freedom, openness, democracy, and hope. Our guiding principles—enshrined in law—are to provide a reliable, authoritative, and independent source of news that adheres to the strictest standards of journalism.

Our agency utilizes a full suite of research and analytics tools to understand the reach and impact of this vital work. We conduct nationally representative surveys to measure how often overseas audiences consume content and on what platforms. We also measure whether audiences find our information credible and share it with others, and whether it helps them form opinions. In a nationally representative survey of adults in Russia conducted between late April and early June 2018, Gallup found that USAGM content (from Current Time, RFE/RL, and/or VOA) was consumed across all platforms by 7.9 million people each week, or 7.7 percent of the adult population. This is an increase from 5.6 million adults in 2016.

We are very proud that USAGM content is considered trustworthy by over two-thirds of our weekly audience in Russia, a remarkable figure considering the overwhelming deluge of state-sponsored propaganda and state-controlled popular media available in the Russian media space. Seven in ten audience members in Russia reported that Current Time and RFE/RL had increased their understanding of current events; six in ten said the same about VOA. Close to half of our

weekly audience said that VOA had increased their understanding of U.S. foreign policy and American society.

What these figures show is that our voice is heard and our objective, balanced information is getting through, increasingly to an online and digitally connected younger audience.

The credibility of our reporting—a reputation earned over decades—is why our broadcasts are so highly valued around the world. It is also why our audience continues to grow worldwide, increasing last year by 24 percent. That credibility forms the foundation of our influence and is one of our greatest strengths in pushing back on false narratives and state-sponsored propaganda. We need that credibility today more than ever as we face pressing and pernicious threats to freedom of expression and a free press from Russia and other authoritarian governments.

### Russian Disinformation

And make no mistake, we are living through a global explosion of disinformation, state propaganda, and lies generated by multiple authoritarian regimes around the world. The weaponization of information we are seeing today is real. The Russian government and other authoritarian regimes engage in far-reaching malign influence campaigns across national boundaries and language barriers. The Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation machine is being unleashed via new platforms and continues to grow in Russia and internationally. Russia seeks to destroy the very idea of an objective, verifiable set of facts as it attempts to influence opinions about the United States and its allies. It is not an understatement to say that this new form of combat on the information battlefield may be the fight of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Government control over Russian media outlets has devastated independent media sources in the country, especially on television, where virtually no alternative information sources are available. Russia's state and state-controlled media inundate audiences with disinformation about global events and depict the United States as being on an irreversible downward spiral, its institutions failing and global strength on the wane. Disinformation campaigns are coordinated among state-funded TV channels, social media platforms, internet services, and so-called trolls to fulfill the Kremlin's goal of countering what Moscow regards as "Western influence." Media laws as well as self-censorship for fear of government retribution contribute to a repressive media environment.

Increasingly, Kremlin disinformation campaigns are aimed not only at its own citizens, but also at global audiences. State-sponsored Russian broadcasters such as RT (formerly Russia Today) and Sputnik are expanding their global operations even into the United States. Right here in Washington D.C., Sputnik purchased airtime on a local radio station in 2017 to broadcast Russian state propaganda. Russian state-sponsored disinformation networks operate in English, Arabic, Spanish, French, German, and in at least 25 other languages. Russian influence is contributing to the deteriorating media environments and democratic backsliding in places such as the Balkans, where Russia partners with local media outlets, bloggers, and other influencers to push anti-Western narratives and pro-Kremlin stories.

At USAGM, we have tracked cyber-attacks in recent years on operations in and around Russia, including on the VOA Uzbek Service and on our broadcasts to Russian-occupied Crimea. We are

facing challenges on other fronts as well, as the Russian government directly targets USAGM with legal actions. In late 2017, the Russian Justice Ministry declared RFE/RL, VOA, and several affiliated news services “foreign agents” within the Russian Federation. That status had led to bans on reporting by these news services at the Russian State Duma, unwarranted fines resulting from ambiguous regulations, and increased harassment of RFE/RL stringers and freelancers engaged in professional journalism in many regions across Russia. This, and continued legislative efforts by Russia to criminalize dissent, have created security concerns for journalists who work with RFE/RL and VOA within the country. Russia recently passed laws banning so-called “fake news” that enables the authorities to block websites and hand out punishments for material deemed insulting to the state or the public.

The Russian government has targeted USAGM journalists, subjecting them to physical assault, imprisonment, court convictions, arbitrary detention, interrogation, stalking, verbal assault, online threats, and seizure of equipment. It has also targeted the journalists’ family members. Among the most serious cases, RFE/RL contributor Mykola Semena is serving a 2.5-year suspended sentence following a conviction on “separatism” charges in Russian-occupied Crimea, and is barred from working as a journalist for two years. He was convicted based on his written criticism of Russia’s occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. RFE/RL contributor Stanislav Aseyev was kidnapped by Russian-led forces in a Russia-controlled area of Donetsk, Ukraine in June 2017 and forced to confess falsely to spying for Ukraine.

Make no mistake: the United States is being targeted on the information warfare battlefield, and I do not use that term lightly. It is an uphill battle for us and our democratic allies to counter such a determined and well-resourced foe. In addition to the work of RT, Sputnik, and other Russian media outlets in the region, the Kremlin also targets Russian-speakers with the vast resources of its domestic state-controlled news and entertainment networks. The \$28 million a year USAGM can devote to Russian-language programming and the additional \$64 million allocated to broadcasting in the rest of Eurasia is a significant investment that shows demonstrable impact—but it is relatively small in comparison.

Nevertheless, USAGM is maximizing our resources and the incredible talent of our journalists to meet this challenge head on by offering audiences an alternative to Russian disinformation in the form of objective, independent and compelling news and information. We are using a multi-pronged approach. First, we are targeting young, entrepreneurial Russian-speaking audiences through direct programming and expanded distribution of our 24/7 Russian-language network Current Time, which is produced by RFE/RL in cooperation with VOA. Second, we have maintained our traditional Russian broadcasts through VOA’s Russian Service and RFE/RL’s Radio Svoboda. These are supplemented with hyper-local digital media through RFE/RL’s North Caucasus and Tatar-Bashkir services in Russia and in regions such as Siberia. Third, USAGM’s Eurasian and Central Asian language services operate in languages such as Ukrainian, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbian, Uzbek, Kazakh, Azerbaijani, and Georgian, among others, to push back against the Kremlin’s disinformation machine. We are increasingly confronting Russian disinformation efforts in English for a global audiences as well.

Global Russian Programming: Current Time

I am excited to share with you the incredible success we are seeing with *Current Time*. Launched in 2017 with your support, the Current Time television and digital network provides Russian speakers across Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Baltics, Eastern Europe, and as far away as Israel with access to accurate, topical, and trustworthy information. It serves as a reality check on the disinformation that drives conflict in the region.

The Current Time weekly audience was recently measured at 4.1 percent of Russian adults aged 15 and older (4.2 million people). In 2018, Current Time's videos received more than 500 million views online and across social media platforms, with more than half coming from inside of Russia. Current Time now has more than two million followers across its social media platforms, including more than 900,000 followers on the network's primary Facebook page. Current Time's YouTube channel has more than 600,000 subscribers. These all represent year-on-year double-digit percentage increases, and we anticipate that those figures will continue to climb.

The Current Time television channel is now available in 20 countries via 92 distributors and has more than 50 affiliates—local partner stations that carry individual programs. It has also been able to achieve limited television distribution within Russia, with nine affiliates inside the country. Current Time's digital arm engages audiences with fresh, compelling content via social media. The service is active on all of the region's popular social media platforms, including Facebook, VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, and Twitter.

Current Time leverages state-of-the-art production value with a robust online presence to capture a younger, social-media savvy, Russian-speaking demographic. It aims to depoliticize Russian-language media by serving as a credible and compelling news source for all Russian speakers, who are often limited to Kremlin-controlled media even when living far beyond Russia's borders. Current Time places a premium on live news coverage that allows skeptical audiences, numbed by fake news and Kremlin narratives, to judge events on the ground for themselves. For example, Current Time has delivered on-location reporting on topics and events like the Russian presidential elections and opposition protests, the Trump-Putin summit in Helsinki, U.S. elections, major Congressional hearings, the 2018 World Cup, the Skripal poisoning case in England, Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukrainian naval vessels near the Kerch Strait, Russia's ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine conflict, and other major news stories.

Current Time covers social and political protests that state media ignores, and it reports extensively on corruption. Its feature programs have illuminated unknown aspects of life in Russia and beyond, telling the untold stories of ordinary residents in unheralded places whose efforts are improving life for their neighbors and communities. For example, each episode of the Current Time program "Unknown Russia" gives the viewer a look at the lives of ordinary Russians living in unexplored and often neglected corners of the enormous country. Another feature program, "Person on the Map," focuses on ordinary individuals, such as teachers, farmers, and inventors, who have opted for the provincial life and are eager to build a better world without leaving home.

Current Time's April 2019 Ukrainian election coverage set a record for the 24/7 Russian-language network with some 9.3 million views across all platforms, and garnered outstanding feedback from partners and audiences alike. The network offered a live broadcast with simultaneous Russian translation of the April 19 debates between the two final Ukrainian presidential candidates to

Russian-speaking audiences in countries whose leaders steer clear of public debates with their opponents. Two days later, Current Time broadcast 13 hours of live, non-stop election day coverage of voting by the candidates, Ukrainian citizens, and Ukrainians around the world; exit polls; results; and reactions from the candidates' campaign headquarters.

Current Time is also giving a voice to opposition figures in Russia. For example, after years of speculation, the anonymous author of the popular Russian social-media account, StalinGulag—an acerbic critic of current affairs in Russia—revealed his identity and sat for an interview with Current Time. The twenty-seven-year-old Aleksandr Gorbunov, whose Twitter account has over 1.1 million followers, decided to go public after his elderly mother's apartment was searched for spurious reasons. Social media audiences responded robustly, viewing the interview about 300,000 times.

Current Time also offers an array of information on U.S. policy and perspectives produced by the VOA Russian Service in Washington and across the U.S. In the lead-up to the 2020 U.S. elections, Current Time will feature special programming explaining America's democratic experience while focusing on issues targeted by Russian disinformation. Starting with the first Democratic primary debates in Miami in June, VOA expanded its programming to provide live coverage from across the U.S.

In an indication of the Kremlin's irritation over Current Time's coverage, Russian state media has featured it in at least six separate segments since May 2015, decrying it as part of a "U.S. information war" and labeling it a threat to national security.

The Current Time model of collaboration between RFE/RL and VOA has been such a success that USAGM followed this playbook with the launch of a 24/7 Persian network called VOA365, and has plans to expand the concept to Mandarin this year.

### VOA Russian Service

VOA's Russian Service has provided coverage of America's democratic experience to the Russian-speaking world since 1947. Due to Russian restrictions on broadcasting inside the country, the service currently employs a digital-first, cross-platform strategy to fulfill its mission. The goal is to offer fact-based alternatives to the Kremlin's disinformation campaigns designed to fan anti-U.S. and anti-Western sentiments both in Russia and globally. VOA Russian's interactive multimedia content includes video streaming on desktop and mobile platforms, products made for social media, expert blogs, and user-generated content and feedback. It serves to engage audiences in conversations about American life and values while offering insights into U.S. policy and institutions, including U.S.-Russia relations and American reactions to developments influencing Russian domestic politics and governance.

From June 2018 to June 2019, the VOA Russian Service website registered an average of 2 million monthly visits and 2.5 million monthly article views—typically attracting a more educated and liberal Russian-speaking audience. During the same period, videos on VOA Russian's digital platforms garnered 147 million views on Facebook and 12.7 million views on YouTube. Facebook is the Service's most active social media outreach platform, receiving about 1 million post

engagements daily. Original content includes live reporting by VOA correspondents and immersive formats such as 360 panoramic videos.

The VOA Russian Service programs aim to tell America's story. Specific new programming includes "America Live Coverage Desk" – VOA's live, unfiltered coverage of events in America. Launched in 2017, "America Live Coverage Desk" features real-time analysis by U.S.-based experts and simultaneously translated presidential addresses, major policy pronouncements, speeches, debates and congressional hearings. This past year the service launched the "Great American Road Trip", a 20-episode travel TV program where VOA Russian journalists take viewers beyond major tourist routes and destinations and introduce them to people who represent the American character – self-made problem-solvers, innovators, thinkers, and role models.

The VOA Russian Service also produces a variety of programming, now over 11 hours a week, which all air on the Current Time TV channel. "Current Time America," a one-hour, Monday-to-Friday television newscast, offers content not otherwise available on state-controlled Russian media and a "reality check" on various political, economic, social, and cultural issues. It features live interviews with newsmakers and the latest in business, science and technology, medical, and entertainment news. A stringer network across the United States provides news and feature programming from major American cities. Other new content includes live, unfiltered, simultaneously translated coverage of major events in America; new weekend talk shows; and documentary programming.

In addition to the unique role that VOA has in showcasing the American experience to foreign audiences, the VOA Russian Service also shines a light and gives a voice to opposition figures in Russia. A recent interview with exiled former oligarch and regime critic Mikhail Khodorkovsky garnered more than 1 million views on YouTube, and was picked up and reposted by numerous Russian outlets. In June 2019, VOA Russian digital team members covered the mass protests resulting from the detention of Russian investigative reporter Ivan Golunov, who was detained in Moscow on bogus drug charges. The team successfully obtained commentary from influential participants. In addition to the live coverage of the protests as they unfolded, including hundreds of detentions, the digital team produced a video explainer with human rights statistics, reminding the audience of Russia's press freedom challenges.

#### RFE/RL's Radio Svoboda

RFE/RL's mission is distinct from VOA's, in that its purpose is to serve as an example of what a local and independent media can and should be. Thus, the focus of its programming is often reporting on local news that is not covered by Russia's domestic media. RFE/RL serves as a "surrogate" for free press in Russia and in other countries in the Russian periphery. Its flagship Russian Service, known locally as Radio Svoboda, live streams from important public events, such as protests, and provides a wealth of Russia-focused content online, on social media, and by radio.

Radio Svoboda maintains a bureau in Moscow with approximately 50 staff, and utilizes other freelancers throughout Russia and around the world who are under significant pressure for their work.

Radio Svoboda programming provides analysis on Russian current affairs, politics, social issues, human rights, and culture in and where they live, in addition to investigative pieces not covered by domestic Russian media. The media mix ranges from news, to documentary programming, to other Russian-language shows designed to compete with the disinformation exported by the Kremlin. Radio Svoboda also features eight daily news bulletins, live streaming from important public events such as protests, and video/TV casts of talk shows and programs.

As an example of the impact that Radio Svoboda makes, the network recently drew an audience of over 2 million to its reporting on the May Day protest detentions. More than 100 people were detained during opposition rallies across Russia, led by Alexei Navalny, a vocal critic of the Kremlin and a leading opposition figure. The Russian police responded with force to shut these events down. Current Time aired TV footage from St. Petersburg that showed police hitting people with batons and dragging them to police vans; the video attracted some 900,000 online views. Total views for the May Day coverage across all platforms came to more than 1.2 million.

#### Programming in Languages other than Russian

In addition to reaching Russian-speaking audiences, USAGM broadcasts continue to push back against Kremlin propaganda in other languages used in the Russian Federation, as well as in Central Asia and the Balkans. Original content is generated at many levels – local, national, and regional – and then translated across language services to provide audiences with a diverse news menu. A central goal of each of these, in addition to providing local and national news coverage in local languages other than Russian, is to push back against the false narratives coming out of Russia.

For example, the VOA Georgian Service devotes 70 percent of its overall programming to countering Russia's disinformation and anti-Western propaganda inside Georgia. The VOA Serbian Service has significantly expanded its programming in recent years with the aim of countering growing penetration of Russia-sponsored media and disinformation into the Serbian and Montenegrin media space. VOA Serbian has expanded its coverage regarding the Russian presence and influence in many areas of politics, society, culture, and economics, including the growing influence of Russian soft power through civil society organizations, cultural exchanges, and ties with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, RFE/RL conducted a live interview with new Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in which he reaffirmed that Ukraine is on a "course toward Europe." In May, the TV channel "Ukraina" aired the Ukrainian Service documentary "Balukh" on the Ukrainian activist sentenced in Russian-occupied Crimea for flying a Ukrainian flag. RFE/RL correspondent Anzhelika Rudenko, who travelled to Crimea in 2018 to document reaction to his arrest by Balukh's neighbors in the village where he lived, was subsequently banned from returning to Crimea by Russian occupation forces. According to the channel, the documentary, which aired at midnight, reached 740,000 people - second only to a political talk show on the 1+1 channel popular with viewers age 18 and older.

In Kazakhstan, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service and Current Time both had extensive live coverage of the June 9, 2019, presidential election, which was widely seen as an orchestrated handover of power from the longtime president and Russian ally Nursultan Nazarbaev to a hand-picked

successor. USAGM broadcasts documented the ensuing protests in Nur-Sultan and Almaty and the detention of nearly 4,000 people including several journalists. Meanwhile, the Kazakh state-run media misrepresented or ignored these developments. RFE/RL's continuous reporting from Kazakhstan received a robust audience response, with more than 1.6 million views of the Kazakh Service's live election and protest coverage, and another 816,000 views of an interview with the only opposition candidate in the election, Amirzhan Qosanov.

On an even more localized level, RFE/RL covers news in the Tatar, Bashkir, and Chechen languages, providing relevant news coverage to Russia's underserved and marginalized populations in politically sensitive areas. RFE/RL has also launched hyper-local websites to focus on the realities on the ground in Russia-occupied Crimea, Donbas, the mid-Volga region, the North Caucasus, and Siberia.

### Disinformation Fact Checking

In addition to the Russian and regional language networks, USAGM continues to operate the fact-checking websites Polygraph (in English) and Factograph (in Russian) that counter Russian disinformation. Established in 2016 and 2017 respectively, these services in VOA and RFE/RL investigate misleading statements and stories from Russian officials and state-sponsored propaganda outlets. Polygraph and Factograph serve as a resource for verifying the increasing volume of disinformation and misinformation distributed globally. They separate fact from fiction, add context, and debunk lies. Polygraph has garnered an 849 percent increase in web article views in the past year, and the site has been quoted by U.S. embassies and consulates, as well as independent news organizations such as the Atlantic Council's Disinformation Portal and *The New York Times*.

### Looking Ahead

Looking to the future, USAGM will continue to prioritize Russian-language broadcasting to combat the Kremlin's sustained dissemination of disinformation and state-sponsored propaganda. We have bolstered our reporting capabilities throughout Russia, Ukraine, and neighboring countries during the past year and will continue to do so. In addition to our Russian-language efforts, we will continue to develop news capabilities in other languages used in the Russian Federation, Central Asia, and the Balkans, build live news capabilities, expand acquired and commissioned programming, and meet digital audiences on their preferred platforms. USAGM will continue to seek Current Time placement opportunities and expand our reach in underserved markets.

We cannot do this without the support of the Congress. Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, we are deeply grateful for your support of our work and we value your oversight role. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to any questions you may have.



U.S. AGENCY FOR  
GLOBAL MEDIA

UNITED STATES  
BROADCASTING  
BOARD OF  
GOVERNORS



**JOHN F. LANSING**

*U.S. Agency for Global Media CEO and Director*

John F. Lansing joined the BBG in September 2015 after nine years as President of Scripps Networks, where he is credited with guiding the company to become a leading developer of unique content across various media platforms including television, digital, mobile and publishing.

As President of Scripps Networks, Lansing was responsible for strategic and operational oversight of the \$2.5 billion division of Scripps Networks Interactive, including the company's portfolio of six cable networks – Food Network, HGTV, Travel Channel, DIY, Cooking Channel and Great American Country – and the \$100 million Scripps Networks Digital division. Prior to joining Scripps Networks in 2004, Lansing was Senior Vice President for Television in the broadcasting division of the E.W. Scripps Company, managing the company's portfolio of 10 network affiliated television stations. Earlier, he held various senior management positions at Scripps-owned affiliates, including WEWS TV in Cleveland, Ohio and WXYZ TV in Detroit, Michigan. Most recently, Lansing was President and Chief Executive Officer of Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing (CTAM), a marketing association comprised of 90 of the top U.S. and Canadian cable companies and television programmers. There, Lansing oversaw the development of business strategies and marketing initiatives that position cable television companies for continued growth as they compete with emerging digital content platforms.

Lansing also brings a deep understanding of journalism from roles as an award-winning Photojournalist and Field Producer, Assignment Manager, Managing Editor, and News Director at several television stations earlier in his career.

Lansing is the former Vice Chair of the Bellarmine University Board of Trustees and was named to the Bellarmine Gallery of Distinguished Graduates in 2010. He serves on the National Advisory Board of the Bellarmine University's Institute for Media, Culture & Ethics; National Council for Media and Public Affairs of George Washington University School of Media & Public Affairs; and, until recently, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies Foundation, one of the nation's top schools for professional journalists.

Lansing has been married for 24 years to Jean Rausch Lansing. They have four children.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.  
Ms. Gabrielle.

OPENING STATEMENT OF MS. GABRIELLE

Ms. GABRIELLE. Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, thank you for inviting me to testify before your subcommittee about the Global Engagement Center's work to coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to counter Russian disinformation. This is an important topic, and I very much appreciate that you have devoted this time to this issue.

I am pleased to be joined here today with Coordinator Kulikowski and CEO Lansing. The various work of our organizations complement one another, and I think it is important that by testifying together we can paint a better picture of the work that is being done to expose and to counter Russian disinformation.

The GEC's mission as defined by Congress is to direct, lead, synchronize, integrate, and coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and foreign non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining or influencing the policies, security, or stability of the United States and United States allies and partner nations.

Secretary Pompeo has called upon the GEC to employ a broad suite of tools to stop America's adversaries from weaponizing information and using propaganda to undermine free societies. It is clear that the Kremlin has been attempting to damage America's credibility among our allies and our partners, undermine trans-Atlantic unity, and to sow discord in target societies and weaken Western institutions and governments.

Russia attacks those it perceives as adversaries by overwhelming target audiences with lies, questioning the very concept of objective truth and increasing polarization in societies. Russia has been aggressively deploying propaganda and disinformation since early in the Soviet era, but new information technologies allow it to cause harm on a much larger scale than ever before.

Now, as then, free societies must unite and we must work diligently together to build public awareness, to promote resilience, and ultimately to defeat this threat to our values and to our institutions.

The GEC is actively working with our allies and our partners in Europe to identify, recognize, and expose Russian disinformation and to promote accurate messages about the United States and our allies and our partners in the pursuit of freedom, prosperity, and security.

We are also an active participant in the Russia Influence Group, which is co-chaired by the commander of U.S. European Command and the assistant secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasia Affairs at the Department of State. This interagency body has been coordinating the lines of effort of the U.S. Government agencies to counter the various aspects of Russian malign influence in Europe for almost 4 years.

The GEC has funded specific initiatives to counter Russian disinformation, and these include deploying technology to provide early warnings of foreign disinformation, analyzing which foreign audiences are most susceptible to targeted disinformation, devel-

oping partnerships with key local messengers to produce content to reach critical audiences, building the technical skills of civil society organizations, NGOs, and journalists to shed light on the spread of disinformation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We appreciate this subcommittee's support for the GEC's mission, the attention to this subject, and I look forward to answering any questions that you have.

[The information follows:]

**Statement of Lea Gabrielle  
Special Envoy & Coordinator for the Global Engagement Center,  
U.S. Department of State  
Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
“United States Efforts to Counter Russian Disinformation and Malign  
Influence”**

**Wednesday, July 10, 2019**

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers – Thank you for inviting me to testify before your Subcommittee about the Global Engagement Center’s (GEC) work to coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to counter Russian disinformation. This is an important topic and I appreciate the Subcommittee devoting time to it.

Secretary Pompeo is committed to using a broad suite of tools to stop America’s adversaries from weaponizing disinformation and utilizing malign foreign propaganda to undermine free societies, while at the same time respecting the right to free expression.

The GEC’s mission, as defined by Congress, is to “direct, lead, synchronize, integrate, and coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and foreign non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining or influencing the policies, security, or stability of the United States and United States allies and partner nations.”

Before I dive into the substance of my testimony, it is important to underscore that while Russia uses modern disinformation largely from a position of weakness towards the West, this weakness should not be mistaken for a lack of capability or intent to do harm to the United States or our allies. As part of its efforts to sow discord in target societies, weaken Western institutions and governments, and diminish American standing on the world-stage, the Kremlin engages in low-cost, high-volume malign propaganda and disinformation campaigns, targeting areas where press freedom is high and where socio-economic polarization can be further deepened and exploited.

By trying to weaken international institutions and divide alliances, the Russian government finds itself increasingly isolated in this fight. And, here lies one of our

great advantages: The United States has valuable partners and allies around the globe who are working with us to address this challenge.

Russian influence campaigns leverage a range of information-related capabilities and they coordinate them within a common strategic and operational framework. This magnifies their reach and impact. Defending against them requires a robust combination of tools, authorities, and resources across the U.S. government. The GEC is playing an increasingly critical role in coordinating the U.S. whole-of-government effort to counter Russian malign propaganda and disinformation overseas. We are also an active participant in the Russia Influence Group, co-chaired by U.S. European Command and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of State. This interagency group has been coordinating action in the field and at posts to counter Russian malign influence in Europe for almost four years.

### **The Threat**

I have touched briefly on the threat from Russia, and I will lay that out in more detail. Russia seeks to weaken those whom it perceives as its adversaries by overwhelming target audiences with a tsunami of lies, polarizing domestic political conversations, and attempts to destroy the public's faith in good governance, independent media, and democracy.

The highest levels of the Russian government direct and resource these activities in the United States, Europe, parts of the Western Hemisphere, and elsewhere which include: undermining electoral processes; engaging in malign propaganda and disinformation campaigns; promoting corrupt practices; economic manipulation; systematically inflaming the fault lines of society by promoting fringe voices on both ends of the political spectrum; funding agents of influence and front organizations; and conducting direct operations, such as assassinations, coup attempts, and sabotage.

These subversive activities are greatly enabled by new information technologies that increase the volume and velocity of messaging and permit remote network penetration and large-scale data leaks. Along with facilitating Russian influence operations, information technologies allow the Kremlin to rapidly flood the information space with competing, contradictory, and incendiary narratives to hide its malign actions and mislead and confuse publics. Flooding the information space makes it more challenging for responsible governments to communicate factual counter-narratives to the world.

We have seen this approach time and time again. Russia has promoted false narratives about its ongoing aggression against Ukraine; the war in Syria and the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime; migration and minority populations; the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17); the nerve-agent poisoning of UK citizens in Salisbury, England; energy development and distribution; NATO exercises and deployments; the crisis in Venezuela; and countless other topics.

### **A Whole of Government Response**

Before getting into some of the GEC's specific work to counter Russian disinformation, it is important to note some of the many activities of the U.S. government that relate to the overall effort to counter foreign propaganda and disinformation.

For example,

- The Department of State works with Allies and partners to build collective resilience, share best practices, and communicate and impose costs on actors that carry out Russia's malign influence campaigns.
- Through Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), the Department of Justice registers agents of foreign principals in the United States who engage in, inter alia, political activities on behalf of a foreign principal. The Department of Justice enforces requirements that informational materials on behalf of a foreign principal are labeled as such.
- United States Agency for Global Media's (USAGM) mission is to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy which is obviously a key component to all of this. I appreciate that we have CEO Lansing here today to talk about that piece.
- The Department of Defense conducts messaging and promotes fact-based narratives about U.S. military activities.
- The National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) advises and informs decision makers about foreign intelligence threats to the U.S. and,

helps U.S. government partners to identify approaches to counter those threats.

This is just a sampling of the various efforts underway, and while a lot has been done, we can always do more. The GEC is focused on building the capacity of foreign partners to help counter Russian disinformation abroad, while also working to ensure that these efforts are well coordinated across the U.S. government interagency.

### **Specific GEC Counter Russia Initiatives**

The GEC is actively working with Allies and partners in Europe to identify, recognize, and expose Russian disinformation, and to counter such disinformation with accurate messages about the United States and our Allies and partners in the pursuit of freedom, prosperity, and security.

Interagency work is one part of the GEC's efforts to address Russian disinformation. To that end, the GEC is expanding its footprint of interagency detailees who work to ensure the U.S. government's counter disinformation efforts are streamlined across the interagency and duplication is minimized. We also have a mandate and authorities to execute programs and initiatives to counter propaganda and disinformation. To enable this, in FY 2018 the GEC received and spent \$40 million specifically for initiatives to counter Russian, Iranian, and Chinese propaganda and disinformation.

These GEC-funded initiatives include: 1) Deploying technology to provide early warnings of foreign disinformation; 2) analyzing those foreign audiences that are most susceptible to or targeted by disinformation; 3) developing partnerships with key local messengers to produce content to reach critical audiences; and 4) building the technical skills of civil society organizations, NGOs, credible voices, and journalists to shed light on the spread of disinformation.

Our specific counter-Kremlin efforts fall into three categories: Analyze, Build, and Communicate.

First, analyze. We believe strongly that it is vital to understand Russian tactics and goals if we are to address them. The GEC has invested heavily in capabilities that allow us to answer three core questions: Who are the Russians targeting? How are they targeting these people? And how effective are their actions? We answer

these questions by combining traditional market research approaches like focus grouping and polling with modern techniques that rely on machine learning to understand the online information environment.

Second, build. Once we better understand these tactics and goals we can address them. This often starts with building the capability of our foreign partners to quickly identify disinformation and respond effectively. Currently we are supporting both international initiatives that include foreign governments as well as on-the-ground civil society actors.

For civil society actors, the GEC has funded an implementer to train civil society actors in 14 European nations. The training enables the civil society organizations to help their communities rapidly identify and respond to disinformation in locally-relevant ways.

Third, communicate. Russian disinformation often takes advantage of information vacuums. Together with our partners, we must fill the information space with positive, fact-based narratives. Congress provided the GEC with an important tool to meet this need – the ability to hire private sector advertising and marketing firms. We know what story we want to tell. It is crucial to have local communications professionals help us tailor that story to local audiences. They understand the market, and they understand how to message to the market in the most appealing fashion.

One recent GEC initiative, integrates all aspects of the Analyze, Build, and Communicate model. The GEC supported the North Macedonian government in their efforts to ensure a free and fair vote in the lead up to the September 30 referendum on the Prespa Agreement, which helped resolved a long-standing dispute with Greece over the country's name that had stood in the way of North Macedonia's NATO aspirations. While in-country from July 24 to August 17, the GEC worked with the communication teams within the Office of the Prime Minister. As part of this effort, the GEC delivered two major reports to the North Macedonian government. Other completed tasks included providing the host nation with a snapshot of the social media environment, data on media outlets, training on data analysis tools, and building awareness on the disinformation tactics of our adversaries.

Here are some additional specific examples of programs that fall within the overall Analyze, Build, and Communicate model:

- Two major initiatives, developed in coordination with the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, that combine cutting-edge technology and on-the-ground audience research to deepen understanding of the scope and nature of Russian disinformation across 13 Central and East European countries, including the audiences that the disinformation is targeting and viable countermeasures;
- A two-year, multi-million dollar project to build resistance to disinformation in the most vulnerable European societies by increasing direct person-to-person engagement on this issue;
- Projects supporting independent media in two vulnerable European countries to produce higher-quality reporting that exposes and educates their publics on Russian disinformation;
- Creating strategic partnerships with foreign governments to enable the types of information sharing and response coordination that allows us to quickly identify and get ahead of Russian influence operations;
- Developing an online analytics and information-sharing platform that provides the GEC, the U.S. interagency, and our foreign partners with open-source tools and capabilities they need to understand Russian disinformation and malign propaganda in their countries and then coordinate a response with their international partners;
- Providing funding to our embassies for 19 grants for a wide range of efforts to counter Russian disinformation, from supporting accurate reporting around the referendum in North Macedonia, to building media literacy in Bulgaria, Latvia and Spain. With increased funding we intend to provide additional support of this type to our overseas missions.
- Finally, we have established the Information Access Fund grant mechanism called for by Congress in the FY 2017 NDAA via a capable implementing partner. Utilizing an implementing partner allows the GEC and our U.S. missions overseas to be faster and more flexible to respond quickly to new priorities and opportunities as they arise.

## **Analytics & Research**

There is an increasing demand from our U.S. government and foreign partners for data analytics and targeted advertising technologies to counter propaganda and disinformation. To that end, the GEC created an Analytics & Research Team which is made up of about 20 data scientists to enable us to do the type of message testing and audience analysis that is key to success in the information environment.

The Analytics & Research Team provides the following key capabilities, among others to the GEC:

- Capturing trends and patterns in media coverage, networks, and on-line communication outside of the United States;
- Discovery of coordinated adversarial campaigns;
- Analysis of public opinion outside of the United States;
- Advanced statistical modeling applying data science algorithms for cases outside of the United States;
- Advanced computer simulations and scenario development (game theory and agent-based simulations) for cases outside of the United States; and,
- Advanced predictive analytics models to accurately estimate the risk of disinformation vulnerability, election violence, conflict onset, crisis duration, and terror-threat risk for cases outside of the United States.

As one example of this work, the GEC is supporting the public affairs section at U.S. Embassy Sarajevo with data-driven analytic products produced by our Analytics & Research Team in order to equip the embassy with insight about the information environment in the lead up to national elections in October of this year. The GEC's work has focused on key vulnerabilities that threat actors, both state and non-state, are known to exploit in influence campaigns. The GEC has provided information and training to the embassy on bot detection, social media trend monitoring, and social media analysis. As October approaches, the GEC will continue to support the embassy through the election, and intends to provide quick-turn analysis in the post-election period.

## **Technology**

The GEC has also created a Technology Engagement Team which is tasked with identifying, developing, and implementing new technological capabilities, utilizing expertise from the tech industry to counter malign propaganda and disinformation.

Our Tech Engagement Team has three key ongoing initiatives.

- The first is the GEC's Tech Demo Series. Since mid-2018, the GEC has hosted 21 biweekly demos of promising technologies against the problems of malign propaganda and disinformation. The Series regularly includes observers from DHS, FBI, IC components, DOD components, USAGM, State bureaus, and European embassies. The participating technologies have included psychological resilience tools, blockchain-based info validation, and crowdsourced vetting of info online. The Tech Demo Series has resulted in numerous government-industry partnerships, and serves as the sole venue to coordinate Interagency implementation of these tools – offering cost savings and operational efficiencies to the US Government.
- Secondly, the GEC has convened four intensive Tech Challenges, which are workshops with international partners to understand, assess, and implement effective tech solutions to foreign propaganda and disinformation. During the GEC's most recent Tech Challenge in Bristol, UK, the GEC awarded a substantial grant to a Czech-based data analytics company to directly support the UK's counter-Russia efforts. The UK has invited the GEC back for another Tech Challenge in 2020.
- The GEC has also implemented a technology Testbed, which enables the U.S. government to rapidly identify and test promising technologies against foreign propaganda and disinformation. The Testbed has rigorously reviewed more than 30 technologies and will soon publish its results on an online platform called Disinfo Crunch. Disinfo Crunch will be available to the GEC's government partners, and will serve as an unprecedented coordinating function for the US and foreign governments, enabling access to technologies that can directly confront Russia's disinformation activities.

## **Conclusion**

Russia has been using malign propaganda and disinformation for many decades. New information technologies give it opportunities to create harm on an increased scale. As has always been the case, free societies must unite and work together to defeat this threat to our societies and institutions.

Ultimately, one of the best defenses against disinformation is a free and transparent news media environment, which is why the United States actively engages with our Allies and partners to strengthen independent media.

Healthy and robust public debates based on facts, evidence, and reason are integral to civic engagement. A well-informed citizenry is key to the strength of democratic institutions, and so the GEC will continue to support efforts to strengthen civil society, combat corruption, and promote media literacy.

Working closely with the State Department's regional and functional bureaus and across the interagency, the Global Engagement Center is honored to have a key role in this important effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to any questions you may have.

## Lea Gabrielle

Lea Gabrielle joins the State Department as Special Envoy and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center. She is a former Human Intelligence Operations Officer, Defense Foreign Liaison Officer, U.S. Navy Program Director, Navy F/A-18C Fighter Pilot, and national television news correspondent and anchor.

While serving in the U.S. Intelligence Community, Ms. Gabrielle was a CIA-trained Human Intelligence Operations Officer, assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). She directed and conducted global clandestine strategic intelligence collection operations. Ms. Gabrielle also deployed in tactical anti-terrorist operations in hostile environments with Naval Special Warfare (SEALs), conducting independent operations in support of Tier One Forces. Ms. Gabrielle later served as Director of a U.S. Navy sensitive intelligence program.



Prior to becoming an intelligence operations officer, Ms. Gabrielle was a Defense Foreign Liaison Officer for the Office of International Engagements, DIA. In this foreign diplomacy role, Ms. Gabrielle was a Department of Defense principal contact with foreign Defense Attachés, organizing international military cooperation and information-sharing operations between these attachés and U.S. Government leaders.

Ms. Gabrielle began her public service in the U.S. Navy as an aircraft carrier-based F/A-18C fighter pilot, flying combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq in Operations Enduring Freedom and Southern Watch. After 12 years of active duty service, Ms. Gabrielle became a television news journalist at NBC News, and most recently served as a correspondent and frequent anchor for the FOX News Channel and Fox Business Network.

Ms. Gabrielle is a U.S. Naval Academy Graduate with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. She is thrilled to be returning to her roots in U.S. Government service and to be able to apply her extensive national security and diplomacy experience to U.S. foreign policy as the U.S. State Department Special Envoy and Director of the Global Engagement Center.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.  
Mr. Kulikowski.

OPENING STATEMENT OF MR. KULIKOWSKI

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. Thank you. Thank you, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, thank you for your kind words, members of the subcommittee, and for this opportunity to discuss our role in countering Russian disinformation.

The Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia's historic efforts over 30 years to build free and democratic partners among states transitioning from communism are now focused on the central obstacle to this transition, Russian malign influence, including their use of disinformation.

Of the \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2017 foreign assistance funds we coordinated in the region, we allocated over \$103 million to support independent media programming, including \$56 million in supplemental funding to help build resilience against Russian disinformation. Of the \$1.3 billion in 2018 funds, we have allocated thus far \$54 million to support this media sector work.

We use these funds to build resilience against Russian disinformation for four kinds of programs.

First, media literacy, programs that teach producers and audiences of all ages how to separate fact from fiction. For example, in Montenegro the embassy public affairs section funded a digital forensics center that uncovered evidence of Russian involvement in a local protest designed to stoke ethnic tensions to destabilize Montenegro, and their work discredited the effort.

Second, access to independent media and reliable content for local audiences. This helps shed light on all the levers of Russian malign influence. In Moldova, for example, a USAID-supported virtual newsroom exposed 700-plus Facebook accounts spreading disinformation in advance of the February parliamentary elections. In Ukraine, NED is using our funding to support the two most popular online sources of objective information in Ukraine's Donbas region.

Third, improving the professionalism, management, and financial sustainability of media outlets. For example, USAID's Balkan media assistance program helped to increase the online advertising revenue of one outlet nearly 500 percent and the audience traffic of another 113 percent. Likewise, State is now bringing Central Asian journalists to the United States to develop their professional skills.

And fourth, we support strategic communications analysis to determine vulnerabilities and specific action needed. DRL, the Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Bureau of the State Department, for instance, uses our funds to support research on the characteristics of audiences in the Baltics and the Balkans to help decisionmakers determine how best to raise awareness about disinformation, research that is also being used by the European Parliament.

Madam Chair, our work to build resilience to Russian disinformation across the Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia region builds on the work of U.S. Government partners across the inter-agency. Each partner brings its own comparative advantage to the

table to complement our programs. Our collaboration will help us reach our common goal of countering this disinformation that is central to Russia's efforts to exert malign influence over each of the countries in which ACE works.

Thank you very much.

[The information follows:]

**Coordinator Jim Kulikowski's Testimony  
Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs**

**“United States Efforts to Counter Russian Disinformation and Malign  
Influence”**

**July 10, 2019**

**Introduction**

Thank you, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to discuss the critical role foreign assistance plays in countering Russian malign influence in the Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia region.

I am honored to appear before you, having been appointed nearly five months ago to the position of Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia (ACE). The ACE Coordinator position is both statutory and rooted in the historic assistance effort to build free and democratic partners among states transitioning from communism. We are coming up on the 30th anniversary of the commencement of this effort with the passage of the Support for Eastern European Democracy Act. Consistent with this act and the Freedom Support Act of 1992, ACE's mandate is to coordinate policies and programs among all U.S. government agencies, and ensure proper management and oversight by agencies responsible for implementing assistance programs, including those funded through the Assistance to Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia (AEECA), Economic Support Fund, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, and Global Health Program accounts. With respect to such funds, the Coordinator is directly responsible for recommending allocations from those accounts, in coordination with overseas posts, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), relevant State bureaus, and other relevant partners. Foreign assistance funds from other appropriation accounts are also used in Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia, including Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs. Although legislation does not give the Coordinator a formal oversight role over those funds, the Coordinator relies upon broader authorities related to the coordination and strategic planning of policy and programs in the region to ensure that such funds are used for purposes that support overall U.S. policy.

Overall, we coordinated over \$1.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2017 State and USAID foreign assistance funds in Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia. And, we are coordinating \$1.3 billion in Fiscal Year 2018 funds. In this context, ACE works to provide assistance bilaterally to 17 countries and provides funding for broader regional efforts, all of which advance Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) assistance goals relating to cybersecurity, rule of law, humanitarian response, political processes, independent media and

civil society, countering propaganda and disinformation, energy security, economic resilience, and security. In May, the Department submitted a report to Congress outlining the Europe and Eurasia programs and activities carried out to achieve these goals during Fiscal Year 2018.

### **Foreign Assistance Support for Efforts to Counter Russian Disinformation**

Let me turn to our significant efforts in the countering Russia in the disinformation space.

As Coordinator, my priority is to ensure U.S. assistance supports U.S. foreign policy priorities for the Europe, Eurasian and Central Asian region. We work closely within the bureau and interagency to ensure that our programming matches the policy guidance and initiatives set out in this space. The National Security Strategy could not be more clear: the Kremlin is attempting to weaken the credibility of America's commitment to Europe, undermine transatlantic unity, sow discord in Western societies, and weaken Western institutions and governments. Its use of influence campaigns to pursue these goals is unacceptable.

This includes working closely at all stages of program development with the Global Engagement Center (GEC) to ensure complementarity of programming with implementing agencies, such as USAID, the Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) and embassy public affairs sections. This is most important in the area of countering disinformation through support to civil society, think tanks, and independent media.

The Department of State and USAID allocated over \$103 million in FY 2017 AEECA funds (of which \$56 million was from the Security Assistance Appropriations Act supplemental appropriation) to support independent media programming to help our partners in Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia build resilience against Russian pressure and disinformation. Thus far, we have allocated \$54 million in FY 2018 U.S. foreign assistance funds for this work.

AEECA funding in the media space is implemented through USAID, DRL, embassy public affairs sections, and ACE (through a grant to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)), and consists of four major categories of activities: media literacy, increased access to objective information, capacity-building, and strategic communications. Please note the examples I describe here do not include programs funded through DRL's Human Rights Development Fund, Department .7 public diplomacy funding or funding allocated to the GEC.

Our first line of effort in the disinformation space advances *media literacy* by supporting programs that teach information producers and audiences how to separate fact from fiction and develop improved analytical skills when consuming news. The following are some examples of our impact in this program category.

Embassy Podgorica's Public Affairs Section has supported a digital forensic center in Montenegro since December 2018. The center monitors and analyzes disinformation targeted at Montenegrin audiences and provides related media literacy training. The center's analysis highlighted, for example, evidence of Russian involvement in a local protest designed to stoke ethnic tensions and added to the Department's understanding of continued Russian aims to destabilize Montenegro.

Embassy public affairs sections also support "Learn to Discern" programs in Ukraine, Serbia and other countries in the region. In Ukraine, following intensive media literacy training in 50 secondary schools in Chernihiv, Ternopil, Mariupol, and Dnipro, participants' appreciation for professional journalism increased by 12 percent; the number of participants who considered themselves capable of recognizing quality media increased by 36 percent; and those willing to seek out quality reporting increased by 41 percent. The Ministry of Education has bought into these program results, and is working with the Department to scale up this program to all of Ukraine's school districts by 2021.

A Sarajevo-based organization is using AEECA support provided through the NED to lead Southeast Europe's leading fact-checking and investigative reporting organizations in a joint effort to track and debunk disinformation, and to promote access to objective news and analysis that challenges illiberal narratives. The grantee is working with groups in Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia to produce content for country-specific versions of a common regional online platform that monitors traditional and online media outlets in their respective countries in order to identify misleading or false content. The effort uncovered and exposed a major disinformation hub run by domestic and foreign political actors to influence public opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and revealed that the majority of republished misleading and fake news in the region comes from Republika Srpska's public broadcaster RTRS.

In a second line of effort, we are ensuring *citizens' access to a plurality of affordable, public and private sources of information, and supporting the production and sharing of professional, reliable content for local audiences*. Throughout the region, continued support for investigative journalism and objective news content is important to shedding light on the various levers of Russian malign influence, including illicit money flows, Facebook accounts spreading disinformation around elections and Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

In Moldova, for example, a USAID-supported virtual newsroom program provides local journalists, media professionals, and civil society activists with digital behavioral analytics and cutting-edge social media technologies to deliver 'near real-time' analysis and response to disinformation actors and narratives. The program helped expose more than 700 Facebook accounts spreading disinformation in advance of the February parliamentary elections, dozens of which were linked to government officials and political parties. USAID is supporting a similar effort in Ukraine that is developing a database and plug-in for Google Chrome to report

suspicious accounts to Facebook for removal, which is particularly important ahead of this month's parliamentary election.

The NED is using AEECA funding to support the two most popular online sources of objective information in Ukraine's Donbas region. One news portal reports on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and monitors the media and events inside the Russia-controlled territories in eastern Ukraine. It remains the most popular news portal with news from and about the region drawing over 850,000 visits per month, including some 100,000 from the Russia-controlled territories. Another partner produces a news portal with an audience of 600,000, half of which live in the Russia-controlled area, as well as a television program with an audience of 2 million. As the Russian-led forces have attempted to block access to partner websites, NED partners have found that video content is much easier to disseminate in the Russia-controlled territories (via You Tube for example) and is in high demand. One video series focused on misinformation about the conflict region, and generated 450,000 views.

In another example, USAID-supported investigative journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina broke news stories about weapons purchases and the presence of Russia-trained fighters in the Republika Srpska, which garnered international attention and pressure. Law enforcement authorities at the Bosnia and Herzegovina State level are now investigating the matters.

Through regional programs, reporting from a U.S. government-supported network of investigative journalists has led to partner governments freezing \$5.5 billion in illicit gains, 100 criminal investigations, and the closure of 1400 shell companies. The network continues to see results from a 2014 collaborative investigation which exposed an immense financial fraud scheme that enabled vast sums to be pumped out of Russia through Europe and beyond by exploiting the Moldovan legal system. The story recently led to the banning of Latvian bank ABLV by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network from operating in the U.S; and the closure of ABLV Bank, due to its role in laundering money.

Finally, in Moldova, we are displacing Russian content in the media sector with objective public interest or Western entertainment programming, another means of countering disinformation. USAID, for example, continues to invest in independent outlets and production companies to increase their capacity to produce and distribute high-quality programming and broadcast in Western formats within Moldova and beyond. The Embassy Public Affairs Section also supports translation and broadcast of U.S. films dubbed into Romanian, with a view toward displacing Russian produced infotainment programming.

The third line of effort involves *improving the professionalism of media practitioners, improving business management and financial sustainability of outlets, and strengthening journalism associations/professional organizations*. This approach helps achieve long-term sustainable results because it equips independent media outlets with media management skills, financial strength, and means of engagement with the audience to sustain their operations and

resist the economic pressure from internal and external malign actors. The following are programmatic examples of our success in this sphere.

Through regional and bilateral USAID programs operating throughout the Western Balkans, we have made good progress in supporting the continued viability of a number of key independent and objective media outlets with audience. This is a critical to ensuring that there is access to information beyond what Sputnik, RT and government-influenced outlets produce. The results are impressive: within two months of receiving training in audience engagement, one media outlet reported an increase in its online advertising revenue of nearly 500 percent, while another saw a 113 percent increase in audience traffic. Another media partner showed an increase in numbers of unique visitors to its website from 540,000 to 1.2 million per month. The success continues, with outlets diversifying sources of funding and ensuring more long-term editorial independence.

A public affairs initiative in Central Asia has been sending the region's journalists to the United States to develop their professional skills and improve the quality and quantity of locally-produced media content about the United States in regional and global news. The reporting developed through the program competes for an audience of over 20 million which consumes the vast majority of their content from Russian or pro-Russian sources. By the end of the program, over 350 Central Asian journalists and media influencers will travel on exchange programs to the United States or receive a month-long training at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, creating a foundation for more professional journalism in the region.

Another important tactic in improving independent media outlets' audience and financial viability is to create platforms that facilitate the sharing of media content across borders. DRL has supported one such platform to increase citizen access to reliable information about local, regional, and international issues of public importance through shared content among Eurasia media outlets in Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova and improvements in online journalism. In less than a full year of project interventions, results from partner outlets indicate that targeted trainings to increase production of engaging multimedia content on local issues have the potential to expand audiences across countries and strengthen ties between media and their communities. For example, in Georgia, one local media partner's online audience skyrocketed from 1,000 visits in a month to more than 45,000 visits after only three months of producing socially-relevant multimedia packages. In Moldova, one outlet that upgraded its website based on program guidance went from 2,304 sessions in a month to 14,532 sessions just two months later.

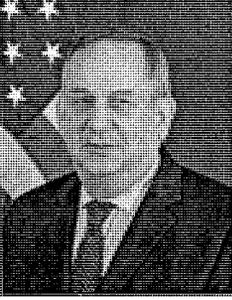
Finally, our fourth line of effort supports *strategic communications capacity including through technical assistance to governments as well as research and analytics to foster informed discussion and specific action to combat disinformation*. Embassy Tbilisi's Public Affairs Section, for example, works with the Prime Minister's office to build a foundation for a whole-

of-government approach to focused, effective messaging. This is critical to ensuring that the Georgian population understands the Government of Georgia's own aspirations to proactively implement critical policies that move Georgia along the path toward Euro-Atlantic integration – a message Russian propaganda aims to discredit.

Embassy public affairs sections in Central Asia and the Balkans are increasingly facilitating university partnerships for key faculties with U.S. universities. The goal is to spur research and area studies that will foster more informed discussion of the West, regional and international affairs. In Central Asia, for example, 20 universities are being matched with U.S. higher education institutions, and are receiving funding to catalyze new and expand existing projects that will modernize curricula and improve learning outcomes across the region.

Finally, a regional DRL-supported project uses data-driven analysis of disinformation sources and narrative to raise awareness about disinformation among decision makers and key influencers in the Baltics and Balkans and has equipped them with the information and tools necessary to design solutions that are responsive to their specific country needs. This program recently organized a roundtable on disinformation in the European Parliament (EP), where members on the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) received insights from leading experts who work with political and civic actors from the Baltic and Balkans. The round table is poised to be a significant step as it was designed to inform future actions by the EP, including its forthcoming report on disinformation, and has buy-in from influential stakeholders that are committed to long term action in this field.

Madame Chairwoman, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of this Committee, our work to build resilience to Russian disinformation across the Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia region continues. I want to emphasize that AEECA-funded efforts do not operate in isolation. They complement and build on the work of U.S. government partners across the interagency, including the GEC and the U.S. Agency for Global Media. Each of these partners brings its own comparative advantage in countering malign State disinformation, and can bring tools and geographic scope to the table to complement our foreign assistance programs.



Jim Kulikowski was appointed to the Coordinator position in February 2019. Prior to that, he was a Senior Advisor in the Office of U.S Foreign Assistance Resources assigned to the Office of the Secretary.

Between 2011 and 2017, he was part of the Appropriations Committee front office as Chief Counsel and then Deputy Staff Director. Altogether he has spent about 24 years working for the Committee, including positions of Clerk of the Commerce, Justice, State Subcommittee and Minority Staff Director.

He has also worked at OMB as Chief of the State Department Branch and at the Office of Global Health at HHS, including a stint as Acting Director and a detail to UNESCO.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I would like to begin the questioning, and we will go from Democrat to Republican in the order in which you have arrived.

This is a question for the whole panel. I see little evidence that we are successful in using all our tools of public diplomacy to get our message out and win hearts and minds.

And I really question, even though we saw this beautiful commercial, how do we evaluate if we are effective in connecting the much larger operations and assets of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, the Department of State, and other agencies of the United States Government to assist in our efforts to counter state-sponsored disinformation or terrorist narratives?

We have in the United States the best technology and marketing minds in the world. Are we harnessing these talents in this important area? Are we using all the platforms of the United States Government to counter the messages of ISIS and other terrorists? How do we redirect the conversation and better contest the digital information space?

When you look—and many of us have visited many countries, spoken with many leaders—we are not doing so well in these efforts, and we have seen the impact of disinformation in some elections. So if you can address the last—why don't we begin with Mr. Lansing—address the last question. Are we really effectively using the digital information space?

Mr. LANSING. Thank you for the question, Chairwoman Lowey. It is the right question. In the 4 years that I have been leading USAGM we have had a dramatic shift towards digital platforms, where in the past our primary method for reaching audiences was through, frankly, shortwave radio and AM and FM radio and some television.

Our most recent efforts, including the Current Time network that we just discussed, are all digital first. And the primary method for reaching audiences with that network is on social media platforms on mobile platforms, and on other digital platforms.

As I mentioned in my prepared statement, we are reaching 540 million video views on social media platforms. That is, short-form videos that are traveling on social media platforms to the former Soviet space and within the Russian Federation. Our key is finding not just anybody, not just Russians generically, but young, savvy future leaders, people who will influence others, influencers.

We are measuring our work not just by media reach. While reach is important—you can't influence anybody until you reach them—we are holding ourselves accountable to you and this committee based on our impact. And so we have measurements of impact that we measure every day against our media. And what are those measurements of impact? Do people find our information trustworthy? Do they share it? Do they like it? Do they do something with the information as a result of having it reach them?

I can tell you that in Iran, for example—I know we are here to talk about Russia—but in Iran our trustworthiness is measured at 85 percent, and we are reaching fully a quarter of all Iranians within Iran with our content on Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. But generally across the globe, all of our content on average has a trustworthy factor of 75 percent.

And so the one thing that we are exporting beyond a particular message or platform is the fact that it is believable. And in a world where you can't believe anything, to be able to reach people and have them believe it is truthful is really our number one export.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am going to turn to Ms. Gabrielle, but I would be interested, do you poll on a regular basis?

Mr. LANSING. Yes, ma'am, we do. We use Gallup and other third parties just as U.S. media does, and we poll around the world.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And the elections throughout Europe reflect all this outstanding media. Is that correct?

Mr. LANSING. As far as I know.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Gabrielle.

Ms. GABRIELLE. Yes, ma'am.

Well, first of all, I appreciate your thoughts behind all the different, unique capabilities that we have, not just in the United States but really across the world in terms of our allies.

You know, our adversaries, like Russia, they have weak alliances that are based on convenience, whereas the United States has true friendships that are based on trust, and that is because of the principles that we promote. So leveraging those alliances and leveraging those relationships and leveraging that trust is key.

The GEC was essentially formed to answer the call specifically that you are asking about in terms of bringing all the different capabilities and technologies to bear. So we have four key priorities of the GEC that is leading our U.S. Government efforts to counter propaganda and disinformation.

There is so much good work being done in this field across the U.S. Government, but if there is not a body that is coordinating those efforts, then we are going to be duplicating and we are not going to be supporting each other's efforts in the best way possible. Some of those efforts are in a classified space. Some of them are in an open space.

So the GEC is building essentially a mission center that can coordinate all of these efforts. And within our mission center we are building the expertise. We are bringing in data scientists. We have people who used to work in advertising. We have experts in languages and in regional expertise. We have people who are influence experts, who are information operations experts, so that we can essentially be not just the mission center, but the center of expertise across the U.S. Government's efforts in countering propaganda and disinformation.

Our second line of effort is working with our international partners. Our international partners, as I said before, these are true alliances based on trust, and they share information with us and we can share best practices and make sure that we are all working together to defeat the adversaries who want to use our basic vulnerability of our desire to communicate against us. They want to use our basic freedoms, that the principles that make us great, they want to use those as weaknesses. So we work with our allies to prevent that.

Our third line of effort right now is leveraging all of the wonderful work that is being done in the private sector, the civil society and tech companies, the tech industry, as well as the media, bringing all of those efforts to bear, because there is so much work being

done to counter propaganda and disinformation. It would be a huge mistake not to bring that together.

And finally, we have to continue to assess and adjust as we go along. So this is something we are working on. The GEC received its mandate to counter state-sponsored disinformation a couple of years ago. We are building this effort, and I think that this is something that will ultimately bring us together so that we can make sure we are not duplicating efforts and we can make sure that we are bringing these efforts to bear in the best way possible.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Kulikowski.

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chair.

So our efforts, as I said, are based on building resilience. So we don't put out messages. We teach people within each country how to respond, how to react to the messages they receive.

So, for instance, in Ukraine the Learn to Discern program brings in people of all ages to teach them how to discern reality from falsity and has been used successfully in the elections leading up to the Presidential election. And that teaching is not only teaching them how to discern reality, but teaching them how to be responsible content creators so that they can become the messengers of truth, if you will, and put it out on the net.

And the evidence is that those efforts are being successful and are being adopted by Ukraine to be spread throughout the entire educational system. So by creating users who know both how to discern reality and how to project true reality we build the resilience that no matter how large the effort is that Russia is putting out there, that the audience is not receptive to it and is able to respond on their own.

Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I know my colleagues will pursue these issues, so I will turn this over to Mr. Rogers, although it is tempting just to keep going.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Kulikowski, there is a multiplicity of U.S. Government actors involved in countering Russian disinformation. It is unclear to me at present how well coordinated these efforts are. A recent study by the RAND Corporation, for example, said that a wide list of agency responsibilities suggests the absence of a clear overall lead agency to coordinate U.S. Government activities to respond to the Russians.

The State Department has their Global Engagement Center. State has, of course, the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Government Interagency Working Group. The Russian Influence Group, RIG, includes a lot of different agencies from DOD, State, DHS, and so on.

Help me ring a bell here.

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. Yes, sir. Happy to, Mr. Rogers.

So coordination overall with respect to Russian malign influence is my job, is the job of my office, my bureau. We coordinate through the agencies that you mentioned, and, in fact, each of those does something slightly different and has different authorities and ways to work.

So we work with USAID. We provide—we coordinate on getting funding to them. And USAID works primarily on a development model, which is a program to develop capabilities and capacities over 5 years. The public diplomacy section in State works on a much shorter timeframe, and each embassy has its public diplomacy section that can take short-term projects and respond to immediate needs with agility to provide responses to issues as they come up.

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, another Bureau in the State Department, has the ability to reach into countries that and work with those right on the border with Russia that we do not have the ability to reach into. The GEC has the ability to do messaging and other things that we don't have the authority to do.

So there is a reason why these different agencies are involved in the effort. They each do different things. And it is really our job—my job—to help coordinate those efforts and make sure they fit into a coherent pattern, which we do on an annual basis planning out the program of operation with the money that we have for each country.

Mr. ROGERS. How can we know that you are succeeding?

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. Thank you.

Obviously, we do evaluations. The evaluations are being put into place. We have short-term indications of the effectiveness of each of those programs. We measure them to show that they are accomplishing their task.

I guess maybe you have to look at some of the bigger issues. You have to look at the results in North Macedonia, for instance, where a massive effort was put into place by Russia to make sure that the agreement was not accepted by either country. And through the combined efforts of all these agencies that we have talked about, we successfully battled that back and the people of North Macedonia and Greece gave us a huge victory, which is really an example that leads the rest of the West Balkans forward and gives them hope.

So that is maybe not quite the answer you were looking for, but in terms of results, the Ukraine elections is another one where the efforts of Russia to disrupt the Presidential elections did not work.

So at the 30,000-foot level at least there are many instances that indicate that these combined efforts are, in fact, succeeding against the huge effort Russia puts in to disrupt. That is not to say the war is won. That is to say we are winning battles as we go.

Thank you.

Mr. ROGERS. My time is expired.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Actually, if I may take the liberty of following up with my good friend Mr. Rogers on the coordination. Can you just address the Global Engagement Center, DOD's Joint WebOps Center? Is this new DOD center performing duplicative functions? Are they doing a better job? Are they coordinating with you? If you can just describe this, I would be most appreciative.

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. I will do my best, Madam Chair.

There are mechanisms in place that coordinate with DOD and with DOD centers. There are two mechanisms at the State Department, as Ms. Gabrielle explained. There is the Russia Influence

Group, which is jointly chaired by DOD and State and coordinates with all the actors throughout the spectrum of malign influence activities.

There is also with European Command, EUCOM, there is also a joint effort with State. State has a deputy commander at EUCOM. We were just there 2 months ago for a conference among all of the State Department heads of mission and all of EUCOM staff to coordinate our efforts, and this is an ongoing effort.

So there are mechanisms. Some of these, some of the units that you referred to are fairly new. We are learning how to work with them. But the effort is underway and 5 months into the job I am trying to get there as quickly as I can. But the mechanisms and the structures are there to do it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I am going to turn to Ms. Lee, but you look like you are so anxious to address this. Am I correct?

Ms. GABRIELLE. Thank you very much. I would appreciate the opportunity to address it.

A couple of things. You mentioned the Joint MISO WebOps Center. I led a delegation from the State Department to visit because we will be playing a major role in coordinating the efforts of the WebOps Center.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Where? Where is the WebOps Center?

Ms. GABRIELLE. It is in Tampa. It is co-located with SOCOM currently.

So I led this delegation so that we could bring regional bureaus and membership from the regional bureaus to go and see what this is all about.

Ultimately they are building a very strong messaging capability. So the GEC's role, as I have mentioned before, is to lead the U.S. Government's effort and to coordinate our effort in countering propaganda and disinformation, not all malign efforts, not all malign influence, but those specific.

So as we build this mission center we are building the expertise so that the interagency can know that we are the place to come when you need expertise on countering propaganda and disinformation and also so we can lead those efforts.

But we are new. In the past 2 years we have this state-sponsored disinformation mission. The Russia Influence Group and others were 2 years ahead of us in their build. So a lot of places in the U.S. Government coordination had already started and been led. So our objective is to get involved in that coordination, show that we have the expertise, and then take the load off of the different organizations who are focused on their specific efforts so that we can do that coordination as we go.

So Russia Influence Group is a good example. How the DOD—how the GEC will be doing coordination and assisting with the DOD Joint WebOps Center. We are not focused on messaging at the GEC. We are focused on the strategic efforts to counter propaganda and disinformation. Words are not influence. Words are, you know, just words. We are working on influence in coordinating the efforts of the U.S. Government to counter disinformation and propaganda using influence.

Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am pleased to turn to Ms. Lee and save other questions for later.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much. I want to thank our chairwoman and ranking member for holding this very important hearing today.

I am very familiar, I think most of us, with state-sponsored disinformation in our own campaigns here in America. It is well documented that Russia, for example, tried to influence and turn African American groups against each other through their interference in our elections. Russians' interference, of course, was very clear in terms of which candidate they supported for the Presidency. So we are very clear on what is taking place.

I have been a longstanding member of this subcommittee, and I have long had concerns over the effectiveness of some of the programs run by the U.S. Agency for Global Media, including the Office of Cuba Broadcasting and Radio and TV Marti, which serves, quite frankly, no useful purpose. It is a waste of taxpayer dollars and it actually should be defunded.

I am also concerned about recent reports that a project called Iran Disinformation Project, which was funded by Global Engagement Center, was attacking U.S. persons, human rights advocates, and journalists and academics on Twitter, including formally imprisoned Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian.

Special Envoy Gabrielle, as you know, the Global Engagement Center's approach is to work through credible partners to counter state propaganda, which you have laid out. Yet the selection of Iran Disinfo and their attacking online of U.S. persons raises serious concerns about GEC's vetting and oversight processes.

I am also gravely concerned that Iran Disinfo also tweeted out patently partisan opposition to the Iran nuclear deal, which has nothing to do with countering state-sponsored propaganda.

So what steps have you taken to ensure stronger oversight and accountability over grantees, and what safeguards are in place to ensure that GEC-funded programs do not violate U.S. values or norms that are nonpartisan and not opposing any specific policy that this administration just happens to oppose, such as the Iran deal?

Ms. GABRIELLE. Thank you so much for bringing this up this important topic. There is actually a lot of misinformation out there—and I say “mis” because I don't think it is intentional—about what happened with the Iran Disinformation Project.

Essentially the GEC does find third-party partners to work with because the idea is to create force multipliers, right, to be able to spread truthful narratives using third-party implementers. That was the intent of that project. The intent was for it to unveil Iranian disinformation.

The GEC learned that someone had tweeted a few tweets on a Twitter handle associated with that implementer that were not in the conduct that was intended. They were outside the scope of the agreement that we had with this implementer. I immediately suspended this within hours of learning that there were several tweets that were outside the scope of our agreement.

I immediately suspended it, and we conducted a thorough review. We have since terminated our agreement with that implementer.

Never the intent of the Global Engagement Center to have anyone tweeting at U.S. citizens.

And I just have to add, because you mentioned Jason Rezaian, I am a former journalist myself. I was reporting on his situation. I was saddened by it. I was concerned for him, and I am very happy that he made it home safely.

Ms. LEE. What accountability measures, though, have you put in place—

Ms. GABRIELLE. Thank you for asking.

Ms. LEE [continuing]. To make sure that this does not happen again?

And also the partisan nature of what you are doing, in terms of the messages, how do you ensure that, for instance, one of our partners does not tweet out or support a policy of the Trump administration, example, in opposition to the Iran deal? That is very undemocratic.

Ms. GABRIELLE. Again, this has to be a nonpartisan issue, and us coordinating efforts to counter propaganda and disinformation has to be nonpartisan because our adversaries want to create divisions among us to separate us. So I completely agree with you that this has to be nonpartisan going forward, and we are a nonpartisan organization.

As far as the use of freedom of expression by our implementers, that is not something we can control, but what we can do is put mechanisms in place so that we are aware of what is happening. And if they go outside the scope, we can more quickly realize it, assess it, and terminate those agreements.

Ms. LEE. You have got to do it in advance. You have got to put some accountability measures in before they actually sign the contract.

Ms. GABRIELLE. Completely agree.

Ms. LEE. And then you have got to make sure that there is some oversight and transparency during the process or during the time-frame of their contract.

Ms. GABRIELLE. We absolutely agree with you. And, in fact, we are tightening up the scope of agreement in agreements like this to lay out specific requirements. We are also putting oversight mechanisms in place. My team has conducted a thorough review of our other similar mechanisms so that we can assess them and be better about recognizing earlier.

Again, if someone tweets a few tweets, those things happen fast and the damage is done very quickly. I couldn't agree more with you that we need our implementers to stay within the scope of our agreements because this has to be a nonpartisan issue. This is a national security issue, and we have to work together as a country.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair. And let me, first of all, express my appreciation for you holding this hearing. I think this is very important.

I have worried for some time that our government media outreach initiatives were in serious need of replenishment and regeneration. And, frankly, I am inspired by your presentations. Obviously, you all embrace this with a great passion, and you are look-

ing at the tools of the modern media economy to better leverage successful outcomes here.

In that regard, let me ask you, Mr. Lansing, you have a measurement of 520 million views that you put out. Each week I get a report where my own tweets and my own Facebooks, how many people have looked at them. And by the time you start adding that up, you know, you are in the tens of thousands of people. I mean, 2,000 might look at this one. Sometimes one breaks and it is 20,000 or 30,000. And so that adds up and piles up quite a bit. So I get what you are trying to say with 520 million views.

But going back to what you said, measurement of impact, is that really an accurate number? There are other ways in which you can determine impact, and I think we ought to unpack that.

I have several other questions, so if I cut you off it is just going to try to get to a whole spectrum of things, so if you could give me some assessment of that question.

Mr. LANSING. No, that is a great question, Congressman Fortenberry.

We hold ourselves accountable, as I said earlier, to impact over reach. The reach is measurable because it is social media platforms and they report their analytics and so that makes it even easier for us to understand the reach versus broadcast media.

But we don't really think reach is the primary measurement for us. It is really what do people do having received our content. Do they share it? Do they like it? Do they take some aggressive or non-aggressive or civic action as a result of it? We measure all that through qualitative research that we do in the field.

The most important measurement, in my mind, honestly—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. What does that mean? Polling?

Mr. LANSING. Polling. Yeah, just like in the United States. I came out of the private sector as well. It is Gallup and other polling companies that do interviews by phone and in person.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. Good. And I think this is a softer place, a softer science. It is harder. Sometimes we in Congress, we look at how much money we are spending and how good our intention is, and we determine that that is a measurable outcome that it is effective, and that is not necessarily the case. So that is one of the areas that obviously we need to do work on. You are clearly skilled at that.

Secondly, though, how does our effort compare to Russia's, for instance? Now, there is different intentionality, and I don't want to say our intentionality is the same at all. There is different intentionality. But in terms of the actual outreach efforts, by what measure can you compare us to what Russia is doing?

Mr. LANSING. Well, I don't know exactly what they invest in RT and in Sputnik and in other Russian media, but I know that it is more than what the United States Government invests. Of course, all media in Russian is—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Right. Ten times? A hundred times?

Mr. LANSING. I think it is around a 10X factor, absolutely.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Back to the question that both Ranking Member Rogers and Mrs. Lowey also raised, our chair, how can you assure us that in, for instance, your use of partners to leverage out-

come, that that isn't a force multiplier, that that may be a force multiplier or it may be indicators of fragmentation?

Again, until you have come along, my impression is of this whole entire government effort, that it is very fragmented, and that, again, it was in serious need of replenishment and updating.

So explain how your work—and perhaps, Jim and Mr. Lansing, your work all go together—or I should say Mr. K, sorry, as we used to call you when you worked around here—explain that a little bit clearer because it seems like there are a whole-of-government approach going on here or a fragmented approach going on here.

Ms. GABRIELLE. Coordination is certainly one of the biggest challenges across any number of institutions. So it is a very difficult job, as I am sure you are aware. But that is our primary focus, is doing that coordination piece.

So we have looked at best practices at the Global Engagement Center in building a strategy for how we can conduct coordination across the government. And since our mission is global, we have to focus on every threat of disinformation and propaganda and globally how that is applied. So we are building an interagency and international coordination cell based on best practices that we have seen in doing coordination.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Where? At State Department?

Ms. GABRIELLE. So, again, yes, at the State Department.

Now, let me clarify. There is some confusion because the GEC is at the State Department, but our mandate is the whole-of-government coordination, not just within the State Department. So one of the first things I had my team do when I came on board is build a slide for me to show us who are we supposed to be coordinating—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. So you have a map of this? I think we need to see the map of this. I think my time is up, but—

Ms. GABRIELLE. I am happy to share with you our diagram.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. To the degree you can, I get it.

Ms. GABRIELLE. I call it my spaghetti diagram, because essentially we are coordinating the entire world of countering propaganda and disinformation. But we are using best practices to do it. It takes some time.

And as Mr. Kulikowski was saying, you know, it is not a matter of who is in the lead for what specific objective; it is a matter of us making sure we are working together and deciding who is leading, and for us it is coordinating—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I get it. I have oversimplified it. You have laid down a mapping strategy.

Madam Chair, I think that would be important for the committee to see.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Member, for holding today's important hearing.

I wanted to ask Mr. Lansing, I know today's hearing is about American efforts to combat Russian disinformation campaigns, but I wanted to address and to hear about concerns over USAGM's

management that have risen again in the past few days in the news.

The credibility and transparency of USAGM is critical to ensure that we are able to provide a counterbalance to the corruption in many of the countries where your programming is being broadcast.

Can you please address for us your plans and ensure us how you are fortifying these safeguards at USAGM that ensure that your reporters are providing accurate and unbiased news to viewers and also now you are conducting oversight in relation to financial management, for example?

Mr. LANSING. Sure. Thank you for that question.

So we have redoubled our efforts at program review with all of our networks and all of our content. We broadcast, as I said earlier, in 61 languages to over 100 countries 24/7.

We have a process in which each of the five networks reviews its content on a rolling basis that has already been broadcast, reviews it for professionalism, for accuracy, for discipline, and for adherence to the highest standards of professional journalism. And all of those reports, all of those reviews roll up to me to review on a regular basis.

We have redoubled our effort in that. We have added more resources and more people so that we can do that on a more consistent basis.

The most important thing that we have, Congresswoman Meng, is our credibility. That is what we are actually exporting to the world, honesty and credibility and professional journalism. And we hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional journalism in our review process, and in our editorial development process. It is something that I have done my whole professional career.

We have an excellent team of people leading our networks. Amanda Bennett leads the Voice of America, a twice Pulitzer prize-winning journalist. Ambassador Alberto Fernandez is leading MBN and has really in the last year and a half reshaped the entire Arabic strategy for our business. Radio Free Europe launched Current Time and has completely rebuilt our Russian media strategy. And I can go on and on, so—

Ms. MENG. Actually, so sorry to cut—

Mr. LANSING. Yeah.

Ms. MENG. I wanted to know, you have increased your personnel resources; I assume. Do you know how many personnel there are? What is the number of the increase? And how often do they undergo this kind of review?

Mr. LANSING. It is a rolling review. It happens constantly as we roll forward. Each network is of a different size. Voice of America has 43 language services. Radio Free Europe has 21 language services. MBN has one language; it is in Arabic. We have a Latin America Division within Voice of America.

So each one is tailored to that particular network, so there are many more people at Voice of America doing program review, for example, than, say, at Middle East Broadcasting Network since there are just more languages to review.

Ms. MENG. What about TV Marti, for example?

Mr. LANSING. TV Marti, we are currently undergoing a complete, bottom-to-top review of all of its editorial processes. We put to-

gether a panel of five Spanish-speaking journalism professors to review the content of OCB over the last several months. They put a report together for me that indicated there were serious lapses in the professionalism of the journalism at OCB.

And, as a result, I have taken actions to remove several people from OCB, and we are currently reviewing the entire management structure and the mission of OCB. And we are in the process right now of evaluating what steps we will be taking to strengthen and fortify the content and journalism coming out of OCB.

Ms. MENG. Okay. Will you be able to report back, as you are making improvements, increasing resources on some of the these improvements that you might have made, to our committee?

Mr. LANSING. I absolutely will.

Ms. MENG. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. LANSING. Thank you for your question.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you to all of the panelists for being here this morning for this very important hearing, and I thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for holding it.

And, you know, I, too, along with my colleagues, as you have heard, share the concern about this coordination across government agencies.

And I think, Mr. Kulikowski, we talked about—or you mentioned in response to one of the questions about reporting annually. And I would just like to start and say, I wonder if there is an opportunity maybe for you to revisit with this committee a little bit more often than just annually with some updated information as to how those coordination efforts—because, again, I think that there is an overlying concern here about those coordination efforts.

So, to the extent that the chairwoman would also agree, I think it would be beneficial for this committee to hear more, rather than just waiting for a full calendar year or fiscal year before we hear back from you.

But my specific question is for you, Special Envoy Gabrielle. I understand that GEC has developed, as in your testimony, your own counter-Kremlin strategy. And I would like to know, specifically referring to, as you said in your testimony, analyze, build, and communicate this model.

What does that mean? What accountability measures are in place? If you could drill down on that. I guess, in other words, how do you know that the strategy has been effective?

And, again, this goes back to these overlying concerns about, you know, what are the metrics by which we are grading success with all of these efforts.

Ms. GABRIELLE. So, as I mentioned before, the GEC's counter-state-sponsored-disinformation mission is still relatively new. So we received our first dollars, our first funding for this about a year ago.

So we are building into all of our programs and all our initiatives measurements and evaluation techniques. We actually have brought on a team that can establish at the beginning of each ini-

tiative what some of those points are that should be evaluated as we go along.

I think that that is key, having almost somebody from the outside but that is within the organization hired specifically to be looking at that and helping us identify measurements of success. Because evaluating how well you have influenced someone or a target audience is not easy to do unless you have a specific marker on the board when you start out.

I think a good example is our support, which we worked with Mr. Kulikowski's organization, on the—worked with the North Macedonian Government to help ensure a free and fair vote in the lead-up to the September 30th naming referendum. We actually provided people on the ground there to support, with insight reports, giving demographic and micro-targeting information, really using data scientists to support that effort.

That is a good example where at the beginning you want to know, here is the marker. If people are getting out and voting and if that is the measurement of success, well, then that is the thing that is easily measurable. Identifying how well someone has been influenced is more difficult, but we are putting mechanisms in place. That is just one example.

You asked about the ABC's. So what that really means—and thank you for reading this—is, you know, we first begin with analyzing. We have to analyze what the tactics are that are being used against us by our adversaries, really understanding them and understanding what the target populations are and whether or not our adversaries are being effective. Because if they are not, then we are not going to put our efforts there. But analyzing the target audiences and understanding how they are being targeted.

The second is building, really building the capability and the capacity of foreign partners to be able to identify disinformation and to be able to respond quickly to it. Right now, we have a number of international initiatives, including working with foreign governments, and then on the ground, working with civil society actors and that.

And the third is really communicate; the “C” of the ABC is communicate. You know, Russian disinformation takes advantage of vacuums of information. So, with our partners, we fill that information space with, as directed by Congress, fact-based narratives.

Mrs. ROBY. And just real quickly, using that model, have you been able to identify areas of the world that are most vulnerable to malign information attacks?

Ms. GABRIELLE. Yes, we certainly have. And I think that, you know, for the purposes of this committee, you know, we are talking about Russia and where Russia is effective.

We know that Russia specifically targets the U.S. And there was a question earlier about, you know, how much effort does Russia put at this. Well, the United States, we have to look at the entire world, whereas Russia very much focuses its adversarial behavior on the U.S.

So we are constantly using data scientists, data analysis to identify what are the most vulnerable audiences and where we should focus our efforts. And that is part of our coordination piece. As the interagency looks to us to be the experts in countering propaganda

and disinformation, that data science is key in helping them understand where those efforts should go.

Mrs. ROBY. I appreciate it.

And I have gone over my time, Madam Chair, but I do think that there are some good followup questions here, as this is being laid out for us, in terms of being able to measure the success, not only from State on reporting the impact of the coordination of these government agencies, but also, as more information becomes available, that this committee be made abreast of what is going on and the successes and the challenges that you are facing moving forward. I think that would be very helpful.

So thank you, Madam Chair, for holding this hearing today. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I am going to turn to Mr. Price, but, at another time and maybe a followup question, when you said Russia primarily targets the United States, it is hard for me to believe that they aren't very involved in elections all throughout Europe and in other places of the world.

But I will turn to Mr. Price now, so you can save that for another time.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Kulikowski, I want to welcome you back to the committee and, particularly, thank you for raising the issue of the disinformation efforts underway in the former Soviet states and in the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. You mentioned Montenegro and Moldova, both notorious cases, and I assume there are more where those came from.

And, of course, Mr. Lansing, your outlets are broadcasting in most, if not all, of these places.

And, also, Ms. Gabrielle, if you wanted to chime in on the question I am about to ask, you are welcome to do so as well.

I am interested in what patterns you are seeing in terms of Russian efforts in these countries. I know that is a broad question. What kind of generalizations can you make?

And I am particularly concerned about the kind of democratic backsliding we have seen in many of these countries. Many are fragile democracies to start with, and then others that we had thought were joining the Western community of nations have backslid in some pretty alarming ways. I wondered how that has changed Russia's approach and your approach to countering Russian influence.

I suppose there are a number of things one could ask. Has this democratic backsliding made it easier for Russia to interfere, or has it altered the character of that interference?

In terms of the local outlets that you champion, Mr. Kulikowski, that you try to empower, what kind of threats and dilemmas and problems has this posed for them, these developments in their own countries?

And then how do we cover it? How do we deal with this? Let me just take Hungary as a case study. How do we describe it when President Trump welcomes Viktor Orban to the Oval Office? Do we cover the Republican and Democratic Senators when they warn him not to do this? Do we, in our broadcasts, indicate how con-

troversial this is in our own country? And certainly how it relates to what is widely perceived as democratic backsliding in Hungary.

I would love to see transcripts of our coverage of that Orban visit to the Oval Office. If they are available, I think that would be very useful. I think this would be a pretty interesting case study.

But you see the kinds of issues this raises. And I wonder—maybe we will start with you, Mr. Lansing—as to how we deal with it.

Mr. LANSING. Thank you for the question, Congressman Price.

We will absolutely provide you transcripts of our coverage of anything, but particularly of the Orban visit to the White House.

Our role, through Voice of America, is to cover America for the world. And we do it in a professional, unbiased, journalistic manner. We don't carry a particular point of view, Republican or Democratic or the administration. Our point of view is to give all sides of any particular story and report that in parts of the world that don't have a free media.

I will tell you—it was a multifaceted question. One point I wanted to make. You asked, how are the Russians influencing parts of the world where we are seeing backsliding in democratic institutions? Well, we are seeing that more and more, as you know, in even NATO countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Hungary. And so, just this year, we expanded Radio Free Europe's coverage into Romania—Romanian—and Bulgaria, so that we are there now, present where we weren't before, because it had become more democratic. Now that it has backslid, we are in there now confronting Russian disinformation and lies with truthful and factual information. We are also, at this very moment, exploring an expansion into Hungary, as well, for the same reason.

One of the things I thought the committee might find interesting—and I am sure you are already aware of—while we saw the malign interests in our 2016 election was done by, you know, warehouses full of Russian trolls and robots even, what we are seeing now it is stepping up into artificial intelligence. And so the Russians are using AI to create information, to create personalities, to create actual people that don't really exist as a means of communicating and disrupting societies—democratic societies or societies that are teetering on the edge of a democracy.

I will reflect back on my testimony earlier, but the very fundamental strategy of the Kremlin when it creates an attempt to disrupt a democratic society is to just sow chaos. It is about making the truth seem so elusive that nothing can be believed. And that is what we are really up against.

You know, they say a lie can go around the world while the truth is putting its shoes on. And so it is a very, very difficult thing to combat a persistent attempt to just make everything seem to be a lie. Because if everything is a lie, then the Russians can step in, and then whatever they want to do they do.

And so that is the battlefield that we are on. And we are engaged on many, many levels, both in terms of our journalism and our content but also through our fact-checking websites that are, on an hourly basis, disputing Russian lies with facts and truthfulness. It is a battle out there. I mean, I can't say we are at the promised land or that we have reached the epiphany of making all of this going away, but we are engaged.

I think the one thing I guess I would ask—and I know you get asked a lot since you are on the Appropriations subcommittee—is, you know, just help us fund the effort. It is becoming more and more expensive, because the Russians are sparing no expense in disrupting all of these democratic institutions.

And I hope that answered your question.

Mr. PRICE. Yes.

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. Thank you.

Just to add to that, I agree very much with the pattern that was referred to. The pattern is to create chaos, to seize any opportunity to go in and confuse and divert and undermine processes that are underway. It is opportunistic, and it is opportunistic across the board.

In terms of backsliding when some of the countries, are EU and NATO members in Eastern Europe, the importance is to make sure that the institutions and the media capabilities that we have built remain in place. And so, when the Secretary was in Hungary last February, he announced a program, a regional program, to invite investigative journalists from Eastern Europe to the U.S. to make sure that they had all the tools at their availability to continue to be able to watch out for the kind of corrupt influences that is one of the means Russia uses to insert its messages.

So those efforts, those regional efforts are underway. A \$700,000 grant program has hit the streets. The grant applications are in, and we are going through them as we speak to make sure that that capability remains.

We are also able to work with NED, for instance, in the region, and NED has several grants funded to promote freedom of information and democratic ideals in the region.

So we have ways of making sure, even as we pursue the strategy of engagement with the democratic leaders of those countries, to assure that the capabilities that are necessary to battle back remain in place and are renewed and strengthened.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I can't resist again, before I turn to Ms. Frankel, but we won USA's soccer match, right? I can't believe that, how difficult it is, we can't win this battle. So I am really interested in pursuing the questions that Mr. Price asked and I think we are all asking. We know it is a battle, but we have to win.

And there is certainly a lot of money being put on the table. And the reason we wanted to have this hearing, to ensure that we are spending the money in the most effective way and not just continuing business as usual. Because I have seen many of the buildings, talked to many of the people, and the expertise is there, certainly in the private sector. And I am hoping that we will clearly focus and win this battle.

But Ms. Frankel is next. Thank you.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you. I think you are being kind when you call it a battle. I would say we are in a war. And what I would be interested in, Madam Chair—and I thank you for this hearing—is to have a comparison between how much we are spending on military hardware versus how much we are spending to counter this cyber warfare. Because it seems to me that this is the war of the—are we in the 21st century? Yes.

I want to ask you specifically, what is the line—the lines of Russian propaganda, what are they basically—what kind of information are they getting out, specifically? What are the tails that they are telling, their fake news? What do you see?

And let me just—I am going to add something to the question. Do the Russians ever use any of our President's statements in their propaganda, such as the Russian interference in our elections is a hoax or that he believes Putin when it comes to Russian interference?

Ms. GABRIELLE. So, as far as the lies that Russia tells, you know, Russia is, of course, the most expansive and aggressive actor in this space—and I want to clarify what I did said earlier. When I say that Russian primarily targets the U.S., what I mean is us, our allies, our Western institutions, those bonds that we have, anything that basically undermines the type of society that they want to have.

But as far as the lines of effort, you know, we have been saying they covertly plant false stories, they use—

Ms. FRANKEL. Just give me a couple of examples of fake stories. Because we have been talking in generalities. I would like to know what kind of information they are spreading. What are they saying, for example?

Ms. GABRIELLE. Well, it really depends on the country, and I—

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, just give me an example. Pick a country and give me an example.

Ms. GABRIELLE. Okay.

Ms. FRANKEL. Anybody can help her.

Mr. LANSING. I will help her.

Ms. FRANKEL. Go ahead.

Mr. LANSING. No, she doesn't need help. She is doing a great job.

You know, the thing is, it is interesting, the Russians are really not pushing a particular narrative other than "nothing is true," that you can't have any faith in any institution, that a democracy—

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, give it to me. I don't want to be—

Mr. LANSING. It just matters—

Ms. FRANKEL [continuing]. Rude. Just tell me how they do it. What do they say? What do they show? What do they—

Mr. LANSING. For example, when MH17 was shot down in eastern Ukraine, the Russian narrative on that was that the Americans loaded the plane with a bunch of dead bodies and shot it down themselves so they could blame the Russians.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay.

Mr. LANSING. There is an example.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay.

Have they ever used any of the words of our President in any of their disinformation?

Mr. LANSING. I am sure they have. Of course.

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, you are sure they have; of course. You would know. Can you tell us?

Mr. LANSING. Yeah. I mean, they take the news as we receive it—or as we broadcast it, and they distort it and change it and—

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, how about the President's comments, over and over, that the Russian interference with our election is a hoax?

How about his statements in—was it Helsinki?—where he stood up next to Putin and said, “Well, why shouldn’t I believe him?” He said the Russians didn’t interfere with the election. Have you ever—know of any times where that information was spread by the Russians in other countries?

Ms. GABRIELLE. So we are developing analytics and research capabilities where we can look into and we can assess things like that.

I want to just answer your question that you asked before about some of the other—

Ms. FRANKEL. No, no. Answer that.

Ms. GABRIELLE. Okay.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay.

Ms. GABRIELLE. So I will tell you this.

Ms. FRANKEL. Yes.

Ms. GABRIELLE. The Russians will use every division possible to fragment us as a country. They will use your words, they will use my words, they will use the President’s words, they will use any words they can to divide us and to separate us. So, absolutely, any little string we give them of division, they will exploit that. That is their tactic.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay. Thank you. I guess you are answering my question, is, yes, they have used the President’s words.

All right. So—and thank you for that example. Are there any other examples any of you can give me?

Ms. GABRIELLE. The poisoning of the U.K. citizens in Salisbury, England; energy development and distribution; NATO exercises and deployments; the crisis in Venezuela; and countless other topics. Again, they will use your words, they will use my words, they will use any words they can to divide us.

Ms. FRANKEL. Now, how do you pick your targets, which countries you are going to be working in?

Mr. KULIKOWSKI. Well, we pick our targets—we work with basically all countries in the region that we work in. We pick our targets in conjunction with the guidance that you provide us. So our targets are your targets, which prioritize Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova.

But we work with the balance of the countries. The Western Balkans are extremely important to us. But we work with you on determining where the funds go and how we choose our targets.

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chair, my time has run out, but I do again want to just request that I really think it would be interesting to see the amount of money we spend on this counterintelligence work, because you have different—you are TV, internet, and so forth. I would like to see how much we spend and compare it to the money we spend on military hardware, and even on our troops.

And, with that, I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I was just discussing with staff that I wish we had a couple more hours, because this panel is so invaluable. We are not finished yet. We have Mrs. Torres, and then we have another panel. So we will have to bring you back another time.

But Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you. I am going to try to be very brief with my questions, piggybacking on what was just asked.

How is the information and the images of toddlers behind jail cells and having nothing but a sheet of aluminum to cover themselves, pooping themselves, nobody feeding them, how are those images being portrayed to the world about America?

Mr. LANSING. In the same way that any American journalistic enterprise is reporting that story, our journalists report the story—

Mrs. TORRES. Are they being truthful about—

Mr. LANSING. Yes.

Mrs. TORRES [continuing]. What is going on out there, or are they spinning that to—

Mr. LANSING. We don't—

Mrs. TORRES [continuing]. Create an image—

Mr. LANSING. Congresswoman Torres, we don't spin anything. We report the—

Mrs. TORRES. Not you. I am asking how the Russians—

Mr. LANSING. Oh, how the Russians are—

Mrs. TORRES. Yes.

Mr. LANSING. Well, I can't give you a specific example of how they are covering—

Mrs. TORRES. You are the friendly ones.

Mr. LANSING. We are the friendlies.

Mrs. TORRES. Yes.

Mr. LANSING. I don't have a specific example. I can only assure you that they are looking for a way to report that story in a way that makes America look like it is—

Mrs. TORRES. Will you report back to the committee on—

Mr. LANSING. Yeah, of course.

Mrs. TORRES [continuing]. How those images are being spun? I am very concerned about how—

Mr. LANSING. How the Russians are reporting on that story? Sure.

Mrs. TORRES [continuing]. How the Russians are reporting that and how that information is being utilized to diminish, you know, our standing as a global leader.

So I want to bring the conversation back to our hemisphere and Latin America. So, beyond Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, where have you detected significant Russian influence in Latin America? And to what extent does corruption make countries more vulnerable to Russian influence?

Mr. LANSING. You named the countries that are most influenced by the Russians, starting with Cuba and Venezuela, Colombia, El Salvador. I think wherever you see a Latin American country that is backsliding in democratic ideals, I think you will find the Russians there helping to make that happen.

Mrs. TORRES. Specifically to the Northern Triangle, how is corruption there being—

Mr. LANSING. The corruption, I think, is something that is largely the result of Russian influence.

Mrs. TORRES. All right.

Any of you have anything else to add to that?

Ms. GABRIELLE. Well, we are certainly seeing Russian influence in Venezuela, of course, as well as other adversary actors in Venezuela trying to influence their local populations.

And for the GEC, part of our mandate is recognizing and understanding where propaganda and disinformation are occurring globally. That is part of the reason that we have dedicated intelligence officers from the intelligence community who are detailed into our spaces of the GEC to assist with us and to point out when there are specific areas that we need to look at.

Mrs. TORRES. I think we have to pay attention to our hemisphere.

Mr. LANSING. Yeah.

Mrs. TORRES. You know, about 3 years ago, I was in Chile. They had a partnership with Russia with satellites, satellite infrastructure that was being built there.

So I think that we need to pay special attention to our hemisphere and how this administration is treating migrants that are coming here seeking asylum and how that information is being utilized against, you know, our moral values as American citizens.

And, with that, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I know that all of us would like to continue, but we have a second panel waiting. So I certainly would like to thank our witnesses. And you can be assured that we will invite you back sooner rather than later to continue this discussion. Thank you very much for being here today.

And we will recess just for one moment to transition to the second panel, because we took so much time with your excellent presentations. Thank you.

Mr. LANSING. Thank you.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Polyakova, Ms. Jankowicz, I want to really thank you for joining us today. If you would be kind enough to summarize your written statement, we would be happy to place your full testimonies into the record.

And after your testimony, I will call on members, alternating between majority and minority. Each member is asked to keep questions to within 4 minutes per round. I do want to say, because this subject is of such interest to all of us, we get a little carried away, so we are going to have to keep to our timeframe.

And so, after your testimony, I will call on members, alternating between majority and minority.

Ms. Polyakova, please proceed.

#### OPENING REMARKS OF MS. POLYAKOVA

Ms. POLYAKOVA. Thank you. Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is truly an honor and privilege to address you today on this important issue. Thank you for inviting me to testify.

President Vladimir Putin's Russia seeks to weaken Western governments and transatlantic institutions, discredit democratic values, and create a post-truth world.

Russian disinformation doesn't stop when the ballot box closes. Elections may provide an ideal, high-impact opportunity for a disinformation actor like the Kremlin, but the barrage of

disinformation against Western democracies, including that of the United States, continues long between election cycles.

Disinformation, as one tool of Russia's political warfare, is certainly not new. But what is new is that, today, what used to take years simply takes minutes. The advance of digital technology and communication allows for the high-speed spread of disinformation, rapid amplification of misleading content, and massive manipulation via unsecured points of influence.

I have been working on Russian disinformation long before it became the issue du jour 3 years ago. Likewise, Russia's democratic and pro-Western neighbors, especially Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltic states, have contended with Russian disinformation attacks for years. The United States and Western European countries woke up late to the challenge.

But since the 2016 wake-up call, as you said, Congresswoman Lowey, European governments, the European Union, Canada, and the United States have moved beyond, quote/unquote, "admiring the problem" and have entered what I think of as a new period of trial and error, where we are trying new efforts and new policies to counter this threat.

Four insights have emerged over the last 3½ years. These are based on my many, many conversations with my European colleagues on the research side, European governments, and others in the private sector, including the social media platforms.

First, there is no silver bullet for addressing the disinformation challenge. Governmental policy on its own will not be enough. What we need is a whole-of-society approach that includes stakeholders from the private sector, independent media, and civil society.

Second, exposure and identification of specific malicious entities like Russian bots and trolls is necessary but not sufficient to curb the spread of foreign disinformation. As we respond, our adversaries evolve.

Three, the democratic response to state-sponsored information warfare must be rooted in democratic principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity. As we learned during the Cold War, we need not become them to beat them.

Lastly, malicious disinformation attacks are not limited to one country; all democracies are equally affected. That is why the Transatlantic Alliance should be the basis of a counter-disinformation coalition in which the United States should play a leading role.

Unfortunately, the United States, as you rightfully noted, has fallen behind Europe in both conceptualizing the nature of the challenge and operationalizing concrete steps to counter and build resilience against disinformation.

In my written testimony, I have detailed the nature of the Russian threat, European and U.S. responses, and what else needs to be done by this legislative body and the administration. Here, I will focus on a few specific policy recommendations relevant to this committee and the administration.

I apologize. I will go about 30 seconds over.

During the Cold War, the United States developed and invested in a messaging and media infrastructure that was well-suited for

the communications environment and the time. I can speak from personal experience, growing up in the Soviet Union in the 1980s, that we relied on Radio Liberty and Voice of America to provide truthful information about our own country that we certainly did not receive from the Soviet authorities.

Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. After the Cold War, the U.S. ceded that space and, with it, our ability to project democratic values and principles into the frontline states.

Today, the communications environment has been revolutionized and transformed by the digital revolution, but the U.S. media apparatus has not kept up. A 20th-century model for countering 21st-century disinformation will fail. We need to take urgent and critical steps today.

First, the U.S. Congress should invest in a real way in rebuilding our messaging capabilities to reach vulnerable populations in the frontline states. As you have already, but on top of that, we need to focus on building and appropriating appropriate funds to build capacity of civil society media and other nongovernmental organizations.

To that end, Congress should authorize and appropriate funds to further develop RFE/RL's and VOA's "Current Time" program that we heard about earlier today and allow it to expand further into the former Warsaw Pact countries.

Lastly, this Congress should also continue to put pressure on the administration to ensure the administration continues to impose sanctions on foreign officials or officially controlled purveyors of disinformation and their sponsors.

I can go on, but just to close, I will say these recommendations, as are outlined in my written testimony, are low-hanging fruit. They will not, in themselves, curb the tide of disinformation. We must take the leadership in this space in addressing foreign disinformation specifically. To do otherwise will be to leave this arena open to authoritarians to set the rules of the game.

Thank you.

[The information follows:]

# BROOKINGS

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United States House Committee on Appropriations – Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

United States Efforts to Counter Russian Disinformation and Malign Influence

July 10, 2019

**Dr. Alina Polyakova**

Director, Global Democracy and Emerging Technology  
Fellow, Center on the United States and Europe  
Foreign Policy Program  
Brookings Institution

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

It is an honor and privilege to address you today on this important issue. Thank you for inviting me to testify.

President Vladimir Putin's Russia seeks to weaken Western governments and transatlantic institutions, discredit democratic and liberal values, and create a post-truth world, with the aim of shielding Moscow's autocracy from liberal influence and easing Russia's domination of its neighbors.<sup>1</sup> Russian disinformation campaigns aim to amplify existing social divisions and further polarize democratic societies. As such, they don't stop when the ballot box closes. Elections may provide an ideal high-impact opportunity for a disinformation actor, but the barrage of disinformation against Western democracies, including the United States, continues between election cycles.

The spread of disinformation to undermine public confidence is one critical tool in the Kremlin's broader tool-kit of malign influence, which also includes cyber-hacking, illicit finance, support for radical movements and parties, and the use of economic warfare, primarily through energy exports. Disinformation, as a tool of Russia's political warfare, is not new. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union's main intelligence agency, the KGB, routinely carried out disinformation campaigns against the United States and our allies. *Dezinformatsiya*, as it is called in Russian, was part and parcel of Soviet active measures aimed at shaping the outcome of global events of interest to the Kremlin.

For example, in the 1980s, the KGB ran a disinformation campaign called "Operation Infektion" to plant the idea that the CIA invented the AIDS virus as part of a biological weapons program. A news story was first planted in a small Soviet controlled paper in India. It was then disseminated by Soviet outlets in the Soviet Union and globally, eventually infiltrating Western media including in the United States. The Soviet Union eventually dropped the story in the late 1980s after the Reagan Administration made

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<sup>1</sup> Alina Polyakova and Daniel Fried, "Democratic Defense Against Disinformation," (Washington, DC, United States: Atlantic Council, February 2018), [https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Democratic\\_Defense\\_Against\\_Disinformation\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Democratic_Defense_Against_Disinformation_FINAL.pdf).

countering and exposing Soviet disinformation an explicit part of U.S. policy. Eventually, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was seeking better relations with the West at the time, reportedly apologized to President Reagan for promoting the conspiracy theory, which undermined U.S. diplomatic efforts in the global south and damaged the U.S. image globally. The entire disinformation cycle for Operation Infektion, from initial plant to global spread and eventual end, took approximately five years.

Today, what used to take years, takes minutes. The advance of digital technology and communication allows for the high-speed spread of disinformation, rapid amplification of misleading content, and massive manipulation via unsecured points of influence. This digital ecosystem creates opportunities for manipulation that have exceeded the ability of democratic nations to respond, and sometimes even to grasp the extent of the challenge.

Russia's democratic and pro-Western neighbors—especially Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltic states—have contended with Russian disinformation attacks for years. Other targets of state-sponsored disinformation campaigns—the United States and some Western European countries—woke up late to the challenge, with the United States doing so only after the 2016 presidential election. Indeed, the Russian disinformation attack on the United States was part of a long-standing pattern of Russian political warfare honed in Eastern Europe and later deployed against the West, of which the United States was another target and victim. As a result, Western democracies have learned that the very principles and values of open societies—plurality, freedom of speech, independent media—are also vulnerabilities that can be exploited by malign actors for their advantage.

One positive consequence of Russia's brazen interference in the U.S. elections has been that it has served as a wakeup call to Western democracies in Europe and North America. Since 2016, European governments, the European Union, Canada, and the United States have moved beyond "admiring the problem" and have entered a new "trial and error" phase, testing new policy responses, technical fixes, and educational tools for strengthening resistance and building resilience against disinformation. As these efforts progress, four insights have emerged:

1. There is no silver bullet for addressing the disinformation challenge. Governmental policy, on its own, will not be enough. The private sector, specifically social media platforms, and civil society groups, including independent media, must be part of the solution. **A whole of society approach is key.**
2. Exposure and identification of specific malicious entities (i.e. Russian bots or trolls) or content is necessary but not enough to curb the spread of foreign disinformation. **As we respond, the adversary's tactics evolve.**
3. A democratic response to state-sponsored information warfare must be rooted in democratic principles of **transparency, accountability, and integrity**. These principles should guide U.S. and European policy. As we learned during the Cold War, we need not become them to beat them.
4. Malicious disinformation attacks are not limited to one country. All democracies are current or potential future targets—our response is stronger with allies. Like-minded governments should establish mechanisms for consistent sharing of information, best practices, and risk-assessment guidelines. **The trans-Atlantic alliance should be the basis of a "Counter Disinformation Coalition,"** in which the United States should play a leading role.

Unfortunately, the United States has fallen behind Europe in both conceptualizing the nature of the challenges and operationalizing concrete steps to counter and build resilience against disinformation. The U.S. Congress should fill the gap. In this statement, I draw on two reports, Democratic Defense

Against Disinformation (2018) and Democratic Defense Against Disinformation 2.0 (2019),<sup>2</sup> which I co-authored with Ambassador Daniel Fried, in addition to my research at Brookings<sup>3</sup> on emerging threats in the information space and previous Congressional testimonies,<sup>4</sup> to:

- Provide an overview of Russia’s disinformation machine;
- Provide a progress report on European and U.S. efforts to respond to Russian disinformation since 2016;
- Recommend steps that the United States, and the U.S. Congress in particular, should take to better defend against and get ahead of disinformation threats.

### I. The Russian disinformation machine

Russian disinformation against democracies is multi-vectored and multi-layered, consisting of overt state-funded propaganda, covert social media entities, and constantly evolving repertoire of fly by night websites. These elements work in concert with each other to amplify and distribute content across traditional and social media outlets.

Overt Russian state-funded disinformation and propaganda includes RT, Sputnik, and other Kremlin-linked media outlets. Estimates suggest that the Russian government spends approximately \$300 million on RT annually. RT broadcasts in English, Spanish, Arabic, and German, and claims to reach 700 million people in 100 countries.<sup>5</sup> RT, as it proudly states, is the most-watched news network on YouTube, claiming over 8 billion views and 3.5 million subscribers.<sup>6</sup> YouTube statistics show 2.8 billion views, however. By comparison, Voice of America has approximately 200 million views and 428,000 subscribers. RFE/RL has 32 million views and about 60,000 subscribers.

On Facebook, RT has 5.6 million followers, VOA 11.6 million, and RFE/RL 550,000. On Twitter, RT has 2.9 million followers, VOA 1.6 million, and RFE/RL 77,000.

Covert social media entities include automated (“bot”) accounts, trolls, cyborgs, and impersonation pages, groups and accounts used to carry out digital disinformation campaigns across social media platforms. To date, the Department of Justice Special Counsel report<sup>7</sup> and the investigation’s related

<sup>2</sup> Alina Polyakova and Daniel Fried, “Democratic Defense Against Disinformation 2.0,” (Washington, DC, United States: Atlantic Council, June 2019), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/democratic-defense-against-disinformation-2-0>.

<sup>3</sup> See: Alina Polyakova, “Weapons of the weak: Russia and AI-driven asymmetric warfare,” (Washington, DC, United States: Brookings Institution, November 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/weapons-of-the-weak-russia-and-ai-driven-asymmetric-warfare/>; and Alina Polyakova and Spencer Boyer, “The future of political warfare: Russia, the West, and the coming age of global digital competition,” (Washington, DC, United States: Brookings Institution, March 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-future-of-political-warfare-russia-the-west-and-the-coming-age-of-global-digital-competition/>.

<sup>4</sup> “Five Years after the Revolution of Dignity: Ukraine’s Progress/Russia’s Malign Activities,” U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, statement of Dr. Alina Polyakova, Director, Global Democracy and Emerging Technology, Fellow, Center on the United States and Europe, Foreign Policy Program, Brookings Institution, [https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/061819\\_Polyakova\\_Testimony.pdf](https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/061819_Polyakova_Testimony.pdf) and “Lessons from the Mueller Report, Part II: Bipartisan Perspectives,” U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, statement of Dr. Alina Polyakova, Director, Global Democracy and Emerging Technology, Fellow, Center on the United States and Europe, Foreign Policy Program, Brookings Institution, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU00/20190620/109668/HHRG-116-JU00-Wstate-PolyakovaA-20190620.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Elena Postnikova, “Agent of influence: Should Russia’s RT Register as a Foreign Agent?” (Washington, DC, United States: Atlantic Council, August 2017), [https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/RT\\_Foreign\\_Agent\\_web\\_0831.pdf](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/RT_Foreign_Agent_web_0831.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> “RT,” YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/RussiaToday/videos?app=desktop>.

<sup>7</sup> Robert S. Mueller, III, “Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election,” (U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, 2019), <https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf>.

indictments from February 2018<sup>8</sup> and July 2018<sup>9</sup> against the Internet Research Agency (IRA) and Russian military intelligence (GRU) provide the most comprehensive assessment of the inner working of Russia's covert disinformation operations. The IRA's information operations against the United States relied on impersonation accounts to infiltrate public discourse online; used non-political content and issues to build audience on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and elsewhere; purchased ads to prop-up content on platforms to reach more users. Over the course of the U.S. operation, the IRA purchased over 3,500 ads and spent approximately \$100,000—a small investment, which signals that advertising was a relatively small part of Russian disinformation operations in the United States. In mid-2017, the most popular IRA-controlled group—"United Muslims of America"—had over 300,000 followers. By the end of the 2016 election, the IRA "had the ability to reach millions of U.S. persons through their social media accounts" on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Tumblr, according to the report.<sup>10</sup> Facebook later estimated that IRA-controlled accounts reached as many as 126 million people,<sup>11</sup> and an additional 1.4 million<sup>12</sup> were reached through Twitter.

The Kremlin, via Putin's ally and agent, Yevgeny Prigozhin, invested in expanding the IRA's operations. In early 2015, the IRA had a staff of 225-250 people, which grew to 800-900 by the middle of the year adding new capabilities such as video, infographics, memes, etc.<sup>13</sup> By 2016, the number of employees at the American department or translator project almost tripled to 80-90 people, representing approximately 10 percent of the total staff. The IRA's monthly operating budget in 2016 was \$1.25 million (approximately \$15 million annually).<sup>14</sup> Since the conclusion of the Special Counsel investigation, we still don't know the full scope of the command structure, how far into the Kremlin the decision-making process reached, and how the project continues to be funded today. In 2017, an independent Russian news outlet reported that the IRA had moved into a new, larger office building. While the IRA's operations undoubtedly continue today, and other similar "troll farms" are also very likely operating in addition to the IRA, there is scant (if any) information about these entities' activities and funding.

## II. How Europe has responded<sup>15</sup>

Following Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, Russian disinformation operations have targeted elections and events in France (MacronLeaks), the United Kingdom (disinformation around the Skripal operation), Sweden (disinformation around NATO), Spain (Catalan referendum), European Union (European Parliament elections), Netherlands (MH17 investigation), North Macedonia, Greece, Ukraine, and elsewhere. The national responses have been varied based on national context and much of the response has come at the EU level.

<sup>8</sup> UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. INTERNET RESEARCH AGENCY LLC A/K/A MEDIASINTEZ LLC A/K/A GLAVSET LLC A/K/A MIXINFO LLC A/K/A AZIMUT LLC A/K/A NOVINFO LLC et al. 18 U.S.C. § 6 2, 371, 1349, 1028A (2018). <https://www.justice.gov/file/1035477/download>.

<sup>9</sup> UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. VIKTOR BORISOVICH NETYKSHO et al. 18 U.S.C. § 6 2, 371, 1030, 1028A, 1956, and 3551 et seq. (2018). <https://www.justice.gov/file/1080281/download>.

<sup>10</sup> Robert S. Mueller, III, "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election," 26.

<sup>11</sup> Mike Isaac and Daisuke Wakabayashi, "Russian Influence Reached 126 Million Through Facebook Alone," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/technology/facebook-google-russia.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Carbone, "1.4 million Twitter users engaged with Russian propaganda during election," *Fox News*, February 1, 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/tech/1-4-million-twitter-users-engaged-with-russian-propaganda-during-election>.

<sup>13</sup> Polina Rusaeva and Andrei Zakharov, "Раследование РБК: как «фабрика троллей» поработала на выборах в США," *RBC*, October 17, 2017, <https://www.rbc.ru/magazine/2017/11/59e0c17d9a79470e05a9e6c1>.

<sup>14</sup> UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. INTERNET RESEARCH AGENCY LLC A/K/A MEDIASINTEZ LLC A/K/A GLAVSET LLC A/K/A MIXINFO LLC A/K/A AZIMUT LLC A/K/A NOVINFO LLC et al. 18 U.S.C. § 2, 371, 1349, 1028A (2018). <https://www.justice.gov/file/1035477/download>, 7.

<sup>15</sup> This is a summary of EU activities, for a detailed assessment of European responses, see: Polyakova and Fried, *Democratic Defense Against Disinformation 2.0*.

### EU response

Last December, the EU launched an Action Plan Against Disinformation based on principles of transparency and accountability.<sup>16</sup> It increased funding to identify and expose disinformation and established a “rapid alert system” (RAS). The RAS was supposed to have an initial operational capacity by March 2019, two months before the EU parliamentary elections. But as *The New York Times* recently reported, the system is still not operational and mired in internal debates.<sup>17</sup>

The EU has also pushed to work with the major social media companies although in a voluntary capacity. Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Mozilla have signed onto an EU voluntary Code of Practice, which tries to set some standards for fighting disinformation. Social media companies are also submitting regular progress reports to the EU. The progress reports indicate a mixed picture. The EU Commission has recognized efforts by social media platforms to take down fake accounts, restrict ad purchasing by purveyors of disinformation, identify and block inauthentic behavior, and take other steps to meet the (general) commitments outlined in the code. But it also noted insufficient information provided by social media companies, and urged specific next steps, including calling on platforms to take more serious actions to address transparency, particularly with respect to political ads. The commission is issuing monthly progress reports to test social media companies’ response to their commitments.<sup>18</sup>

The EU action plan also aims to improve social resilience against disinformation by creating a European network of independent fact checkers, launching a secure online platform addressing disinformation, exploring means of reliable identification of information suppliers, and supporting long-term social media literacy. It remains unclear, however, how and if these efforts have been implemented.

### National European responses

National responses have varied significantly, which has only contributed to the difficulty of implementing a comprehensive EU level strategy.

France has taken the lead in conceptualizing a common democratic approach. In March 2019, President Emmanuel Macron proposed a new “European Agency for the Protection of Democracies,” which included providing each EU member state with expertise to protect election processes against cyber-attacks and manipulation.<sup>19</sup> France has also led the “Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace,” established in November 2018.<sup>20</sup> In relation to security of the information space, the Call includes commitments to:

<sup>16</sup> “Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan against Disinformation,” (Brussels, Belgium: European Commission, December 5, 2018), [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/action\\_plan\\_against\\_disinformation.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/action_plan_against_disinformation.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Matt Apuzzo, “Europe Built a System to Fight Russian Meddling. It’s Struggling,” *The New York Times*, July 6, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/06/world/europe/europe-russian-disinformation-propaganda-elections.html>.

<sup>18</sup> “Code of Practice against disinformation: Commission calls on signatories to intensify their efforts,” *European Commission*, January 29, 2019, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-19-745\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-745_en.htm); “Second monthly intermediate results of the EU Code of Practice against disinformation,” *European Commission*, March 20, 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/second-monthly-intermediate-results-eu-code-practice-against-disinformation>. Latest statement at time of writing: “Code of practice against disinformation: Commission welcomes the commitment of online platforms ahead of the European elections,” *European Commission*, April 23, 2019, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-19-2174\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-19-2174_en.htm).

<sup>19</sup> Emmanuel Macron, “Renewing Europe,” *Project Syndicate*, March 4, 2019, <http://prosvn.org/kCvUch5>.

<sup>20</sup> “Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace,” (Paris, France: Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, November 12, 2018), <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/digital-diplomacy/france-and-cyber-security/article/cybersecurity-paris-call-of-12-november-2018-for-trust-and-security-in>.

- Increase prevention against and resilience to malicious online activity;
- Protect the accessibility and integrity of the Internet;
- Cooperate in order to prevent interference in electoral processes;
- Prevent the proliferation of malicious online programs and techniques.

The Paris call includes backing from 66 States, 139 international and civil society organizations, and 347 private sector entities. The implementation process is still in its early stages, but the multi-stakeholder support is a positive sign that it could serve as a platform for a global commitment on information and cyber security. The United States is not a signatory.

Sweden created a new “Psychological Defense” agency tasked with countering disinformation and increasing societal resilience to disinformation. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), akin to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, has worked closely with local authorities to establish lines of communication, conduct trainings, and analyze potential systemic weaknesses. Ahead of the Swedish national elections last fall, the MSB mailed leaflets to households explaining the threat of information influence and outlining how to respond.<sup>21</sup> Swedish schools also received information and materials to help teach students how to identify disinformation.

Other European countries, including the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, and the Netherlands, established some form of a cross-agency team tasked with coordinating governmental efforts to identify and respond to information operations.

### III. How the United States has responded

The United States has made little progress in addressing the disinformation challenge. At a basic level, it remains unclear who in the U.S. government owns this problem. Still, there have been notable activities from the Administration and the U.S. Congress. The State Department’s Global Engagement Center (GEC) has been tasked with countering state-sponsored disinformation, and it has begun to fund research and development of counter-disinformation tools while supporting civil society groups and independent media on the front lines of the threat in Europe. Over time, this funding will help boost independent media and groups on the front-lines of the information war.

U.S. Cyber Command began operations ahead of the 2018 congressional elections to deter Russian operatives from potential interference.<sup>22</sup> Cyber Command, together with the National Security Agency (NSA), reportedly developed information about Russian trolls and their activities, and alerted the FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS).<sup>23</sup> The operation followed the Department of Justice indictments of Russian individuals, intelligence officers, and companies involved with the Internet Research Agency

<sup>21</sup> “Countering Information Influence activities – A handbook for communicators,” (Karlstad, Sweden: Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, March 2019), <https://rib.msb.se/riker/pdf/28698.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Begins First Cyberoperation Against Russia Aimed at Protecting Elections,” *The New York Times*, October 23, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/23/us/politics/russian-hacking-usa-cyber-command.html>.

<sup>23</sup> David Ignatius, “The U.S. military is quietly launching efforts to deter Russian meddling,” *The Washington Post*, February 7, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-military-is-quietly-launching-efforts-to-deter-russian-meddling/2019/02/07/4de5c5fa-2b19-11e9-b2fc-721718903bfc\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.1cbbaf8bf3ae](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-military-is-quietly-launching-efforts-to-deter-russian-meddling/2019/02/07/4de5c5fa-2b19-11e9-b2fc-721718903bfc_story.html?utm_term=.1cbbaf8bf3ae).

and in cyber operations against the U.S. elections.<sup>24</sup> Cyber Command has reportedly sent messages to specific individuals active in disinformation operations, de facto outing them and their activities.

While not a new policy, the Department of the Treasury used existing authorities to impose sanctions on Russian entities tied to disinformation efforts, including those directed at the 2016 U.S. presidential election. This included the sanctions designation on December 19, 2018, of entities and individuals tied to the IRA and nine GRU (military intelligence) officers. Material accompanying the Treasury Department's sanctions designations exposed details of Russian operation, including establishment of an online English-language website, "USA Really."

*Current Time*, the Russian language television news program produced by VOA and RFE/RL is perhaps the U.S. government's closest response to countering RT and other Kremlin-funded outlets by providing truthful information to Russian speakers in the post-Soviet states. This effort is critical as Russian speakers have little access to Russian-language broadcasting that is not Kremlin-controlled. However, *Current Time*, cannot, at this time, compete with the production values and the reach of RT. *Current Time's* YouTube channel has received 279 million views and has 667,000 subscribers. On VKontakte (the Russian equivalent of Facebook), *Current Time* has 254,000 subscribers. Impressive for a program that started in 2014 but still far behind RT's reach.

The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) added significant (albeit second-order) provisions defining the importance of countering disinformation for U.S. national security.<sup>25</sup> It cemented the role of the GEC by defining its counter-disinformation task within the parameters of U.S. national security, likely securing the center's longer-term funding in future iterations of the NDAA. It also defined "malign influence" as "the coordinated, integrated, and synchronized application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic, business, corruption, educational, and other capabilities by hostile foreign powers to foster attitudes, behaviors, decisions, or outcomes within the United States."

The Senate has reintroduced the Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act of 2019 (DASKA); while mostly devoted to sanctions, it also "calls for the establishment of a National Fusion Center to Respond to Hybrid Threats, a Countering Russian Influence Fund to be used in countries vulnerable to Russian malign influence, and closer coordination with allies" (sections 704, 705, and 706).<sup>26</sup>

#### IV. What the U.S. should do

##### U.S. Congress

- **Congress should authorize and appropriate funds to "build capacity** of civil society, media, and other nongovernmental organizations," countering Russian and other sources of foreign disinformation (from DASKA Sec 705(b)), in coordination with the EU, NATO, and other bodies.

<sup>24</sup> UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. INTERNET RESEARCH AGENCY LLC A/K/A MEDIASINTEZ LLC A/K/A GLAVSET LLC A/K/A MIXINFO LLC A/K/A AZIMUT LLC A/K/A NOVINFO LLC et al. 18 U.S.C. §§ 2, 371, 1349, 1028A (2018). <https://www.justice.gov/file/1035477/download>; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. VIKTOR BORISOVICH NETYKSHO et al. 18 U.S.C. §§ 2, 371, 1030, 1028A, 1956, and 3551 et seq. (2018). <https://www.justice.gov/file/1080281/download>

<sup>25</sup> "John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 2019," (Washington, DC, United States: U.S. Government Publication Office, July 25, 2018), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-115hrpt874/pdf/CRPT-115hrpt874.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, *Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act of 2019*, S 482, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, introduced in Senate February 13, 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/s482/bills-116/s482is.pdf>.

Funding is already available to the State Department's Global Engagement Center; this should be increased.

- Congress should authorize and appropriate funds to establish a “fusion cell” or NCTC-style model for coordinating U.S. government efforts on disinformation. The Cell could be housed in DHS, State, or elsewhere. There is more than one option for structuring an interagency response.
- Congress should authorize and appropriate funds to further develop *Current Time* to allow *Current Time* to broadcast and build audiences in Central Eastern Europe and the Balkans with potential expansion further into Western Europe.
  - At the same time, the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) should be tasked with conducting an audit of its existing programs and services to assess which are underperforming. It may not be a good use of resources to continue to fund traditional television broadcasting. More innovative, digitally oriented content should be considered to reach audiences through social media markets.
- Congress should develop in-house expertise on disinformation and digital media. Congress's capacity for detailed analysis, independent from social media companies, will be critical.
- Congress should prepare legislation—on a step-by-step basis—to support a regulatory framework for social media companies. This layered approach should start with greater Congressional scrutiny around all online advertising—an industry that is largely unregulated.
  - The **Honest Ads Act**, introduced in the last Congress, is a solid step toward setting transparency standards around online advertising (not just narrowly defined political ads). Standards should be established evenly across the tech industry, not just for social media firms. This act, revised and strengthened along the above lines, could be a vehicle for this effort.
- Consider legislation to provide a framework for regulation to address **transparency** (especially with respect to bots), **integrity and authenticity of service** (i.e. targeting deceptive and impersonator accounts, whether individuals or false-front organizations), and **common terms of service** across the social media industry.
- Congress could also consider mandating that media outlets determined by the Department of Justice to be acting as agents of foreign governments be de-ranked in searches and on newsfeeds and be barred from buying ads. RT, for example, was required to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). Governmental assessments and FARA determination should be one of many variables considered in rankings for search engines. However, legislators should bear in mind that mandating de-ranking based on governmental assessments and FARA determinations could set a precedent which undemocratic regimes could abuse.
- Congress should explore establishing a **federal statute that would limit companies' collection of personal data** about individuals. Such a statute would specify that any personal data collected would be specific to the stated purpose of the technology. Such data collection limitation would make microtargeting and exploitation of individuals' personal data more difficult while also reducing

the ability of malicious actors to influence. The California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018<sup>27</sup> could serve as precedent for a federal mandate.

#### U.S. Administration

- The USG should continue to **impose sanctions** on foreign official, or officially-controlled or directed, purveyors of disinformation and their sponsors, and to identify and prosecute violations of federal elections laws (prohibitions on foreign contributions).
  - On September 12, 2018, the Trump administration issued Executive Order 13848, which provides for sanctions imposed against persons found to have interfered in U.S. elections. While, in part, simply an effort by the administration to preempt stronger legislation (i.e., the “DETER” Act introduced by Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)), it provides a useful vehicle, should the administration use it.
  - U.S. sanctions laws restrict U.S. citizens from financial dealings with or “providing material support” to foreign persons under sanctions. Enforcement of these and federal election laws could limit the ability of Russian or other foreign purveyors of disinformation to work with U.S. agents.
- USG should, as some European countries have done, set up an interagency group/center or fusion cell tasked with coordinating governmental efforts to counter disinformation at home and abroad. The group should have high level political leadership to direct and coordinate policy, establish a baseline for response, educate civil servants, work via State with U.S. embassies, and create communication channels from the local to the federal level.
- **Establish a USG rapid alert system (RAS)** to inform the public, allied governments, and social media companies of emerging disinformation campaigns that threaten national security. The European rapid alert system can help the USG judge the potential of this idea. Some of the challenges can be anticipated: given U.S. politics and traditions, issues will arise around a U.S. RAS’s mandate (e.g. the definition and attribution of disinformation) and its composition, credibility, and independence.

#### **Getting ahead of the threat**

The above recommendations are low-hanging fruit on which the U.S. Congress and the Administration should act. These steps will not turn the tide of disinformation attacks. Rather, these are the minimum actions needed to start to build resistance. The Kremlin’s tool-kit is out in the open and Russia has faced few consequences for its malign activities. This sends a signal to other malicious actors that they can act with impunity to destabilize democracies and distort public discourse. Other state actors with perhaps greater capabilities, such as China, and non-state actors, such as terrorist groups with a higher tolerance for risk, will adapt the disinformation toolkit to undermine democracies or are already doing so.

While the democratic West is fighting yesterday’s war, our adversaries are evolving and adapting to the new playing field. First, innovation in artificial intelligence (AI) is enabling the creation of “deep fakes” and other “synthetic media” products. Using video and audio manipulation, malicious actors can manufacture the appearance of reality and make a political leader appear to make remarks that they did

<sup>27</sup> Dipayan Ghosh, “What You Need to Know About California’s New Data Privacy Law,” *Harvard Business Review*, July 11, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/07/what-you-need-to-know-about-californias-new-data-privacy-law>.

not. As these tools become more low cost and accessible, they will become perfect weapons for information warfare. Such technologies could drive the next great leap in AI-driven disinformation.

Second, disinformation techniques are shifting from the use of simple automated bots to more sophisticated interaction with (and manipulation of) domestic groups, extremist and otherwise, through various forms of impersonation and amplification of organic posts by domestic actors. Thus, it is already increasingly difficult to disentangle foreign-origin disinformation from domestic social media conversations. Rather than trying to break through and channel the noise, the new strategy aims to blend in with the noise—obfuscating manipulative activity and blurring the line between authentic and inauthentic content.

The United States has fallen behind in addressing the challenge of foreign disinformation. But, it is not too late to change course toward a proactive rather than reactive approach. This critical issue concerns all democracies equally. Strong U.S. leadership could tip the balance toward ensuring that the digital space continues to facilitate and support democratic values of transparency, accountability and integrity. To do otherwise is to leave this arena open to authoritarians to set the rules of the game.

**Alina Polyakova**

Alina Polyakova is the founding director of the Project on Global Democracy and Emerging Technology and a fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution, where she leads the Foreign Policy program's Democracy Working Group. She is also adjunct professor of European studies at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University. Her work examines Russian political warfare, European populism, digital authoritarianism, and the implications of emerging technologies to democracies. Polyakova's book, "The Dark Side of European Integration" (ibidem-Verlag and Columbia University Press, 2015) analyzed the rise of far-right political parties in Europe. She is a frequent contributor to The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Foreign Affairs, The Atlantic, Foreign Policy, and commentator in major media outlets including Fox News, CNN, BBC, and Bloomberg, among others.

Previously, she served as director of research and senior fellow for Europe and Eurasia at the Atlantic Council, professor of sociology at the University of Bern, and Fulbright Fellow. She serves on the board of the Free Russia Foundation and has held numerous fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the National Science Foundation, and the Swiss National Science Foundation, among others.

Polyakova holds a master's and doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley, and a bachelor's in economics and sociology with highest honors from Emory University.

**Affiliations:**

Council on Foreign Relations, term member  
DisinfoPortal, co-founder  
Free Russia Foundation, board member  
Johns Hopkins University, SAIS, adjunct professor  
Lawfare Blog, contributor

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.  
Ms. Jankowicz.

OPENING REMARKS OF MS. JANKOWICZ

Ms. JANKOWICZ. Chairman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to testify before you today on a topic of utmost importance to the United States, our values, and our standing in the world.

For the past 3 years, I have been on the front lines of the information war, most recently in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Georgia. I have worked alongside, interviewed, and briefed policymakers throughout the region, and these experiences present a grim picture: The United States is abdicating its leadership in countering Russian disinformation.

Where we ought to be setting the rules of engagement, the tone, and the moral compass in responding to Russia's information war, the United States has been a tardy, timid, or tertiary player, with much of our public servants' good work on this issue stymied by domestic politicization.

Disinformation is not a political issue; it is a democratic one. By convening this hearing, I know the members of this subcommittee recognize that, and I hope you continue to reflect this sentiment in your appropriations decisions.

Beyond that challenge, the U.S. has not invested sufficient resources to become competitive in this fight. Russian information warfare continues to target the U.S. And our allies as well as the rules-based international order. It does so through increasingly hard-to-track tactics that I outline in my written testimony. However, countering it has not been a budgetary priority. Russia has not met the same budgetary challenge.

After struggling to gain an informational foothold during the 2008 war with Georgia, the editor in chief of RT, Russia's state-sponsored foreign propaganda outlet, described the conflict as a watershed moment. She said, "In 2008, it became absolutely clear to everyone why we need such a thing as an international television channel representing the country, and of course they began to pay more attention and understand that it costs money," end quote.

The budget for RT, arguably one of the least effective arms of Russian disinformation, is \$277 million in 2020. I am not advocating that the U.S. match the Russian Government's spending on information warfare, nor am I arguing that we mimic its tactics. Instead, we must invest more in the tools already at our disposal, with an eye on empowering individuals, not endlessly fact-checking or playing whack-a-troll.

Congress should invest more in programs that, first, teach people how to navigate the modern information environment, including through digital literacy training outside of the context of Russian disinformation.

Second, we should inject more reliable information into the ecosystem using existing trusted vectors, such as Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America, and invest in the sustainability of local and independent media outlets rather than just training and capability-building.

Third, we should engage people in countries on the front lines of the information war with firsthand exchange experiences in and about the United States through programs including Fulbright, IVLP, and FLEX. It is time for the U.S. to get serious about addressing disinformation and to do so, in part, by targeting those most affected by it: regular people.

None of these initiatives are political. They focus on empowering individuals to be active and informed citizens through generational investments in democratic discourse, civic engagement, and truth. Ultimately, these recommendations are a manifestation of America's greatest strength: our values.

Thank you.

[The information follows:]

*Statement of*

**NINA JANKOWICZ**

*Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Kennan Institute*

**BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS**

*Concerning*

**“United States Efforts to Counter Russian Disinformation and Malign Influence”**

**July 10, 2019**

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to testify before you today on a topic of the utmost importance to the United States, our values, and our standing in the world.

For the past three years, I have been on the front lines of the information war, most recently in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Georgia. I have worked alongside, interviewed and briefed policymakers throughout the region, and these experiences have presented a grim picture: the United States is abdicating its leadership in countering Russian disinformation.

Where we ought to be setting the rules of engagement, the tone, and the moral compass in responding to Russia's information war, the United States has been a tardy, timid, or tertiary player, with much of our public servants' good work on this issue stymied by domestic politicization. Disinformation is not a political issue, it is a democratic one. By convening this hearing, I know the Members of this subcommittee recognize that, and I hope you continue to reflect this sentiment in your appropriations decisions.

Beyond that challenge, the United States has not invested sufficient resources to be competitive in the fight against disinformation. Russian information warfare continues to target the United States and our allies, as well as the rules-based international order. However, countering it has not been a budgetary priority.

Below I outline how the tactics and tools of Russian disinformation in Europe and Eurasia have changed over the past several years, explain the necessity to match American investments in fighting disinformation to the severity of the problem, and describe several areas that I believe deserve further investment.

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***Russian Information Warfare is Ongoing - Observations from Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia***

I spent the spring of 2019 in Ukraine and Lithuania, which elected new presidents this year, and Georgia, which is currently engaged in mass protests against Russian influence. My research there illustrates how Russian disinformation has become less overt over the past three years, increasingly emphasizing private, hard-to-track, and harder-to-counter informational vectors.

In Ukraine, early in the election cycle, the State Security Service (SBU) uncovered a Russian plot to rent Facebook accounts from Ukrainians and use them to place political ads. Despite the SBU's discovery and the fact that this behavior is strictly against Facebook's Terms of Service, this **monetization of influence** seems to have continued. Facebook pages, groups, freelance boards, and standalone websites all advertised that any Facebook account more than six months

old with at least 200 friends can earn about \$100 per month — around one-third of the average Ukrainian salary — simply by handing over its account details to an advertiser.<sup>1</sup>

In both Ukraine and Lithuania, as around the world, disinformation is spreading on increasingly-private platforms, namely “closed” or “secret” Facebook groups and encrypted messengers. Levels of trust within groups, often organized around a single theme or on one side of the political spectrum, is high, hastening the spread of low-quality information and outright falsehoods, while the ability of social media platforms, journalists, and researchers to track the flow of that information is low, given the privacy settings of these groups. Globally, groups are increasingly being used to organize disinformation campaigns or, worse, coordinated hate speech and violence.<sup>2</sup> Problematically, Facebook is now incentivizing this behavior through its so-called “pivot to privacy,” which emphasizes communication in more private fora.<sup>3</sup>

In Georgia, where opposition to the Russian government is strong and awareness of Russian information operations is high, Russian disinformation is delivered via **domestic outlets that carry a nationalist or traditionalist message**, themes which find strong support in Georgian society and are considered at odds with the country’s Western aspirations. The **tools of soft power, including cultural organizations and the Orthodox Church**, also provide the Kremlin an important vector to exert influence. This use of domestic entities as vectors of disinformation was one of the themes of recent anti-Kremlin protests in Tbilisi.

In short: the age of political advertising being paid for in rubles is waning. As disinformation moves “underground” and becomes harder to track and debunk on a case-by-case basis, equipping individuals is the key to countering it.

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### *Our Investments Must Match the Severity of the Problem*

The Russian Federation is not afraid to make large investments, both monetary and human, into its information operations. The Editor-in-Chief of RT, Russia’s state-sponsored foreign propaganda outlet, described how after the Russia-Georgia War, in which Tbilisi’s ad hoc international outreach on English-language TV channels such as CNN eclipsed Moscow’s PR efforts, “*it became absolutely clear to everyone...why we need such a thing as an international*

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<sup>1</sup> See Nina Jankowicz, “Facebook’s Regulation Fail in Ukraine Should Worry Europe,” *POLITICO EU*, 22 May 2019.

<sup>2</sup> For more in the use of groups in disinformation, see Jonathan Albright, “The Shadow Organizing of Facebook Groups,” *Medium*, 5 November 2018; and Nina Jankowicz, “Shiva Ayyadurai’s Senate Campaign Was Being Promoted By Fake Facebook Accounts,” *BuzzFeed News*, 2 October 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The “pivot” is a distraction, giving users the false belief that they are protected from online harms such as disinformation and targeted advertising within the more private methods of communication. Not only is their personal data being harvested in the same manner, disinformation can thrive in groups.

*television channel representing the country. This is in itself a lesson. And of course, they began to pay more attention and understand that it costs money.”<sup>4</sup>*

That understanding appears to have continued; the planned budget for RT -- arguably one of the *least* effective arms of the Russian government’s information warfare efforts, and certainly only a small part of the overall Russian disinformation ecosystem -- is \$277 million in 2020.<sup>5</sup> Despite the attention paid to Russian disinformation over the past three years, the United States has not yet had a similar budgetary realization. I am not advocating that the United States match the Russian government’s spending on information warfare, nor am I arguing that we mimic its tactics. Instead, we must invest more in the tools already at our disposal, with an eye on empowering individuals, not endlessly fact-checking or playing Whack-a-Troll.<sup>6</sup>

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### ***Empowering Individuals***

Though Russian disinformation has changed since it entered the American awareness, now relying on increasingly underground tactics as outlined above, it is still targeting the fissures in our societies and our information ecosystems. To address this, Congress should invest more in programs that:

- **Teach** people how to navigate the modern information environment including through digital literacy training and civics programs. These programs would not simply teach people to separate “real” and “fake” news, but assist them in sampling a range of viewpoints to inform their daily lives and the criticism that is healthy for any democracy, while developing greater immunity to conspiratorial versions of the truth. The most impactful programs are likely to be presented outside of the context of responding directly to Russian disinformation, such as IREX’s Learn to Discern program.<sup>7</sup>
- **Inject** more reliable information into the ecosystem.
  - Radio Free Europe and Voice of America are invaluable resources in the Europe and Eurasia region, even in countries with a seemingly robust media environment. RFE and VOA represent a standard for in-depth, fact-based, non-partisan journalism as a public good. Rather than decreasing funding for these efforts in

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<sup>4</sup> Kommersant, «Нет никакой объективности», 7 April 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Budget of the Russian Federation, “Приложение 10 к Федеральному закону “О федеральном бюджете на 2018 год и на плановый период 2019 и 2020 годов,” November 2017.

<sup>6</sup> See Nina Jankowicz, Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, June 12, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> For more information see: <https://www.irex.org/project/learn-discern-12d-media-literacy-training>

the Europe and Eurasia region,<sup>8</sup> their funding should be bolstered, allowing them to compete more effectively in an increasingly crowded media environment.

- The United States should also invest in the sustainability of local and independent media outlets. Often USG-funded programs focus on capability-building though there is a great deal of excellent journalism being done in the region. (Independent Russian journalists were the first to uncover the so-called St. Petersburg “troll factory,” for instance, and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project relies on networks of local investigative reporters to break large, complex stories such as the exposure of the Panama Papers.) Independent outlets in Eastern Europe and Eurasia face the same challenges as those in the United States: in the age of online advertising, they struggle to reach their audiences and to turn a profit. Helping them achieve those goals and continue their reporting for another year is more critical than another journalistic standards training.
- **Engage** people in countries on the front lines of the information war with firsthand educational and exchange experiences in the United States. It is impossible to calculate the return on investment of programs including Fulbright, the International Visitor Leadership Program, and the Future Leaders Exchange Program. These experiences are more powerful than any fact-check or counter-disinformation program; they provide participants with a firsthand look at American governance, values, and culture.

It is time for the United States Government to get serious about addressing disinformation and do so, in part, by targeting those most affected by it. None of these initiatives are political; they focus on empowering individuals to be active and informed citizens through generational investments in democratic discourse, civic engagement, and truth. Ultimately, these recommendations are a manifestation of America’s greatest strength: our values.

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<sup>8</sup> See RFERL, “[Trump Administration's 2020 Budget Request Calls For Closure Of Three RFE/RL Language Services](#)” 18 March 2019.

**Nina Jankowicz** is a Global Fellow with the Kennan Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Her book, *HOW TO LOSE THE INFORMATION WAR*, will be published by Bloomsbury's IBTauris in Spring 2020. Ms. Jankowicz has advised the Ukrainian government on strategic communications under the auspices of a Fulbright-Clinton Public Policy Fellowship. Her writing has been published by The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Foreign Policy, BuzzFeed News, The Wilson Quarterly, and others. She is a frequent commentator on disinformation and Russian and Eastern European affairs, and she has been interviewed by CNN's Christiane Amanpour and PBS's Judy Woodruff.

Prior to her Fulbright grant in Ukraine, Ms. Jankowicz managed democracy assistance programs to Russia and Belarus at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. She received her MA in Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, and her BA from Bryn Mawr College, where she graduated *magna cum laude*. She has lived and worked in Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States, and speaks fluent Russian and proficient Polish and Ukrainian.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I want to first thank both of you for appearing before us, and I know we will continue our dialogue. We appreciate your expertise, and I know that all of us on this panel understand the urgency of the messages you are sending.

So I am going to be brief and turn to my colleagues—or maybe I will conclude and turn to my colleagues for their questions.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Can you tell us, what is the impact of Russian misinformation? What damage is it doing, and to whom, and why? Either of you.

Ms. Polyakova.

Ms. POLYAKOVA. I will be happy to begin, Congressman, and I am sure my colleague will follow up.

One, if we start asking the question whether Russian disinformation leads to specific outcomes, like the outcome of an election, that is the wrong way to look at this. I think of it as a slow drip of a desire to shape the public narrative and the public view around specific events that are of strategic national interest to the Kremlin.

Specifically, when the Maidan revolution was happening in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014, the Russian narrative was that a democratic demonstration that was peaceful was actually a fascist coup led and orchestrated by the United States and especially the State Department and the CIA. At the time, this view propagated and was amplified in mainstream media, including seeping into our mainstream media.

So, to my mind, the effect is that it damages the United States' and our allies' images abroad, it undermines our society at home, and it continues to drive wedges between us and our allies internally and externally.

Ms. JANKOWICZ. And I will follow up with a recent example from the Ukrainian elections in 2019.

I think the main narrative that Russia was trying to push, although it was less active in these Ukrainian elections than it had been in the past, was that the outcome was already decided, Ukrainians shouldn't bother going out to vote, there were all this oligarchic interests involved in the election, and, really, there was no democracy to be had there. Of course, Ukraine proved Russia wrong, right?

But the idea here is to build distrust in the democratic system writ large. It encourages people not to go out and vote, not to participate, and to question everything that they are saying to a conspiratorial kind of degree, rather than participating in democratic debate and discourse to support the democratic system.

And I think that, of course, is damaging to United States' interests and damaging to the democratic system writ large around the group.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

I yield.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Thank you both for being here.

I think I would address this question to Dr. Polyakova.

I recently traveled to Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia with the bipartisan House Democracy Partnership, where we heard and saw firsthand the impact that Russian disinformation has on undermining political stability and democratic processes. Of course, it was very familiar to me, as an American.

You stated in your testimony that a democratic response to state-sponsored information warfare must be rooted in democratic principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity and that these principles should be guiding United States' policy.

Now, I have grave concerns about just how transparent and accountable the U.S. Government is when it comes to addressing the significant challenges around countering Russian disinformation machines, particularly in our own country. It certainly has done damage here.

You also stated in your testimony that the U.S. has made little progress in addressing the misinformation challenge and that it remains unclear who in the U.S. Government owns the problem.

Now, of course, we know Russia took sides in the Presidential elections here in America. That is a documented fact. And their candidate, Donald Trump, won. That is a fact.

So let me ask you, how can the United States Government better utilize what tools we have, including diplomacy and coordination across the whole of government, to ensure our success in countering the influence and disinformation by the Russians both here at home in America and abroad?

Ms. POLYAKOVA. Thank you very much for this very good question, Congresswoman.

Firstly, to focus on what we can do here at home, as you heard from the earlier panel, there are multiple U.S. agencies that coordinate the response to the disinformation problem. It remains a problem with no clear high-level political leadership at the, say, Under Secretary level or above.

In a recent report that I co-authored with a longtime State Department Foreign Service officer, Ambassador Dan Fried, called "Democratic Defense Against Disinformation," we outlined a long series of recommendations. And I would be happy to share that full report with you, as well, following this testimony.

Some of the highlights that I would include is that best practices from European governments that are ahead of the United States in this space, notably Sweden—I would point to that—Estonia; and, to a certain extent, France has taken the international leadership role in crafting a set of common understandings of allied and like-minded democracies.

Some of the best practices from the European context are: One, there needs to be high-level political leadership that coordinates U.S. governmental efforts at the interagency level.

Multiple versions of this have been proposed, whether that be in last year's minority report from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that proposed an NCTC-style model for counter-disinformation. A fusion cell is something it has been called as well, to be housed in any of the U.S. agencies, but DHS clearly has the homeland mandate. And DHS so far has focused on the hard security versus information security.

So that is on the domestic front. If you will allow me 1 second on the foreign front, which of course is the main concern of this committee, we need to reinvest in supporting independent civil society in those frontline states. The Balkans I would put as a potential area that will lead to some conflict in the near future.

Russia owns that media space. What I see over and over again is RT and other similar services provide the local-language information in the same way that AP provides cable news that is then pasted, usually without any attribution, into local newspapers.

And you can imagine what kind of “information,” quote/unquote—I put that in quotes—that is. It is certainly not information that is anything positive about the West or the United States.

Ms. LEE. Madam Chair, I would suggest that if these recommendations have been made and if they haven't been embraced by the highest level of our government as it relates to our own efforts to stop the disinformation, then we are complicit in this. And so we need to really figure out why these recommendations haven't been addressed, especially with elections coming up. Because, otherwise, you know, it is, like, hands off, you know?

Ms. POLYAKOVA. If I may have 1 second, I think if we want to understand the kinds of threats that we will face in the future here in this country, we must look to those frontline states, like Ukraine, who have been undergoing these kinds of attacks for decades. And everything that we have seen happen in this country has happened there before.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I am going to ask a few questions, and hopefully you can all sum up, because, clearly, we are going to meet again. And I apologize, but there are so many other hearings going on, it was not for a lack of interest that colleagues on both sides of the aisle have wandered off. So I am going to ask a couple of things, and then I know we will meet another day.

First of all, in the first panel, we heard from CEO Lansing of the United States Agency for Global Media. My first question is, how can we use their platforms, including the VOA and Radio Free Europe, which you touched on, to reach audiences, break through the noise and clutter of the 21st-century media environment? Or are these agencies not relevant today?

Secondly, what role can and should U.S.-funded independent media play in fighting Russian disinformation and malign influence?

What role does forceful diplomacy play in the battle against disinformation? Do the United States and our allies adequately prioritize disinformation efforts for our diplomatic discussions with Russia, China, and others who engage aggressively in these attacks?

I don't mean to have you taking all these notes, but I would like you to sum up addressing these issues.

And which countries have done the best at responding to disinformation campaigns, and can we learn from these lessons?

And, Ms. Polyakova—or Dr. Polyakova, you have cited the EU's Rapid Alert System as an example of progress in Europe in fight-

ing disinformation. I thought it was interesting that, over the weekend, The New York Times carried an article that questions the system's effectiveness to date. How do you evaluate the New York Times' piece and the Rapid Alert System's effectiveness to date?

And, Ms. Jankowicz, you have written that Moscow has used Ukraine as a disinformation laboratory for years. So, if you can, describe Russia's actions in Ukraine, what it learned, the results from such actions, and how Russia applies lessons from Ukraine elsewhere.

I would be most appreciative if you could address those points. Sum up as best you can. You know we are going to bring you before us again, because your information is so vital.

And as I thank you again, I would like you to sum up—you heard the other testimony first from the first panel. I know you feel this is urgent. I feel it is absolutely urgent. I know Mr. Rogers agrees with me. Help us as to what the next steps should be. And perhaps the next steps should be in a classified setting so that we can really understand exactly what is going on.

I don't think there is an issue—and I say this all the time—that is more important and more urgent than addressing what Russia is doing, especially as a result of their actions in the last election.

Please proceed.

Ms. POLYAKOVA. Thank you, Chairwoman Lowey. And I just want to acknowledge your leadership and the leadership of Congressman Rogers on the issue of Ukraine, Russia especially. You certainly have been an important voice in helping to understand Russia's hybrid warfare and political warfare against its neighbors.

And I completely agree with my colleague's written testimony. The Ukraine is the testing bed for Russian techniques, and this is where we must look to understand what is coming to us.

To address your specific questions regarding the European so-called Rapid Alert System, in the report I mentioned earlier, we do assess—and that came out before the New York Times article—we assess that system as potentially useful if it is fully implemented. At the time, it was not fully implemented. It remains unimplemented today, which is a shortcoming of the EU efforts in this space.

However, while I agree with the criticism in the New York Times article and cite it in my written testimony as well, I think it serves as an interesting potential model from where we should learn from in the United States. It is basically an information-sharing mechanism.

Obviously, the EU is very different than the United States. It is a country with 28 member states that have not been sharing information in a productive, concrete process when each country faces a disinformation attack or information manipulation. So, hopefully, if, with a little bit more time, the so-called RAS system will be stood up and will be effective for information-sharing, I think we can learn from the mistakes and successes of the EU as it seeks out certain solutions.

In my written testimony, I also recommend that the United States, looking at some of the European pitfalls and successes, considers implementing a U.S.-style Rapid Alert System as well that

could only be operational, for example, during election cycles, which is not the only time disinformation occurs but is certainly a peak and a huge opportunity for malicious actors. I think we should look to Europe and to learn from them.

I already mentioned Sweden as a potential country that we should look at for best practices. Again, Sweden is not the United States—you know, the scale questions that I don't need to go into with you. However, there are some interesting things that they have done prior to their elections this past fall.

One, the Civil Contingencies Agency, which is the Swedish equivalent of DHS more or less, has established for the last few years a psychological defense agency. So they are deeply focused on cognitive security as part of information security and part of cybersecurity. I think we have something like this in the classified intelligence space, but without clearance, I cannot confirm that, to be honest with you.

One thing that—

The CHAIRWOMAN. Our next hearing will be classified.

Ms. POLYAKOVA. I will say that the Civil Contingencies Agency did two things prior to secure their own elections. One, they sent out, I believe to every household in Sweden, a very simple information pamphlet: What is disinformation? Why should it be something that is of concern to you locally? You know, the equivalent being someone in a small town in Georgia and Michigan receiving something similar. What do you do if you think you are reading information that is inaccurate and is trying to manipulate you?

Second, they sent out similar training materials to teachers and schools so that students could be better educated on: How do you discern disinformation? What is it? Why is it an issue for you?

So these are just some of the efforts that I think we may want to look at.

And, thirdly, they have developed, again, communication information-sharing between local, like, city councils and all the way to the Federal level. And they have done trainings with civil servants so internally there is awareness within government, not just externally in the public.

I think where we are today and the reason why I say that we have lagged behind is, one, there is lack of awareness internally within our government and a lack of public awareness as a result of that. Because we haven't seen leadership at the highest level—at the highest level—here in this country on this issue that would define the threat for the American people so they can better understand why they should care. Right now, I think your average American doesn't understand why they should care about Russian disinformation, and that is a big problem.

Lastly, before I wrap up, you asked regarding USAGM and how we can better use those resources. In my written testimony, I basically outline a proposal in which there is a full audit conducted of all of the services with an eye towards performance indicators and that those services that are not performing in line with those indicators be significantly reduced.

I do think our RFE/RL has been very effective in its "Current Time" program that we saw the presentation of, but it is operating on a shoestring budget, as far as I can tell. It is not competing in

terms of production values with RT by far. Again, I am not advocating that we should match RT's budget, but I think with a redistribution of resources that takes funding away from some programs that are not performing and able to refocus on digital, innovative solutions versus traditional media—again, this is the 21st century. This is the digital century. We are still operating as if we are, you know, in the 20th century and everyone is watching the nightly news at 6:00 p.m. That is no longer the case.

And, again, just to point out that these efforts during the Cold War were incredibly effective. Again, not just my personal experience, but certainly my personal experience and my family's experience in the 1980s speaks to that. It was part of the reason why we immigrated to this country, because we understood what the truth was about our own country that our authorities were not providing at the time.

In my written testimony, I have lots of numbers that you can look at to see why we are not competitive with the Russian disinformation machine at this time.

Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very, very much.

Ms. Jankowicz.

Ms. JANKOWICZ. Thank you again for having me, Chairwoman.

I will start with Ukraine. There are a couple interesting developments in Ukraine that happened during the recent Presidential election, and I would describe them as the Russian and other malign actors trying to move underground.

We have put up a lot of obstacles, both through our advocacy as the United States and social media platforms as well. And some of this has been a bit of a smokescreen—right?—so that the social media companies look like they are adequately addressing the problem. Malign actors have figured out how to exploit these barriers and get around these loopholes.

One way that they are doing this—we talked a lot about ad buys and how the Russians bought ads. They do that in Ukraine, certainly. They are trying to get around those geographical ad restrictions by using ad mules. So they will find people who are willing to rent out their authentic Facebook accounts for about \$100 a month, and those people provide them access to those accounts. It looks like, you know, an authentic Ukrainian is actually logging in and buying those ads, and then they are able to place those political ads.

I would also say that Facebook has been extraordinarily lax in enforcing those policies. And that is something that needs to be addressed but, of course, is beyond the oversight of this committee.

In addition, we are seeing a lot more disinformation in groups and private messengers. So we have seen that happening in Brazil and India on WhatsApp, but recently in Ukraine and Lithuania I tracked a lot of disinformation moving in private Facebook groups.

This is extremely worrying to me, because right now the social media companies, Facebook in particular, are, again, pivoting to privacy, which is a bit of a smokescreen, as I said, in order to make people feel more secure about their information online after countless errors on the social media company's parts. But what that is doing is driving people to have conversations in these private fora,

which researchers like us and journalists cannot track. And even the social media companies have a much more difficult time tracking and curating that information.

And, also, they are kind of insular communities. There is a lot more trust between these groups because it is people of a certain political ideology or a certain background. That trust is built up over time, as we saw in the 2016 election, and that is exploited to share malign narratives. This is something that is extremely worrisome to me. Facebook is incentivizing this behavior, and it is where we should look to the future from Ukraine.

Ms. JANKOWICZ. To address the question about RFE/RL and VOA, I have found these resources to be invaluable not only in their English language coverage, which is one of the most important sources for informing experts like myself when we are not on the ground, but, also, their local language services are invaluable.

I know during the Georgian protests, which happened a couple of weeks ago, I turned to RFE/RL, my Georgian friends were turning to RFE/RL to look for coverage of the protests, especially in a politicized media environment like in Georgia.

I would say that these entities face the same issues that U.S. media outlets are facing right now. They are competing in a very crowded information environment. They need more funding, just like The New York Times and local media outlets in the United States need, in order to compete in this environment. It is not easy, but we need to understand that journalism is a public good and continue investing in that. I think that is critical.

You discussed a little bit U.S. and our allies, are we adequately prioritizing dialogue. I think the more dialogue we can do with our transatlantic allies, the better.

The United Kingdom is leading right now, I would say, in terms of efforts to counter disinformation abroad. I think a great example of how their systems work—and I would add that they don't have one specific agency that is leading on this; they just have a really good coordination system in place. Look at the Salisbury poisonings and the diplomatic response that they were able to send in reaction to that tragic event.

And then, finally, you asked which countries did the best. Alina mentioned Estonia before. I love the Estonian example because it started with a lot of fact-checking and pushing back against the Russian narrative and ended, or is still ongoing, with investment in people. If you look at my testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee that I did last year, I go into that example in detail. And it is about education, it is about outreach—again, what I spoke about in my testimony today. These generational investments are going to be the ones that win the battle in the long run.

Ukraine is doing similar things with media literacy. As we heard about the Learn to Discern program, I think is a great model that is now being tried out in the United States by IREX.

One thing that I would caution against doing is the infringements on freedom of speech that we are seeing in Ukraine. I wrote for The Atlantic about some of those issues, blocking and banning certain websites and social media. We don't want to go down that route.

And then, finally, I think I will just add that democratic systems, the most robust democratic systems, where people trust in the system, like Sweden, like Estonia, like Finland, are the ones that we see having the strongest resilience to disinformation. And so, in that regard, I would encourage the committee to think a bit outside of the box and think about more investments in organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy, programs that DRL, USAID, NDI, IRI are doing. Because as we build up those systems, we are going to build more resilient populations.

Thank you so much for having me.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, on behalf of Mr. Rogers and myself and the entire committee, I am so grateful to you. I thought your testimonies were outstanding. And I look forward to continuing to work with you as we evaluate the really good work of the agencies we currently fund. And, hopefully, based on your advice, we can even provide more services to those agencies that are so desperately needed today throughout Europe. So thank you very much.

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned. This concludes today's hearing. Thank you.

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019.

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND OVERSIGHT OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

**WITNESSES**

**ANN CALVARESI BARR, INSPECTOR GENERAL, USAID**  
**STEVE LINICK, INSPECTOR GENERAL, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LOWEY**

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good morning. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

I am pleased to welcome State Department Inspector General Mr. Steve Linick and USAID Inspector General Ms. Ann Calvaresi Barr.

The oversight of programs and operations to ensure accountability and effectiveness of taxpayer dollars must be a paramount focus of all government agencies, and I am glad you are here today to provide your assessment of where improvements need to be made at the Department of State and USAID.

As chairwoman of both the House Appropriations Committee and this subcommittee, I was pleased to oversee the passage of the fiscal year 2020 House State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which would provide more than \$56 billion for our diplomatic and development efforts.

These programs are not just the right thing to do, they support our national security and economic growth and help promote democracy abroad.

The mandate of inspectors general is to provide independent oversight that ensures the integrity of our programs and prevents the waste, fraud, and abuse of U.S. taxpayer dollars. Your particular mandate is even more challenging, given the high volume of overseas partners and the unpredictable environments in which the State Department and USAID work.

The offices of the inspectors general must have the necessary resources to ensure United States Government engagement and investments are efficient and effective, especially in areas affected by conflict, humanitarian crisis, political instability, or terrorism.

To this end, our fiscal year 2020 bill would provide \$90.8 million to the Department of State's Office of the Inspector General and \$75.5 million to USAID's Office of the Inspector General to ensure accountability in program implementation and operations.

Ms. Calvaresi Barr, I want to point out that the House provided the level your office requested, not the lesser amount requested by the President.

While I support efforts to strengthen civil societies, provide sectors and host country health systems, a push for local procurement

can lead to difficult-to-manage risk, especially in areas of instability or when responding to humanitarian crises.

I am also concerned about longstanding management challenges your offices have identified at the State Department and USAID. We must always strive to do better on behalf of the American people.

Lastly, I also want to emphasize, especially as we near the 2020 election cycle, that critical attention must be paid to Hatch Act compliance. I expect your offices to refer any reported violations of the Hatch Act to the Office of Special Counsel for enforcement.

Thank you for your commitment to providing independent oversight of our overseas programs today and beyond. We encourage transparent coordination with Congress in identifying challenges at the State Department and USAID. Your insight and recommendations on solutions are most welcome.

Before we hear your testimony, let me turn to my ranking member, Mr. Rogers, for any opening remarks he would like to make.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I join the distinguished chairwoman in welcoming our witnesses back to the subcommittee.

As you may recall, the first hearing I held as chairman of this subcommittee was with these two inspectors general examining critical areas of oversight for the Department of State and USAID. I look forward to receiving your update today on challenges that continue to hamper the efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies that you oversee, as well as progress that has been made since we last met.

I would also like to thank the two of you and your colleagues for your continued service to the country. You are doing good work and this committee values the objective and rigorous oversight that you conduct on behalf of the American taxpayer.

We rely on your expertise to help us kick the tires and look under the hood of the Department. What we have found are chronic mismanagement challenges. Some are being addressed sufficiently, others are not. We need to shine a light on these problems and ensure that top leadership of the agencies are acting on your recommendations.

I have been taken aback, frankly, during my time on the subcommittee to see the same set of top challenges identified year after year. Simply put, it is not acceptable. So I want to hear from you both today on what specific things need to be done to remedy this management shortfall.

Mr. Linick, this year you identified seven key management and performance challenges at Department of State. They will sound familiar to anyone following your work and they include these: protection of people and facilities; oversight of contracts, grants and foreign assistance; information security management; financial and property management; operating in contingency and critical environments; workforce management; and, promoting accountability through internal coordination and clear lines of authority.

Now that we finally have an under secretary of management in place, a fight that we have been fighting it seems like forever, finally an under secretary of management in place, hallelujah, we will be watching to see how he plans to address these challenges

I just mentioned that cut across the most important and fundamental responsibilities of the Department.

Ms. Calvaresi Barr, this year you identified four top management challenges, including: managing risks inherent in providing humanitarian and stabilization assistance; strengthening local capacity and improving program planning and monitoring; reconciling interagency priorities and functions to more efficiently and effectively advance U.S. foreign assistance; and addressing vulnerabilities in financial and information management.

I raised these issues, most of which are not new, with Administrator Green during our USAID oversight hearing earlier this year. He committed to completing the recommendations that I just mentioned, so I intend to follow up on that and would appreciate your most recent assessment of their work on this. We want to see results finally.

There is no shortage of topics to discuss, so in closing, Madam Chairwoman, I want to thank these two witnesses and their staffs, as well as your staff, stationed around the world for leading the fight against waste, fraud, and abuse. We appreciate your continued and meaningful engagement with this subcommittee.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Calvaresi Barr, Mr. Linick, if you would be kind enough to summarize your oral statement, we will be happy to place your full testimonies and recommendations into the record. After your testimony, I will call on members based on seniority present when the hearing was called to order. I will alternate between majority and minority. Each member is asked to keep their questions to 5 minutes per round.

Ms. Calvaresi Barr, please proceed.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for your invitation to testify today.

USAID frequently relies on other entities to implement its programs, particularly in tough environments. It must continually balance the imperative to deliver on its mission against the risks associated with it. This context demands flexibilities, but creates risks.

To better ensure USAID effectively manages these risks we shifted our oversight model from a country-specific one to one that is more strategic and crosscutting. This has put us in a strong position to make recommendations that get at the root of USAID's most persistent challenges.

Our impact is encapsulated in four top management challenges for fiscal year 2019. The first challenge concerns managing humanitarian assistance threats. Insufficient risk assessments not only leave USAID assistance vulnerable to exploitation, but exposes the agency to threats it does not fully understand. This allowed bad actors to profit from U.S. good will and in some cases to materially support terrorists. We have uncovered fraud, corruption and mismanagement in cross-border relief programs in Syria, stabilization efforts in Iraq, and public health response efforts in Africa.

The second challenge concerns the sustainability of some of USAID's largest development investments. We found a lack of up-front analyses that fully assess countries' capacity, will, and re-

sources long after U.S. involvement ends. Insufficient planning and monitoring underlies this all and further diminishes sustainability.

Reconciling interagency priorities to advance foreign assistance is the third challenge. Coordination and consensus are key to keeping interagency programs on track. Competing priorities impede development activities.

The fourth challenge concerns the integrity of USAID's financial and information management systems. It all starts here. Without reliable core systems the agency cannot successfully execute its mission.

Our work has prompted foundational changes at USAID. They, for example, set strict requirements on implementer awards, strengthened standards for overseeing U.N. agencies, shored up its supply chain for lifesaving commodities, and promptly responded to identified diversions to terrorist organizations. It has also doubled down on requirements for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries.

While positive actions, the agency needs to rethink its culture of partnership with implementers. No doubt they are critical to USAID's mission, but it must first ensure implementers fully understand the requirements that they are entrusted with and expected to carry out. Ultimately, USAID must be the first line of defense, but they must also hold others they rely on accountable.

This concludes my prepared statement. I am happy to answer any questions.

[The information follows:]

**USAID's Top Management Challenges and OIG's Continuing Oversight  
Statement**  
Inspector General Ann Calvaresi Barr  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee,  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
July 11, 2019

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me here to discuss the major challenges USAID faces in managing its nearly \$30 billion budget to provide foreign and humanitarian assistance. These investments not only aim to provide critical aid, expand economic growth abroad, and create U.S. trade partners, but they also promote stable and free societies and advance U.S. national security interests.

The environments USAID works in—which are frequently characterized by conflict, government instability, or natural disaster—create major challenges for the Agency in carrying out its mission. How well USAID identifies, assesses, and mitigates risk in delivering foreign assistance is key to program effectiveness. While the myriad of country contexts requires flexibility, this cannot eclipse the rigor and safeguards that are needed to protect USAID programs and funds and provide beneficiaries the assistance they desperately need.

Our independent oversight helps ensure USAID gets the highest return on the U.S. Government's foreign assistance investment. To maximize our impact, we shifted our oversight model from one that focused on country-specific programs to one that is more strategic and cross-cutting. This shift has put us in a strong position to make recommendations that get at the root of persistent and pervasive problems across USAID's complex programs and operations.

Our "Fiscal Year 2019 Top Management Challenges" report in particular demonstrates the increased impact of our work. My statement today will highlight the four top management challenges that need USAID's attention now and into the foreseeable future.

## **SUMMARY**

The first management challenge concerns assessing and responding to the risks in providing humanitarian and stabilization assistance—particularly in areas affected by conflict or natural disaster. Insufficient risk assessments not only leave USAID programs and services vulnerable to exploitation, but they also put USAID in the position of attempting to mitigate threats it does not understand. The adverse effects of poor planning, monitoring, and evaluation were demonstrated in the fraud schemes that our agents uncovered in Iraq and Syria and across Africa, some of which involved diversions of USAID-funded commodities to terrorists. USAID has begun to take some action to improve its risk assessments to better understand the environment, the threats, and the safeguards that can realistically be put in place.

The second challenge concerns the need for more robust analyses of country capacity and financial backing to build on U.S. investments in international development. Ending the need for foreign assistance is central to its mission, and a clear understanding of countries' capacity to continue development activities and services after U.S. involvement ends is critical for USAID to make progress toward this goal. Our work continues to show that USAID's upfront analyses of multimillion dollar projects fall short of fully assessing beneficiary countries' internal controls, environmental threats, and ability to strengthen local skills and secure public- or private-sector commitment to sustain U.S. efforts. In addition, we identified gaps in USAID's ongoing monitoring and evaluation that limit its ability to apply

past lessons to better ensure sustainability of future development efforts. This was the case with USAID's West Bank and Gaza Conflict Mitigation and Management Program—ongoing since 2004 with more than 100 grants awarded to local and international organizations—which USAID has yet to evaluate to determine the program's long-term impact and improve the effectiveness of future grants. Again, planning, monitoring, and evaluation are at the root of these vulnerabilities. USAID has begun to address its multiple sustainability challenges through both crosscutting and program-specific actions. Notably, USAID has begun to focus on using high-level metrics to identify strengths and weaknesses, help inform strategic decisions, and ultimately determine a country's level of commitment and capacity to be self-reliant.

Reconciling distinct interagency priorities and functions to advance U.S. foreign assistance is the third major challenge facing USAID. A lack of consensus and joint planning among agencies pits them against one another as they work to achieve their independent aims. We have seen this play out in USAID activities related to the Ebola response in West Africa, sustainable energy in Haiti, and other foreign assistance efforts. Competing priorities, different policies and procedures, and additional layers of review—particularly with the Department of State—complicate and impede multiagency response and development activities. Our work validated gaps in the delivery of foreign and humanitarian assistance in West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and fragile states worldwide. Based on our recommendations, USAID provided the National Security Council critical input for a response playbook, which includes strategies for engaging with the international community. At the Council's direction, USAID and the Departments of State and Defense are working together to implement recommendations from the Stabilization Assistance Review that USAID and State established in May 2018. These and other actions USAID has taken in response to our and others' recommendations have the potential to improve interagency coordination. However, fully implementing these actions will be an ongoing challenge, particularly in areas where the authority to act is outside USAID's purview.

The fourth challenge concerns vulnerabilities in USAID's financial and information management systems. USAID's ability to carry out its mission and ensure effective stewardship of Federal funds depends on the integrity and reliability of these core systems. Without them, other safeguards—no matter how well they are designed and implemented—will not work effectively. Despite noteworthy actions to improve its systems and bring them into compliance with stringent Federal financial and information requirements, USAID continues to work to meet requirements for promoting transparency and accountability. Specifically, USAID has been unable to reconcile its intragovernmental transactions and differences between its general ledger and Treasury's; has experienced challenges managing some of its awards to implementers, which total approximately \$17.6 billion annually; and has not fully complied with Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act requirements.

## MANAGING RISKS INHERENT TO PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AND STABILIZATION ASSISTANCE

In December 2018, the United Nations estimated that \$21.9 billion would be needed to assist 131.7 million people in 42 countries affected by natural disasters and conflict. USAID reports expending an average of approximately \$2.6 billion on humanitarian and stabilization assistance annually.<sup>1</sup> Public health crises and extremist group activities further exacerbate the need for humanitarian and stabilization assistance worldwide.

Delivering assistance in these volatile environments frequently entails working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), contractors, and public international organizations (PIOs),<sup>2</sup> while coordinating with multiple U.S. Government agencies and international donors. In providing this assistance, USAID must balance efforts to distribute relief supplies with safeguards to help prevent assistance from adversely affecting local markets or falling prey to corruption.

Fraud, waste, and abuse in these settings are acute, and managing these risks has been a longstanding challenge for USAID—especially when short-term humanitarian responses evolve into a protracted presence, as in Syria, Iraq, and Somalia. While USAID evaluates operational context and implementer capacity to determine whether the risk of inaction outweighs the risk of providing assistance, our investigations and audits continue to expose weaknesses in USAID planning and monitoring that create opportunities for bad actors to exploit vulnerabilities. For example:

- **Overseeing PIOs.** In September 2018, we reported that USAID did not align its PIO policies and processes with Federal internal control standards or develop clear documented standards for properly vetting, managing, and overseeing PIOs—which frequently help implement U.S. humanitarian responses in nonpermissive environments. In addition, USAID lacked sufficient policies and processes for identifying, assessing, and managing PIO risks. Instead, USAID relied on PIOs to assess and manage their risks. USAID’s awards to PIOs working in Syria and Iraq—which now span more than 6 years and total \$2.6 billion—are particularly vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse because the awards had not been designed with internal control standards appropriate for the context. For example, USAID did not regularly review previous audits or investigations conducted by PIO oversight bodies as part of its awards process, a best practice for mitigating identified internal control vulnerabilities.
- **Responding to Public Health Crises of International Concern.** The United States appropriated about \$5.4 billion to respond to the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, making it the largest donor in the international effort to combat the outbreak—one of the deadliest in modern history. In leading the U.S. response, USAID deployed a strategy that provided needed flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, including the infectious disease’s evolution. However, a lack of policies for a whole-of-Government approach, delays in obtaining emergency funding, and other factors complicated the U.S. response. Insufficient needs assessments, frequent staff turnover, and weak handover procedures for rotating response teams further undermined USAID’s efforts. One official said USAID operated with too few people to follow the money and determine whether support was reaching targeted beneficiaries. Ultimately, USAID procured \$4.6 million in excess medical supplies, and most USAID-funded treatment centers and care units opened after the majority of Ebola cases

<sup>1</sup> For fiscal years 2013 through 2017 as reported in USAID’s agency financial reports.

<sup>2</sup> PIOs include U.N. organizations or international finance organizations and are subject to fewer Federal restrictions than other types of implementers.

had already occurred and progression of the outbreak was on the decline; as a result, some centers never opened or never saw patients.

The re-emergence of Ebola in Africa underscores the urgency for USAID to establish an Agency-wide framework for responding to public health crises, as we recommended in January 2018.<sup>3</sup> Without such a framework, USAID risks starting over with each new outbreak and falling behind in assisting with response efforts. While USAID has resolved some of our January 2018 recommendations, effective implementation will be key to launching a more robust, coordinated, and useful response—especially in the event the World Health Organization classifies the recent outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.

- **Identifying and Curbing Fraud and Corruption in Nonpermissive Environments.** Insecure environments are especially vulnerable to individuals intent on stealing U.S. funds and goods, depriving beneficiaries of assistance in countries like Iraq and Syria. A \$150 million pledge that the United States made in July 2017 to help Iraqis return to communities freed from Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) occupation was placed on hold because of fraud allegations. Following a joint investigation, USAID and the United Nations Development Programme agreed to additional funding requirements that call for stronger internal controls, expanded monitoring of project activities, controlled sharing of contract details, enhanced fraud prevention training, and a full-time, Iraq-focused investigator. These actions, if effectively implemented, should help mitigate vulnerabilities in this high-risk project.

USAID's cross-border relief programs for internally displaced Syrians have been similarly exploited, reducing the quality of humanitarian assistance provided to those displaced. One individual with close ties to host-country officials manipulated tenders to companies he was affiliated with for personal profit. In another case, a USAID implementer manipulated procurements in favor of vendors that offered bribes and kickbacks, shortchanged deliveries, and substituted products in USAID-funded supply kits with items of lesser quality—including supplying windbreakers and rubber galoshes, not the thick winter jackets and snow boots contracted for and needed to adapt to the harsh camp conditions during a Syrian winter. A separate investigation exposed a bid rigging, bribery, and kickback scheme involving a ring of Turkish vendors that colluded with staff from four USAID implementers. To date, the investigation has resulted in the suspension of \$239 million in program funds, the debarment of 18 individuals and companies, multiple employee terminations and resignations, and one indictment of a ringleader in the scheme. Investigations related to other criminal activity as well as civil false claims are ongoing. USAID has taken action to improve award management, program oversight, internal processes, and fraud prevention. However, our ongoing investigations continue to substantiate allegations of fraud and mismanagement.

- **Preventing Support to Terrorist Groups.** States with weak democratic systems and accountability often exacerbate the risks in providing foreign assistance. This is especially problematic in areas where designated foreign terrorist groups<sup>4</sup> operate, often having great influence over the communities that USAID assists. Insufficient monitoring and oversight have allowed these groups to divert assistance from intended beneficiaries. For example, under the threat of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)—a designated terrorist group operating in Syria—an NGO's employees knowingly diverted thousands of USAID-funded food kits worth millions of dollars to ineligible beneficiaries (including

<sup>3</sup> USAID OIG, "Lessons From USAID's Ebola Response Highlight the Need for a Public Health Emergency Policy Framework" (9-000-118-001-P), January 24, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Designated as such by Executive Order 13224, the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List published by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, or the Department of State's State Sponsors of Terrorism List.

HTS fighters) and submitted falsified beneficiary lists. A USAID third-party monitor reported the diversion, and our investigation resulted in USAID suspending \$87.9 million in programming and the NGO terminating dozens of employees. USAID resumed humanitarian assistance activities in northwest Syria after the Agency implemented several major changes in its assistance programs in the region based on our referral on the matter. For example, the Agency implemented an expanded process for addressing risk, beginning with requiring risk mitigation plans from implementers prior to award and post-award vetting of prime and sub-implementers operating in northwest Syria. Another OIG investigation found that implementer staff were affiliated with or sympathetic to known terrorist groups in northwest Syria. Based on our investigative work and findings, the NGO ultimately suspended portions of its program to reverify the identities of all of its beneficiaries, adapted its program to the changing risk environment, and terminated or asked for the resignation of a number of employees.

While USAID requires its award applicants to disclose any prior material support provided to terrorist entities and verifies that contractors are not blocked from receiving USAID funds, implementers have falsely certified that they have not materially supported blocked entities. Further, USAID's requirement to disclose past material support to terrorist organizations concerns only implementers applying for assistance awards, not contracts. We notified USAID of these vulnerabilities, which particularly affect high-risk programs in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and similar nonpermissive environments—and the Agency has committed to addressing this discrepancy through the Federal Acquisition Regulation Principals and the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council, which would potentially extend these required disclosures to all contractors Governmentwide. In addition, our work on HTS prompted discussions at the National Security Council on the U.S. Government's tolerance for the risk of diversions to HTS in northwestern Syria and steps that can be taken to mitigate these risks in light of our observations that HTS had infiltrated USAID assistance programs.

- ***Detecting and Reporting Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA).*** Upon learning in February 2018 that an NGO had covered up claims of SEA violations in Haiti following the country's catastrophic 2010 earthquake, we sent a memorandum to the USAID Administrator highlighting vulnerabilities in USAID's SEA-related reporting requirements for implementers. Our March 2018 memorandum noted that, under Agency policy for awardees and subawardees, the standard for reporting sexual misconduct allegations to USAID and OIG was limited to complaints of human trafficking or procurement of commercial sex, and did not include the full scope of SEA, such as allegations or instances of rape and molestation. In addition, reporting of sexual misconduct was limited to allegations that implementers deemed credible—a threshold that delayed independent assessments and responses by USAID and OIG.

USAID has taken action to address some risks we identified, such as including special conditions in some awards and revising its policy for agreements with PIOs to improve oversight of these organizations. Further, after the Haiti SEA incident was exposed, the USAID Administrator reaffirmed the Agency's zero tolerance for sexual misconduct, exploitation, or abuse of any kind—a message emphasized at his March 2018 "Forum on Preventing Sexual Misconduct," which included representatives from key implementers and U.N. agencies, and where I, as Inspector General, spoke on the gravity of the issue. The Administrator also established the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct, joined by an OIG liaison, who serves as an observer in watch over USAID policy decisions with respect to SEA reporting requirements and communicates OIG's independent response on this issue to the Alliance and other key stakeholders. The Agency updated standard award provisions, and established additional guidance clarifying that all forms of sexual misconduct that affect beneficiaries should be reported to USAID and OIG, not just those involving trafficking or commercial sex.

We continue to assess USAID's humanitarian assistance activities, including reviewing such activities in Iraq and assessing USAID's oversight of selected implementers delivering aid in response to the Syrian crisis. We are also currently auditing USAID's response to the crisis in West Africa—where years of conflict and escalating violence perpetuated by Boko Haram and ISIS have displaced an estimated 2.5 million people in the countries surrounding the Lake Chad Basin—in part to assess its actions to prevent terrorist organizations from obtaining USAID humanitarian funds.

### **STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY AND IMPROVING PLANNING AND MONITORING TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF U.S.-FUNDED DEVELOPMENT**

To support partner countries' journey to self-reliance and better ensure that development is sustainable after U.S. involvement ends, USAID calls for investing in communities that have a stake in continuing activities and services; building the skills of local stakeholders; and promoting planning for sustainability, which could include public- or private-sector participation and financial backing.

Best practices for achieving sustainable development encourage increased use of local systems to implement donor-funded programs.<sup>5</sup> USAID initiatives reflect these principles, and in 2016 the Agency updated its policy on development programming with an emphasis on promoting local ownership. However, working with local partners and host-country governments with limited capacity, weak financial systems, and insufficient internal controls presents significant challenges for USAID.

USAID also continues to work to implement its planning, learning, monitoring, and evaluation cycle to (1) design programs that are supportable and complement larger strategies, (2) promote accountability, (3) adapt programs before they get off track, and (4) inform decisions about current and future programming. Our audits and investigations have repeatedly shown the consequences of operating without a fully implemented program cycle, especially on development programs that encourage self-reliance in multiple areas, including the global health supply chain, local infrastructure, and local capacity.

- **Global Health Supply Chain.** Lax warehousing, security, and commodity distribution systems have made USAID's \$9.5 billion Global Health Supply Chain-Procurement and Supply Management Project<sup>6</sup> vulnerable to supply chain leakage. Since 2016 our investigations and joint operations with local authorities have revealed that host governments' inability or unwillingness to put in place appropriate controls has created the potential for large-scale, illicit resale of USAID-funded commodities to private businesses and public markets. These joint efforts have, as of March 2019, resulted in 41 arrests and 35 indictments of subjects suspected of selling stolen commodities on the black market.

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<sup>5</sup> Best practices incorporate principles from the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, and the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

<sup>6</sup> The project's indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract to provide cost-effective health commodities in more than 50 countries and technical assistance in supply chain management was awarded to Chemonics International in 2015.

- **Local Infrastructure.** The Haitian Government delayed planned reforms considered key to the success and sustainability of a USAID-funded project to expand electricity generation in the country. Similarly, on the Gomal Zam Multipurpose Dam Project, USAID and the Government of Pakistan did not implement a plan to maintain electricity generation or restore power in the event that it failed. After the dam was completed in June 2013 and handed over to the Pakistani Government, Pakistani officials reported sporadic electricity generation, and by October 2016, system failures and damages had altogether shut down electricity generation, which has yet to be fully restored. In response to our recommendations, USAID/Pakistan recovered \$11.5 million that it had paid in excess of the fixed reimbursement agreement amount, and followed through on the environmental remediation. Corrective actions to resolve the critical issues limiting power generation are ongoing.

We recently reported that USAID lacks comprehensive, reliable, and easily accessible data on construction activities under its cooperative agreements and grants, which USAID estimates amounted to \$1.4 billion between 2011 and 2013.<sup>7</sup> Data on the construction type, location, cost, source of engineering design, or performance is critical to inform decisions and mission efforts to advance country-specific goals. Without this data, the Agency misses opportunities to mitigate risks and identify and leverage best practices to effectively deploy technical expertise, including staff engineers. The Agency agreed to draw on current systems to make comprehensive construction data readily available to missions and bureaus, and to implement broader actions to further improve construction data and oversight.

- **Local Capacity.** A July 2018 joint investigative referral from OIG and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction raised serious doubts that the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) had the control and accountability systems needed to safeguard U.S. Government investments in the university, which have exceeded \$100 million over more than a decade. The referral documented AUAF's failure to comply with accounting, timekeeping, and recordkeeping standards—as well as issues surrounding key personnel, conflicts of interest, and the governance of its board—and requested that USAID assess AUAF's responsibility and whether the university should be entrusted with additional U.S. taxpayer funds. In response, USAID's Suspending and Debarment Official executed a comprehensive administrative agreement with AUAF, which requires an independent consultant to monitor and report all of AUAF's accountability efforts; imposes significant new obligations on AUAF's Audit, Compliance, and Risk Management Committee to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of AUAF's assistance agreements; and mandates frequent reporting to USAID on the status of corrective actions taken. A material breach of the terms of the agreement would constitute a cause for AUAF's immediate suspension or debarment. USAID also added supplemental award conditions, including requiring a USAID official to serve as a voting member of AUAF's board for the duration of USAID funding, mandating full cooperation with a USAID-designated financial overseer, and ensuring that AUAF demonstrates progress toward obtaining U.S. academic accreditation and incorporating in the United States.

USAID has also taken action to address concerns we identified with its 2004 West Bank and Gaza Conflict Mitigation and Management Program—which, as of March 2016, has awarded more than 100 grants to local and international organizations and disbursed \$60 million. Specifically, the Agency did not evaluate the program to determine its long-term impact and improve the effectiveness of

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<sup>7</sup> "USAID Lacks Data To Inform Decisions About Construction Under Cooperative Agreements and Grants" (9-000-19-003-P), February 11, 2019.

future grants. The mission recently initiated an evaluation that it expects to complete by the end of July 2019.

In addition to program-specific actions, USAID has begun to take crosscutting actions to address its multiple sustainability challenges. Notably, USAID began a strategic transition in 2018 that focuses on building country self-reliance using high-level metrics to identify strengths and weaknesses, help inform strategic decisions, and ultimately determine a country's level of commitment and capacity to be self-reliant. Examples of other steps taken by USAID include:

- To build local capacity, USAID established external partnerships with the International Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in April 2016 to enhance the oversight capabilities of audit organizations in developing countries. The success of these partnerships will depend on how USAID cultivates them.
- To improve planning and monitoring—concerns cited in our past Top Management Challenges reports—USAID updated and added rigor to its policy for program design and management in September 2016. Recognizing the need to build internal capacity to fully implement the policy, USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning developed new training, tools, and technical assistance to support missions' program planning and monitoring. As of August 2018, the Agency reported it had trained more than 3,000 staff in performance monitoring and evaluation, and approximately 900 staff had completed courses in project design.<sup>8</sup> These actions should help address the Agency's planning and monitoring challenges, but sustained efforts will be required to ensure programs and projects are effectively designed and meet performance expectations.

USAID included sustainability in its first Agency Risk Profile<sup>9</sup>—approved by the Administrator in July 2017—and developed a sustainability risk mitigation plan. Even with the mitigation plan in place, Agency leadership recognizes that regular monitoring of the plan through the enterprise risk management (ERM) process may be needed. The Agency also included risks related to planning and monitoring in the risk profile and will continue to monitor and manage these risks through its ERM process.

In addition to these actions, USAID developed a new policy to engage the private sector—part of its transformation initiative to support countries on their journey to self-reliance—to increase its collaboration with the private sector to promote sustainable, enterprise-driven development. At the request of this subcommittee, we recently reported on U.S. agencies' approaches to engage the private sector and leverage private capital to advance international development.<sup>10</sup> For USAID, this engagement includes financing, technical assistance, knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, and capacity development through various procurement instruments. For example, USAID has procured services to develop host governments' capacity for engaging the private sector and to promote their investment in key sectors.

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<sup>8</sup> USAID provides OIG with updates in its corrective action plan prior to OIG's annual Top Management Challenges report.

<sup>9</sup> The risk profile was developed in response to OMB Circular A-123, which mandates that Federal agencies institute a comprehensive enterprise risk management system.

<sup>10</sup> "Select U.S. Agencies' Use of Private Capital in Advancing International Development" (9-000-19-004-P), May 3, 2019. This report also describes private capital engagement by the other four agencies OIG oversees: the Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, and Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

We continue to monitor USAID's efforts to strengthen capacity and promote sustainability. For example, we recently issued a report on USAID's efforts to strengthen local capacity, enhance and promote country ownership, increase sustainability, and implement risk mitigation procedures.<sup>11</sup> While USAID officials in operating units worldwide were optimistic about the positive impact of these efforts, the Agency lacked a means to determine whether it had achieved progress toward its goals. Our ongoing audits will examine issues related to sustainability in USAID's programs. For example, we have recently started an audit of USAID's Journey to Self-Reliance initiative, which seeks to prioritize partner country ownership over more immediate outcomes, a balance USAID has been challenged to strike in its foreign assistance activities. Our audit will assess USAID's incorporation of a new set of self-reliance metrics—central to this initiative—into its development programming strategy.

## **RECONCILING INTERAGENCY PRIORITIES AND FUNCTIONS TO MORE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY ADVANCE U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE**

Implementing foreign assistance programs, projects, and operations that involve multiple U.S. Government agencies has presented significant challenges for USAID in achieving its core mission. In particular, coordination with the Department of State—which makes policy and funding decisions for operations related to political and security crises—has complicated USAID's project planning and execution. Despite broad interagency guidance on the Department of State's role in politically sensitive environments, USAID employees are sometimes unclear on how best to manage additional layers of review, nimbly respond to changing priorities, address both U.S. diplomatic and development goals, and balance short- and long-term priorities.

The joint USAID-Department of State reform effort conducted in 2017 demonstrated the complexity in aligning complementary yet distinct missions and underscored USAID's persistent challenge in achieving U.S. foreign assistance objectives that involve other U.S. Government agencies.<sup>12</sup> Our point-in-time review of the effort highlighted uncertainty about the joint reform's direction and end goals, and noted that disagreement and limited transparency on decisions related to the consolidation of functions and services led to questions about what the reform effort had achieved. USAID staff also voiced concerns related to the Agency's separate reform plan, including a lack of transparency and inclusivity in its development. Since then—amid leadership turnover at the State Department and ambiguity on the future of joint redesign efforts—USAID forged ahead with its independent transformation initiative. In August 2018, USAID outlined its proposed plans to Congress through nine congressional notifications—five of which have since been cleared.<sup>13</sup> Each of these changes represents significant reorganization, including those designed to refocus headquarters technical expertise to support decision-making in the field, and consolidate management of food and non-food disaster assistance.

The U.S. Government's Haiti reconstruction efforts and the international Ebola response foreshadowed USAID's joint reform challenges. USAID was largely responsible for implementing State Department commitments to the Haitian Government for post-earthquake reconstruction, including a project to

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<sup>11</sup> "Despite Optimism About Engaging Local Organizations, USAID Had Challenges Determining Impact and Mitigating Risks" (5-000-19-001-P), March 21, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> OMB Memorandum M-17-22 required executive branch agencies, including USAID and the Department of State, to submit reform plans and workforce plans to OMB by September 2017.

<sup>13</sup> The five notifications that have been cleared established new bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance; Resilience and Food Security; Conflict, Prevention, and Stabilization; Asia; and Development, Democracy, and Innovation. The remaining four notifications request structural changes to the Office of the Administrator; establishment of a Bureau for Policy, Resources, and Performance and a Bureau for Management; and integration of the Agency's statutory and non-statutory coordinators into the proposed new bureaus.

provide sustainable electricity services. However, USAID/Haiti lacked the staff needed to plan for and monitor efforts to meet both the State Department's priority for generating reliable electricity for an industrial park and USAID's broader development goal to expand modern electricity service to Haitians. When State Department assumptions about the Haitian Government's appetite for energy sector reform and commercial demand for electricity did not materialize, USAID/Haiti had to shift its long-term strategy for the power plant from government to private management and reduce its expansion goals. Ultimately, USAID's project did not meet its modernization and expansion goals, and the power plant will continue to rely on U.S. Government support until it can be transferred to another operator.

The international response to the 2014 Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa, which called for an unprecedented level of coordination for USAID, also demonstrated interagency challenges that affected operational effectiveness. While USAID had previously responded to public health crises of international concern, it continued to operate without a policy framework to launch a rapid and coordinated response to the Ebola outbreak, and responders were left to re-create processes for controlling the virus. Based on our recommendation to have a communication and coordination strategy, USAID provided the National Security Council with a "Playbook for Early Response to High-Consequence Emerging Infectious Disease Threats and Biological Incidents," which includes strategies for engagement with the international community and coordination systems.

USAID has been responsive to our recommendations to improve interagency coordination. For example, USAID agreed to formalize its plan to conclude the Haiti power plant project and to address staffing concerns that undercut project monitoring and implementation. With regard to responding to public health emergencies of international concern, USAID reports that it is working with other U.S. agencies to identify and regularly test roles, capabilities, and responsibilities; agreed to direct the implementation of a strategy for communicating and coordinating with other responders; and committed to incorporating handover procedures for members of rotating response teams. In addition, USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a joint statement to their staff encouraging work relationships that deepen teamwork and collaboration.

To help reconcile their respective priorities, in May 2018 USAID and the State Department established the Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR), which provides guidelines and best practices to optimize U.S. foreign assistance and advance stabilization efforts in conflict-affected areas. At the direction of the National Security Council, USAID and the Departments of State and Defense are working together to implement SAR recommendations and apply SAR in priority countries. While the agencies emphasized their commitment to institutionalize learning, evaluation, and accountability, closer coordination will require shifts in policies, process, and culture. As GAO reported in September 2018, U.S. agencies still needed to formally document their agreement, roles, and responsibilities to enhance coordination and reduce the potential for duplication, overlap, and fragmentation.<sup>14</sup>

According to USAID officials, the Agency and the State Department are also leading an interagency policy research initiative to inform U.S. assistance to fragile countries. Recommendations coming out of the initiative are expected to help coordinate assistance to advance goals related to preventing violent conflict, including mass atrocity and violent extremism. Further, USAID encouraged staff to attend Department of State national security courses to build collaboration and knowledge across the interagency foreign affairs community. In August 2018, USAID announced an in-house course to train staff in techniques and best practices for interagency communication, policy development, and decision making.

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<sup>14</sup> "U.S. Agencies Have Coordinated Stabilization Efforts but Need to Document Their Agreement" (GAO-18-654), September 27, 2018.

USAID is also moving ahead on proposed structural changes announced in its August 2018 transformation initiative. Among these, USAID proposed a Bureau for Policy, Resources, and Performance that is designed to provide a unified Agency voice with the Department of State, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, and other stakeholders on all matters related to USAID policy, budget, and program performance while ensuring coherence among these important dimensions of Agency activity.

USAID's many actions have the potential to improve interagency coordination. However, fully implementing these actions will be an ongoing challenge for USAID, particularly in areas where the authority to act is outside its purview. We continue to monitor and assess USAID's efforts to improve interagency coordination. For example, in March 2019, we reported that while USAID's Power Africa initiative leveraged U.S. agencies' expertise on existing and new efforts in the energy sector, a rapid expansion—extending to all of sub-Saharan Africa and tripling its goals—exposed Power Africa to increased risks, and the USAID Coordinator's Office had not fully implemented a portfolio-wide program to manage the risks.<sup>15</sup>

## **ADDRESSING VULNERABILITIES IN FINANCIAL AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Meeting the Federal Government's strict financial and information management requirements has been a Governmentwide challenge. While USAID has made notable progress in addressing these requirements, it continues to work to reconcile its financial statements and strengthen its awards management.

**Reconciling Intragovernmental Transactions.** To provide accountability and transparency in their transactions with one another, Federal agencies (referred to as "trading partners") must reconcile any accounting differences. These differences can occur if trading partners use different accounting periods or methodologies for classifying and reporting transactions. The Department of Treasury reported that as of September 30, 2017, USAID had \$488 million in unreconciled transactions with its trading partners. According to Treasury's scorecard—used to track and rank each agency by its contribution to the Government's unreconciled differences—USAID was the 19th largest contributor (out of 140 agencies) at the end of June 2018, with differences of \$377 million. USAID's ongoing efforts to improve its reconciliation process and eliminate differences are likely to resolve timing differences. However, other differences, such as those caused by accounting errors, require additional attention.

**Reconciling the Fund Balance With Treasury Account.** USAID's financial statements for fiscal years 2017 and 2016 had a material weakness related to the Agency's Fund Balance With Treasury (FBWT) reconciliations. A material weakness indicates that a material misstatement of the Agency's financial statements may not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. In the past, USAID did not reconcile its FBWT account with Treasury's fund balance each month, or promptly research and resolve any identified differences. Instead, USAID adjusted its FBWT account to agree with Treasury's fund balance. While USAID has made progress in reducing the unreconciled amount, large unreconciled differences with Treasury remain. As of September 30, 2017, the net difference between USAID's general ledger and the amount in Treasury's records was approximately \$214 million, of which \$83 million was due to outstanding unreconciled items and \$131 million was unexplained. This difference accumulated because of ongoing problems with a legacy system and data migration, and the continued lack of an integrated system to control reconciliations performed by USAID missions. USAID management continues to work to resolve these issues. For example, USAID enhanced its cash

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<sup>15</sup> "Power Africa Coalesced Energy Efforts but Lacked Portfolio-Wide Risk Management and Consistent Measures of Progress" (4-698-19-001-P), March 7, 2019.

reconciliation system (eCART) and implemented standard operating procedures for ongoing reconciliations. For the legacy difference, OMB agreed with USAID's action plan and will process USAID's request for the allocation of the \$131 million difference to available unobligated funds on a pro-rata basis. USAID's Office of the Chief Financial Officer will adjust its general ledger accounts in the Agency's internal financial management system and submit a backdated adjustment to Treasury through the OMB MAX system<sup>16</sup> to correct and address the discrepancy.

**Improving Award Management.** Full and open competition is required when awarding U.S. Government contracts, except in unusual and compellingly urgent circumstances or when other qualified sources are lacking. For grants and cooperative agreements, USAID encourages competition to identify and fund programs that best achieve Agency objectives. Under certain circumstances, eligibility to bid may be restricted to a particular type of organization or other limitation, typically for sole-source awards, as long as a justification for using sole-source awards is fully documented and approved by appropriate authorities. However, a USAID contractor operating in Syria had not adequately documented justification for 36 of 41 sole-source subawards it made—leading us to question \$5.6 million in costs. The Agency cited factors that prevented exploring other options for competition—primarily violence in the region—but agreed that documentation was lacking and that it should have held the contractor accountable for complying with Agency policy. However, because the contractor had the proper authority to use sole-source awards and USAID approved them, the Agency could not collect the questioned costs from the contractor.

In addition, we have made a total of 3,365 recommendations in more than 400 performance and financial audit reports issued over the past decade that concern implementer underperformance and inadequate awards management. USAID's reliance on awards to implement its programs around the world—approximately \$17.6 billion annually—demands effective awards management to hold implementers accountable for achieving program objectives.

USAID's primary information technology challenge relates to complying with the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA), which was enacted in December 2014 to reform and streamline the U.S. Government's information technology acquisitions, including strengthening chief information officers' (CIO) accountability for their agencies' IT costs, schedules, performance, and security. Until recently, USAID did not comply with several FITARA requirements, including those related to the CIO's reporting position and authority over budget execution activities related to the use of IT resources.

On May 23, 2019, the USAID Administrator approved new policies and directives related to the management and oversight of the Agency's IT resources, including elevating the CIO position to comply with FITARA's mandate—a recommendation we made in November 2018. According to the Administrator, "all USAID Missions and USAID/Washington Operating Units are now required to coordinate their IT investments with the Office of the CIO." The Administrator also noted that the Office of the CIO will brief and train Agency leaders, contracting officers, budget and personnel offices, and other internal staff who will be responsible for complying with the new policies and directives.

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<sup>16</sup> MAX.gov is a Governmentwide suite of advanced collaboration, information sharing, data collection, publishing, business intelligence, and authentication tools and services used to facilitate cross-Government collaboration and knowledge management. MAX.gov tools include MAX Community, MAX Collect, MAX Survey, MAX A-11, MAX Analytics, MAX Authentication, among many others.

We are following USAID's efforts to reconcile intragovernmental transactions through our annual audits of USAID's financial statements,<sup>17</sup> as well as its progress in implementing its new policies and directives for complying with FITARA requirements. We are also conducting an audit to assess the Agency's acquisition and assistance processes. Specifically, we are assessing how the Agency manages its awards to implementers and its use of common management tools. In addition, we will be assessing USAID's stewardship of expired and canceled awards.

### **CONTINUED OIG OVERSIGHT**

We appreciate Congress' recognition—through its directed oversight support and resources rendered through the appropriations process—of the value we bring to the effectiveness of foreign assistance and humanitarian assistance programs and to American taxpayers.

Our fiscal year 2018 audit and investigative returns amounted to approximately eight times the cost of our operating budget. In addition to these financial returns, our recommendations have triggered foundational changes in policy and programming around global health and humanitarian assistance, Agency procurements, and engagement with public international organizations. Your funding, coupled with our internal transformation and realignment efforts, has advanced the standing and impact of our work.

My office remains committed to ensuring that USAID and the other foreign assistance entities we oversee prudently use every dollar they receive. Your support, oversight, and engagement—along with our revised strategic approach to our work—are critical to carrying out our mission, especially in light of the high-risk and challenging environments that foreign assistance programs operate in. Thank you again for your support. We remain committed to meeting or exceeding your high expectations.

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<sup>17</sup> The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, as amended by the Federal Financial Management Act of 1994 (Title IV of the Government Management Reform Act of 1994, Public Law 103-356), requires an audit of USAID's annual financial statements.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Linick.

Mr. LINICK. Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify regarding the work of the Office of Inspector General. We appreciate your interest in our work.

We oversee the operations and programs of the Department of State and U.S. Agency for Global Media, also known as USAGM, which include more than 75,000 employees and 270 overseas missions and domestic entities. In fiscal year 2018 alone we were responsible for the oversight of more than \$70 billion in Department and USAGM programs and operations. I would like to highlight some of our recent work.

One of our top priorities is protecting those who work for the Department around the world. We continue to find critical vulnerabilities that put our people at risk. We have reported on facilities maintenance deficiencies at overseas posts, weaknesses in emergency preparedness, and health and safety concerns related to residential housing.

We have also reported on the management of specific construction contracts where poor oversight led to physical deficiencies, some with safety and security concerns for new buildings.

We have also focused on the Department's management of contracts, grants, and foreign assistance. This is a continuing challenge for the Department that involves substantial resources. In fiscal year 2018 alone the Department's obligations were more than \$30 billion.

Nearly 40 percent of the investigations we closed in fiscal year 2018 were related to contract and grant fraud. And we have issued several recent reports that highlighted problems such as ineffective performance, monitoring of contractors, deficient invoice reviews and approval processes, and insufficient program evaluation.

Our annual FISMA report identified numerous control weaknesses that significantly affected program effectiveness and increased the Department's vulnerability to cyber attack and threat.

We continue to assess the Department's workforce management challenges. We found that across functional and geographic regions inexperienced staff, insufficient training, staffing gaps, and frequent turnover negatively affect Department programs and operations.

During my tenure at the Office of Inspector General we have undertaken many initiatives to improve how we use our limited resources to further our oversight mission. Most recently we began posting monthly reports on unclassified recommendations on our public website. We provide this information as well as monthly reports on classified recommendations to the Department and to Congress.

Before closing, I would like to note that we recently observed improvements as a result of our work. The Department is doing a better job of tracking physical security deficiencies, it has upgraded management of its contract file inventory, and it has improved armored vehicle programs in multiple ways.

I have included financial information in my written testimony that demonstrates the ways that OIG helps return money to the

American public. We are also proud of our work relating to the safeguarding of the lives of those at posts abroad and protecting the Department's information, reputation, and program integrity.

I want to thank you all again for your interest in and support of our work, and I want to emphasize that OIG's accomplishments are really a credit to this talented and committed staff that I have had the privilege to lead over the last 5 years. I look forward to your questions.

[The information follows:]



**Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State**

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND OVERSIGHT OF  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND UNITED STATES  
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMS**

**STATEMENT BY  
STEVE A. LINICK**

**INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND  
THE U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA**

**BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS**

**JULY 11, 2019**

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and other Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the work of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of State (Department) and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM, formerly Broadcasting Board of Governors). We appreciate your interest in and support of OIG's work.

In this testimony, I will highlight some of our recent work, including our oversight of top management challenges facing the Department and USAGM. I will also discuss priority recommendations and issues, OIG initiatives, and the impact of our work.

## I. MISSION AND OVERSIGHT EFFORTS

It is my honor to have led OIG since the beginning of FY 2014, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss our work. OIG's mandate is extensive, requiring us to oversee both Department and USAGM programs and operations, which include more than 75,000 employees and over 270 overseas missions and domestic entities. We are responsible for oversight of more than \$70 billion in Department and USAGM programs and operations, including more than \$14 billion in combined annual appropriations and more than \$18 billion in Department-managed foreign assistance.

Additionally, our mandate is unique in that we are statutorily required to inspect and audit every domestic and overseas operating unit of the Department and USAGM at least once every 5 years (although this requirement has routinely been waived by Congress). Due to our limited resources, OIG employs a risk-based approach to planning inspections that allows us to use our resources more efficiently. Under this approach, we are focusing on higher risk missions and tailoring inspections to the needs at specific posts.

Our work has resulted in significant monetary and non-monetary benefits for the Department, USAGM, and the American public. I discuss these results in more detail below.

### Management and Performance Challenges: Department of State

In this testimony, I will focus on the Department's top management and performance challenges as identified in the statutorily mandated annual report on this matter. In FY 2018, we noted seven key challenges: the protection of people and facilities; oversight of contracts, grants, and foreign assistance; information security and management; financial and property management; operating in contingency and critical environments; workforce management; and promoting accountability through internal coordination and clear lines of authority.

#### *Protecting People and Facilities*

One of OIG's top priorities is overseeing the protection of the Department's greatest asset, its people. The threat of terrorism or physical violence against U.S. diplomats and U.S. diplomatic facilities touches every region of the world. Additionally, natural disasters, environmental hazards, and ordinary crime continually pose risks to the health and safety of Department personnel and their families serving abroad.

Although the Department has made improvements in overseas safety and security since the 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya, our inspection and audit work continues to identify vulnerabilities that put

our people at risk. Given the sensitive nature of OIG's work in this area, many of the reports related to safety and security are classified. As these reports pertain to some of our most important work—including, for example, setback and perimeter issues at overseas posts; employees working in unprotected spaces, such as warehouses; and the status of emergency medical supplies at some posts—I encourage you to review those materials in an appropriate setting. This testimony includes only information that is publicly available, much of which relates to the day-to-day work Department employees perform—the safety and appropriateness of the facilities in which they work, the vehicles that they drive, and the places where they live.

Constructing and maintaining safe and secure diplomatic facilities has been an ongoing challenge for the Department, and this challenge is compounded in regions affected by conflict and humanitarian crises. In existing facilities, our inspection work frequently finds overseas posts that lack comprehensive and routine preventative maintenance programs. In new construction, one significant challenge our work increasingly highlights is the management and oversight of construction contracts. Aside from their substantial cost, they have significant security implications. For example, OIG examined the construction of two buildings at Embassy Kabul. In one audit report, OIG concluded that poor quality assurance and oversight of the construction process resulted in a failure to adhere to electrical and fire safety standards. A follow-up report in FY 2018 also revealed risks to personnel and property due to the improper installation of the embassy's fire alarm system as part of a major office and residential expansion.

As a general matter, we have found that systemic issues in the Department contribute to our concerns about physical security measures. One longstanding and significant issue is the tracking and prioritizing of physical security needs at overseas posts. Although the Department has made substantial progress in this area, as I will discuss later in this testimony, work remains.

Another area of OIG focus related to the safety of Department personnel has been the operation of official vehicles overseas. Our inspection work continues to find longstanding deficiencies that pose health and safety risks. These include failure to follow policies related to permissible work hours, lapses in medical clearances for operators of official vehicles, and outdated or absent safety training for drivers.

Finally, we have identified issues related to the Department's residential housing program and overseas posts' emergency preparedness that pose risks to the health and safety of Department personnel. In several FY 2018 and FY 2019 inspection reports, we identified posts that could not demonstrate they had properly inspected residential properties for health and safety risks before assigning employees to occupy them.

#### *Oversight of Contracts, Grants, and Foreign Assistance*

OIG continues to focus on oversight of contracts and grants, an area where the Department expends substantial resources. The Department's obligations in FY 2018 included approximately \$15 billion for contracted services and the same amount in grants and fixed charges. The Department faces continuing challenges managing its contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements, particularly those that are long term and complicated. The Department must ensure that contractors and grantees are appropriately selected, work is properly conducted and monitored, objectives of the grant or contract are achieved, and costs are effectively managed. As with ensuring the safety of personnel, management of grants and

contracts is especially challenging in conflict areas, which present unique obstacles to effective oversight.

Overall, we have found that the Department can significantly improve its oversight of contracts and grants. As a result, a large percentage of our audit and inspection reports address, at least in part, deficiencies in this area. Additionally, nearly 41 percent of the investigations OIG's Office of Investigations closed in FY 2018 related to contract and grant fraud. At the root of many of these deficiencies are inexperienced and untrained oversight personnel, staff rotations that lead to inefficiency, and complex programs and contracts that simply require more robust oversight. Although the Department has addressed some problems, particularly related to invoice review processes in certain bureaus, we continue to identify widespread weaknesses.

In recent reports, inspectors and auditors have noted that routine contract management tasks, such as validating performance metrics to assess contractor performance and maintaining complete and accurate contract files, were not being performed in compliance with Department guidance and Federal regulations. For example, an audit of food safety controls at Embassy Baghdad found that the Department failed to develop a quality assurance surveillance plan that included measurable and structured performance standards and was unable to provide documentation for over one-quarter of required food service inspections.

OIG's audit and inspection reports also highlight circumstances where contracting officer's representatives (CORs) served without proper training or without proper designation, which could affect their ability to ensure adequate oversight of contractors. For instance, in the audit report described above, the CORs assigned to the food services task order we audited—which had an obligated value of nearly \$300 million as of December 2017—had no experience in food safety and received no food safety training before assuming oversight responsibilities. Taking a more systemic view, one management assistance report identified structural issues that contribute to the agency's widespread contract oversight challenges. It reported that the broad dispersal of CORs throughout the Department limits the ability of Washington-based contracting officers and Office of the Procurement Executive specialists to oversee the performance of CORs who often work in other bureaus and offices, frequently far from Washington, D.C.

Inadequate or unskilled contract oversight can be costly for the Department. For example, OIG found that contracting personnel for the same food services task order at Embassy Baghdad referenced above did not effectively implement contractually established cost controls to protect the Department's financial interest. We identified approximately \$45 million in questioned costs in this review.

A growing body of OIG's work addresses a subset of Department contracts: those for the construction of new diplomatic facilities. These contracts are usually long term, complex, and of high value. The inadequate management and oversight of construction poses significant financial risks for the Department. One approach intended to reduce costs for high-value contracts is the value engineering program—a systematic process of reviewing and analyzing systems, projects, equipment, facilities, services, and supplies for the purpose of achieving the essential functions at the lowest life-cycle cost consistent with required levels of performance, reliability, quality, or safety. Although Office of Management and Budget policy requires agencies to have a value engineering program, we found that the Department had not implemented one outside of OBO. Moreover, in an audit of the OBO value

engineering program, we could not complete some planned analysis because of missing documentation that prevented auditors from evaluating the overall effectiveness of the program. Therefore, we concluded that the Department is missing opportunities to consider cost reductions for major procurements, including construction projects.

With regard to grants and foreign assistance programs, we have noted problems with performance monitoring and risk assessment. For example, in an inspection of the Bureau of African Affairs foreign assistance program, we reported a lack of documented processes related to foreign assistance project planning, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management. We concluded that the program did not consistently deploy monitoring and evaluation resources effectively across the bureau and did not coordinate site visits.

Additionally, several FY2018 reports identified concerns regarding the Department's ability to plan and design foreign assistance programs that meet policy goals. For example, in one Bureau of International Law Enforcement Affairs foreign assistance program in Central America, our inspection work found that inadequate planning resulted in the acquisition and provision of unusable equipment. Specifically, five helicopters furnished to the host government could not be used for drug interdiction missions—a core focus of the program—because they had been grounded since 2016 as a result of poor maintenance. On a broader scale, an audit of the Department's aviation program found that the Department had not succeeded in permanently increasing host nations' institutional capability to operate programs without U.S. Government assistance. Efforts to do so have faltered primarily because transition plans, including benchmarks, had not been developed and executed with the host countries.

#### *Information Security and Management*

The Department depends on information systems and electronic data to carry out essential functions that are critical to its mission. The Department is entrusted with sensitive information, both classified and unclassified, which it processes and stores on those systems. The security of these systems is vital to protecting national and economic security, public safety, and the flow of commerce. IT security and management is a longstanding and significant management challenge for the Department.

As in prior years, OIG's annual assessment of the Department's information security program identified numerous control weaknesses that significantly affected program effectiveness and increased the Department's vulnerability to cyberattacks and threats. Additionally, our other work continues to identify various areas where the Department could strengthen its cybersecurity performance. For example, our inspection work noted numerous lapses in the performance of Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) duties at overseas posts. This is a significant risk because ISSOs are responsible for implementing the Department's information systems security program and for working closely with system managers to ensure compliance with information systems security standards. Several inspections of overseas posts also noted deficiencies in IT contingency planning, which risks ineffective responses to or loss of critical communication during an emergency crisis. Finally, we have repeatedly identified concerns regarding the Department's ability to maintain an accurate inventory of its IT assets.

Two of the issues that contribute to OIG's concerns regarding IT security and management at the Department are the lack of an effective risk management strategy and dispersed authority for IT matters. In particular, the Chief Information Officer (CIO), who is the head of the Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM), is not well placed in the organization to be fully accountable for

information security program issues. For example, DS, which also has information security responsibilities, does not report to the CIO. During FY 2018, the Department took some steps to strengthen the delegation of authority to the CIO. We will assess whether this change noticeably improves the Department's IT security program during our FY 2019 audit of this topic.

This management challenge is particularly significant because of the uniquely broad effect that information security program weaknesses have on the Department's overall programs and operations. Such weaknesses can affect the integrity of financial applications, which, in turn, increases a variety of risks.

#### *Financial and Property Management*

Financial management has historically been a challenge for the Department, and we continue to identify wide-ranging concerns related to this issue and to property management.

Weaknesses in the Department's collection, use, and analysis of financial information are a particularly significant manifestation of this challenge. In one notable report from FY 2017, OIG highlighted significant flaws in the Department's processes that set certain cost-of-living allowances for Department employees who are stationed in foreign areas. Our report described a laborious, subjective, and error-prone process for gathering data that has not changed in decades. We estimated that using independent economic data, instead of collecting the underlying information on its own, would have saved the Department more than \$18 million from FY 2013 to FY 2015 at six of the seven posts audited. Nonetheless, our recommendation to develop and implement a plan to use independent economic data to determine post allowance rates remains unimplemented.

We regularly identify internal control weaknesses at the Department, which is another subset of its financial and property management challenge. Internal control deficiencies span a wide range of Department operations and may be related to unliquidated obligations, acquisition planning, warehouse operations, or oversight of bulk fuel inventory, to name a few examples. In one FY 2018 audit, we found that the Department is not optimally managing aviation resources and that it spent \$72 million on unnecessary services over a 4-year period. Our audit report noted that a lack of procedures and guidance contributed to insufficient accountability over aircraft equipment and improper disposal of aircraft, placing aviation assets at increased risk for fraud, waste, and abuse.

Lastly, we assess the difficulty the Department faces in tracking and reporting on foreign assistance funds under this challenge. The lack of information on this crucial aspect of the Department's work hinders its ability to manage foreign assistance resources strategically, identify whether programs are achieving objectives, and determine how well bureaus and offices implement foreign assistance programs. I will discuss this further when I highlight our priority issues below.

#### *Operating in Contingency and Critical Environments*

We recognize the unique difficulties the Department faces in managing posts and programs in environments characterized by contingency operations or other types of conflict or instability. Because of the security concerns, constant change, and sometimes dramatic swings in personnel and funding that can occur in these environments, every other challenge the Department faces is magnified in these locations.

Managing contracts and foreign assistance can be particularly challenging in contingency and critical environments, and our audit work concerning security-related construction projects at Embassy Kabul demonstrates this well. In one audit of new construction projects at Embassy Kabul, we found the Department declared new construction substantially complete even though 14 major buildings systems were not fully tested and confirmed to meet the design intent and specified performance requirements. We learned that an unstable security environment and the pressure to move staff into hardened structures contributed to this action, which ultimately resulted in personnel occupying buildings that had a range of ongoing deficiencies, including issues affecting plumbing systems and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. As noted previously, some of the identified deficiencies created electrical and fire safety issues. Similarly, at Embassy Baghdad, Department officials told us they did not implement a point-of-sale cafeteria system because of a security-related crisis in Iraq and later because of morale concerns. Further, officials told us that local national employees were allowed access to the dining facility because contractual limitations were ignored and adequate controls were not implemented. As a result of these weaknesses in oversight, we estimated that the Department inappropriately paid for at least 450,000 meals valued at more than \$4 million.

Financial and property management challenges are also exacerbated in difficult operating environments. For example, in an inspection of the Yemen Affairs Unit we found that the Department lacked critical information needed to make informed decisions about retaining a leased residential facility that OIG estimated would cost more than \$23 million to operate in FY 2018 and FY 2019. Similarly, lost records made addressing unliquidated obligations difficult and labor-intensive.

#### *Workforce Management*

A challenge we first identified in FY 2017 and again in FY 2018 is workforce management. Across functional areas and geographic regions, OIG found that inexperienced staff, insufficient training, staffing gaps, and frequent turnover contribute to the Department's other management and performance challenges. These problems afflict programs and operations domestically and overseas and are identified in a range of reports that cover a variety of topics.

Deficiencies associated with oversight of contracts and grants are sometimes connected to these issues. For example, an audit of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' selection and management of contract oversight personnel illustrated how the Department's contract oversight and workforce management challenges intersect. We found that the bureau did not consistently nominate CORs with the required certification level and technical expertise to oversee contracts in Iraq and did not always effectively evaluate the performance of contract oversight staff. As a result, we also found deficiencies in COR files and contractor performance monitoring. In another example, we found that in one office in IRM, a single COR was responsible for overseeing 14 complex contracts worth over \$100 million per year in FY 2016 and FY 2017. As a result, we found oversight weaknesses, including approval of invoice payments without appropriately verifying that goods had been received.

More generally, we see that many Foreign Service personnel are assigned management of contracts and grants as a collateral duty but do not receive the necessary training. Most Foreign Service employees rotate in and out of posts frequently, and some assignments are as short as 1 year. As a result, many

large grants and contracts have multiple employees overseeing them, which leads to a lack of both continuity and accountability.

Another area of concern is significant staffing shortfalls at certain bureaus. For example, our inspection of the Bureau of African Affairs noted the bureau's profound difficulties in attracting Foreign Service Officers to its overseas posts. The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs experiences similar challenges.

#### *Promoting Accountability Through Internal Coordination and Clear Lines of Authority*

Another challenge that we first identified in FY 2017 relates to internal coordination and clear lines of authority. We found that poor coordination and vague or dispersed authority are often at the root of some of the Department's other challenges. This is a concern that affects a wide range of Department functions. It is often implicated in problems particular to certain Department programs or projects, and it is likewise relevant to some of the Department's more longstanding and systemic difficulties, including ensuring physical and information security, both of which I mentioned previously.

In one FY 2018 report, OIG found that the Department did not effectively implement its non-financial management control program. Although Department policy gave overall responsibility for designing this program to the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS), the Department's Comptroller stated that the policy did not accurately reflect the entities responsible for particular tasks and that such obligations were actually split between CGFS and the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation. We concluded that, nonetheless, the two entities did not coordinate or maintain close communication and did not have the same understanding of their respective obligations. This report illustrates how unclear lines of responsibility make it more difficult for the Department to manage its overall risks.

Additionally, in a review of passport seizures at Embassy Sana'a, Yemen, we found that diffused and overlapping legal responsibilities at the Department—along with the lack of a single decision maker with clear authority for resolving differing viewpoints—contributed to the prolonged and difficult search for a resolution.

#### **Management and Performance Challenges: U.S. Agency for Global Media**

During my tenure, we have issued numerous reports on USAGM programs and operations. Many challenges we identified are similar to those affecting the Department, including information security and management, financial and property management, and grants management. For example, in our annual assessment of its information security program, we reported that USAGM has not fully developed and implemented an effective organization-wide program to identify, protect, detect, respond to, and recover from information security weaknesses using risk-based decisions.

Additionally, we recently issued a targeted inspection of USAGM's governance structure, which had undergone changes in response to prior OIG recommendations. Although we identified some persistent deficiencies related to internal controls and workforce management, we reported that the governance structure in place since 2015—led by a CEO supported by a bipartisan board that had transitioned to a more advisory role—significantly improved the executive direction of the agency.

## II. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES

Many of our recommendations are specific to particular posts or programs, but others address more systemic issues that have the potential to improve overall operations of the Department and USAGM. With respect to the Department, we believe that taking action on the following issues would go far in addressing the most important management challenges.

As to physical security, DS and OBO have overlapping responsibilities for crucial physical security issues. As described above, OIG recommended that the bureaus develop and implement formal, standardized processes to prioritize physical security needs. Follow-up work found that the Department made significant progress on this recommendation by developing and populating a physical security deficiencies database to collect all deficiencies at overseas posts. Nonetheless, it has not yet fully implemented a process to prioritize, fund, and plan for security upgrades in a systematic, deliberate way.

On the topic of IT, we have reported on deficiencies with the Department's risk management strategy for the past 5 years, and we continue to urge the Department to implement a strategy to identify, assess, respond to, and monitor risk. Although a Cyber Risk Office was established in the Bureau of Information Resource Management, we found little had been accomplished on a strategy as of the issuance of our annual information security program audit report in October 2018. An effective organization-wide approach would enable the Department to understand its current risk profile, identify opportunities to improve risk management, and communicate risk. As described previously, another IT issue of concern to OIG is the organizational placement of the CIO. We will continue to monitor whether further corrective action is required to ensure that the Department properly manages its information security risk.

Another longstanding issue relates to the tracking of foreign assistance. In a 2017 compliance follow-up review, we found that the Department did not comply with 2015 recommendations to implement a comprehensive plan for tracking and reporting foreign assistance funding. Without such a system, the Department cannot make data-driven decisions. We accordingly recommended that the Deputy Secretary issue clear requirements for the data needs of senior Department policymakers and prioritize the Department's efforts related to foreign assistance tracking and reporting. The Department took sufficient action to close this recommendation in April 2018. In FY 2020, however, we plan to follow up on how the Department has developed and implemented plans to address foreign assistance management, including legal and regulatory oversight needs and external reporting requirements.

To reiterate, I treat these issues as a priority in large part because they relate to the systemic concerns that we have identified as key management challenges. Attention to these issues—particularly the need for coordination and clear lines of authority—will go far in addressing specific deficiencies identified in individual reports.

## III. OIG INITIATIVES

Since I became Inspector General in FY 2014, we have undertaken a number of initiatives to make the most of our limited resources to further our oversight mission. Soon after my arrival, we began to issue management assistance reports and management alerts to alert senior Department leadership to

significant issues requiring immediate corrective action. These reports allow us to bring issues that we identify in the course of fieldwork to the Department's attention quickly, without waiting for the conclusion of our overall work.

In August 2016, OIG established its own IT network. Before we made this change, our IT infrastructure was part of the Department's unclassified network, which meant that vulnerabilities in that network directly affected us. Moreover, the contents of our unclassified network could be accessed easily by the Department, a situation that placed our independence at unnecessary risk and did not reflect best practices within the IG community.

More recently, to further enhance our commitment to transparency, we started posting monthly reports to our website. These reports identify our unclassified recommendations, which include the total number of open recommendations as well as the number of recommendations closed in the previous month. Additionally, for relevant congressional committees, we provide monthly information on unclassified, classified, and sensitive but unclassified recommendations.

We also continue to fulfill our responsibilities related to whistleblower protection. In addition to conducting outreach to educate Department and USAGM employees on the rights and protections available to whistleblowers, our whistleblower protection coordinator oversees investigations of allegations of retaliation filed by employees of contractors, subcontractors, grantees, subgrantees, and personal services contractors.

#### IV. IMPACT OF OIG'S WORK

Through our audits, evaluations, inspections, and investigations, OIG returns substantial value to the American public. In my first 5 years as Inspector General (FY 2014-FY 2018), we issued more than 600 reports and identified more than \$1.7 billion in potential monetary benefits, which amounts to a fourfold potential return to taxpayers for every dollar appropriated to OIG.

Additionally, OIG embraces its mission to protect people and information, although these efforts rarely result in a monetary return on investment. By helping the Department improve its security, OIG's work safeguards the lives of people who work in or visit our posts abroad. Our security work is a source of immense pride.

Since 2014, our investigative work has seen consistent and positive growth in administrative actions and criminal convictions associated with our cases. For example, one of our investigations resulted in the conviction and sentencing of a former Department employee to 26 years in prison for conspiring to produce more than 1,000 sexually explicit images and videos of minor children in Canada during a 2-year period. Another investigation led to a Department contract company agreeing to pay a nearly \$1 million administrative settlement to resolve allegations that it knowingly provided false information to the Department. Our special agents determined that the company did not comply with contractual obligations to ensure that U.S. embassy local guard force personnel were adequately trained to contract specifications. Finally, a joint investigation with the Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security resulted in the sentencing by a foreign court of three Department locally employed staff, along with three local foreign national citizens, to probation. The court also ordered restitution of \$460,000 to the Department, in addition to various fines. The individuals participated in a large-scale theft of approximately \$2.3 million in diesel fuel from Embassy Tbilisi, Georgia. In addition, 11 individuals were

debarred, and post management terminated six employees. At least two pensions were withheld, resulting in approximately \$46,500 in funds put to better use.

In recent years, we have also observed notable improvements on specific aspects of Department programs and operations. Regarding the physical security deficiencies database I mentioned previously, the Department has completed the majority of past-due physical security surveys and populated the deficiencies database, and the work done thus far has already made the database a useful tool. As I emphasized with respect to our priority recommendations, though, the Department must still implement a method for prioritizing those deficiencies, and this vital aspect of our recommendation should be addressed as soon as possible. The Department also developed an e-filing document management system for CORs to store contract files that had previously been kept in hard copy. Although the development of the e-filing system is an important step toward providing effective contract file inventory control, the Department has not fully deployed it and required its use. We recommended that the Department issue guidance mandating use of the system. In response to our audit and inspection of the armored vehicle program, which illustrated program management deficiencies and health and safety issues, the Department made a number of improvements to the program. For example, the Department established mandatory training for all overseas professional drivers and developed and implemented an armored vehicle program plan and hired a program manager. The Department is also working to develop a system to ensure that posts are reassessing the need for armored vehicles at posts and an oversight mechanism to ensure posts are performing the reassessment.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to again thank Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and other Members of the Subcommittee for inviting me to testify. I also want to emphasize that OIG's accomplishments are a credit to the talented and committed staff that I have had the privilege to lead, and I also want to thank them for their hard work. I take my statutory requirement to keep the Congress fully and currently informed seriously, and I appreciate your interest in our work.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I would like to begin with a request from my colleagues Chairman Engel and Chairman Cummings, from the Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees, respectively. They suggested, and, in fact, they asked me to follow up on their request, they asked you to conduct an inquiry into reports that career employees at the State Department have been subjected to improper retaliation, including for their perceived political views and ethnic identity.

I understand that your office has been carrying out that inquiry for well over a year now, and it is critical that facts about any prohibited personnel practices at the Department be brought to light so that perpetrators can be held to account and future retaliation can be deterred.

Mr. Linick, do you believe prohibited personnel practices were carried out against any of the State Department employees about whom my colleagues have raised concerns?

Mr. LINICK. Thank you for that question.

We actually have ongoing work addressing that very issue. We have two reports. We are looking at allegations of improper personnel practices in the Office of the Secretary and we are looking at improper personnel practices in the Office of International Relations.

The Office of International Relations—Organizations, excuse me—that report will be going to the Department in the next day or two. And the report involving the Office of the Secretary I anticipate will be going to the Department in August.

So that very issue that you just raised is part of our report. I am not prepared to report on the findings, but I have confidence that those findings will be published shortly after these reports are finished.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I appreciate that. But I wonder if you can share with us, in the context of the investigation, has the Department taken any steps to address these allegations? You say you are doing a report, but have there been any steps specifically taken to deter further retaliation?

Mr. LINICK. I can't comment on any of that until my report is published and we address those issues in the reports, and I am reluctant to talk about our findings until we have a final report.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I was also told that you have decided to delay releasing a piece of the report dealing with allegations against members of the Secretary's own senior staff. Is that correct?

Mr. LINICK. That is not correct. We started with one report involving allegations against individuals in international organizations and also allegations against the Secretary's office. We decided to split the reports up because we are basically done with the international organizations report. We wanted to get that out to the Department and get that published after the Department has a chance to look at it.

The other report, the allegations involving the Office of the Secretary, like I said, which I anticipate will be going to the Department in August, that is more complex. There is a parallel OSC investigation. And we want to make sure we get it right. We want it to be accurate and thorough. It is a top priority for our office.

And I am confident that once it is published you will see that its accurate, thorough, and complete.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now, one last question, because we have seen documents indicating that some Department officials use their personal rather than their government email accounts to discuss employees' political views and background. Did you seek these relevant records from both personal and government email accounts? Is that a valid concern?

Mr. LINICK. I can say that where appropriate we did actually collect private email as well.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Now, one of my concerns for many years has been the protection of people and facilities. And I know it has always been a top management challenge to the State Department.

You have identified systemic issues regarding physical security, specifically a lack of coordination between the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, both of which have responsibility for physical security.

So I am, as you know, very concerned about these issues. Have these two bureaus implemented your office's recommendations to address physical security-related deficiencies?

Mr. LINICK. So the relationship between Office of Diplomatic Security—Bureau of Diplomatic Security, DS, and OBO, has improved in terms of coordination.

I would say the most significant recommendation that has not been implemented which we believe would go far in addressing security concerns has to do with prioritizing physical security deficiencies around the world.

So in other words, the Department has a universe of physical deficiencies and they are prioritized based on risk, and then they can use their limited resources to figure out how they are going to aim their resources for purposes of planning the future. I think it would also give them a way to be more proactive as opposed to reactive when security deficiencies come up.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Can you just comment or—either. First I will start with Mr. Linick—on the hiring freeze and did it damage State and USAID's ability to meet diplomatic challenges and effectively manage foreign assistance programs around the world?

Mr. LINICK. So we have a report that is in its final stages on that very issue, on the impact of the hiring freeze. I believe you asked us to do that work. And we have looked at the impact of the hiring freeze both in 2017 and its impact currently. And so that report will be published soon. So I can't really talk about the findings of that particular report.

However, I can share with you anecdotal evidence from our inspections in which we have gathered information during our overseas work about the hiring freeze. And I can say that there is evidence that it has affected staffing, for example, in consular operations. It has affected staffing in Bureau of Diplomatic Security, which obviously affects our security if we have limited staff. It has affected our IT staff. And it is had a big impact on our eligible family members and our civil service. And as I understand it, we have not recovered yet even with our civil service staffing levels at this point.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now, specifically, has your office evaluated the continuing lack of senior leadership at State and its impact on policy formation and program execution? Can you just share with us briefly your findings on that?

Mr. LINICK. Absolutely. We haven't done a sort of a systematic look at the impact of vacancies at the senior levels, so we don't have a report or a body of work in one place on that.

However, as I mentioned before, we do inspections all over the world. We look at executive direction and leadership. And I would say the results are mixed. In the spring we did 13 inspections and 5 of which were posts without ambassadors. And in some instances where we don't have leadership, we have found that it has affected the morale, it has affected relationships with the host government. We had one situation where particular a *chargé*, acting ambassador, could not meet with the foreign minister because of the temporary status of the individual. And it has also impacted strategic planning.

And what complicates things is when these vacancies are filled by folks who are very well intentioned, but who are wearing dual hats, who are perhaps management officers who are doing the work of DCMs and things like that. Perhaps they don't have the experience and so forth. So that has been a problem.

On the other hand, we have found a number of posts where acting leadership is doing just fine and they are doing a good job. So in sum I would say it is mixed.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Before I turn it over to Mr. Rogers, if you could just further, on the first case studies where there are real problems, what do you do about it? Does anyone care at the White House? Who do you report to? And do they respond or do they say, "Okay, it is fine that it is not operating effectively"?

Mr. LINICK. Well, as to the first issue, we actually write our findings in a report. All of this is public.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Who gets it?

Mr. LINICK. Congress, the American public, and the Department, the Secretary of State.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Anybody in the White House that you all respond to? The Secretary of State should be concerned about this, no?

Mr. LINICK. We don't report to the White House. We report to the Congress and to the Secretary of State. And we—

The CHAIRWOMAN. You do report to the Secretary of State?

Mr. LINICK. We do, by law.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Has there been any feedback?

Mr. LINICK. Well, we get feedback on our findings. The Department comments on them. Sometimes they do take action. Sometimes they have removed leaders in those spots. And they are aware of and we get frequent feedback from the Department on our findings.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am going to turn to Mr. Rogers, but if we have time, I would like to explore that further. If you are doing a careful analysis and you are getting feedback from the field, specifically the kind of incidents you spoke about, and you don't get any concern or any direct change, seems to me we have a real problem here.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. It has long been the focus, Mr. Linick, in your office on the oversight of contracts, grants, and foreign assistance. As the Department engages in very complex acquisitions to procure services and supplies, the Department continues to face challenges in properly overseeing contractor performance. Oversight personnel must monitor and document performance, confirm that work is conducted in accordance with the terms of the contract, hold contractors accountable for nonperformance, and ensure that costs are effectively contained.

In fiscal year 2018 Department obligations included \$15 billion for contracted services and \$15 billion in grants and fixed charges. Can you tell me that it is being properly overseen? Is it your assessment that at the root of many of the deficiencies described in your most recent top management report are inexperienced, untrained oversight personnel, staff rotations that promote inefficiency, and complex programs and contracts that simply require more oversight?

Mr. LINICK. That is correct. This has been a persistent issue with the Department for many years. At the root of it I think it is a cultural issue. They are not really focused on program management, they are focused on diplomacy, and there is far too much program and far too little oversight. And this results in a lack of sustained focus on experienced staff and getting contracting personnel properly trained up.

There are structural issues in the Department as well. We have a mix of people who are doing contract oversight, including foreign service officers, who are moving from post to post, so there is lack of consistency in contract oversight.

One of the biggest recommendations in this area that we have made is the Department needs an electronic inventory system so that our contracting officer representatives who are in far-flung places can be overseen by contracting officers at headquarters in Washington, and that still hasn't happened.

At the root of this, in my estimation, is they really need to professionalize the contracting personnel at the State Department, there needs to be a job series for contracting officers, contracting officer representatives, and the like.

So it is a problem, and I think that improvements are at the margins.

Mr. ROGERS. Would you do a paper for us on that topic that you just covered? Can you prepare for us a summary of the problem that we are discussing here and what we can do to fix it?

Mr. LINICK. I would be happy to work with your staff in coming up with a scope of a paper like that. That would be fine.

Mr. ROGERS. I thank you for that. We look forward to hearing from you.

Now, the President's budget request for the Department, and in fact in your office, suggests quite a substantial cut in your funding levels. What do you say about that?

Mr. LINICK. Well, we requested \$90.8 million, which is what our budget was last year, and we received \$88.8 million. So we had a \$2 million decrease.

We need resources. We have worldwide coverage. We have huge travel costs. We have mandatory inspections that we have to do all over the world. We have whistleblower obligations and reporting requirements. We have many requests from Congress to do work and everybody wants their work done quickly.

And we also have our own separate IT network, and we need money for that. So we asked for money for that.

We are independent from the Department. We became independent just a few years ago. So we need the resources.

Mr. ROGERS. If later this year the administration acts on their proposal to draw down State Department and AID personnel in Afghanistan, with parallel reductions in U.S. civilian assistance, how would that impact your ongoing oversight mission?

Mr. LINICK. Well, we think that there is even more risk with a drawdown. We have done work on this in the past—more risk of fraud, waste and abuse. We have done work on this in the past when there was a drawdown back in 2013 in Iraq and we found that the drawdown of personnel was not done in accordance with guidelines and so forth and we found \$193 million in waste.

So I would argue that oversight is even more critical if there is a drawdown, and we are insisting that we continue to maintain our current staff both in Afghanistan and Iraq for that purpose. And to the extent that there is a drawdown, we do plan on auditing that, given the history of issues that we have seen in the past.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Just a quick comment before I turn to Mr. Price. We have been in Afghanistan 17 years. Is that correct?

Mr. LINICK. It sounds about right.

The CHAIRWOMAN. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out that if you suddenly withdraw there would be problems. And we have recently read of girls schools being blown up.

So I am just wondering, who is listening to you with regard to drawdown? Is your input taken seriously by the Secretary of State or are they just going about their business?

Mr. LINICK. Well, I can tell you that I have talked about this issue of drawdown and the perils of a quick drawdown without a systematic look with both the Deputy Secretary of State and the Under Secretary for Management. And I have actually sent letters to the U.S. Ambassador in Afghanistan, John Bass, and I have also sent a letter to the Chargé, Joey Hood, in Iraq warning them of the dangers, at least from a fraud, waste, abuse perspective, of a drawdown that doesn't take into consideration cost optimization, foreign policy priorities, and so forth.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Have you gotten any response?

Mr. LINICK. They acknowledge—they have acknowledged receipt of the information and they appear to understand the implications.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Has there been any change in the plans as a result of your thoughtful presentation?

Mr. LINICK. I don't know. I haven't looked at it, so it would be unfair for me to say yes or no. But I haven't—

The CHAIRWOMAN. Why wouldn't you look at it? I would think that you have an incredibly important responsibility. And if you can document specific problems with the drawdown that is being pro-

posed, I would think you have responsibility to scream from the rafters to the Secretary of State and to whomever is listening.

Mr. LINICK. Well, we do plan on looking at the drawdown. What we don't want to do is get involved—

The CHAIRWOMAN. Who is looking at the drawdown?

Mr. LINICK. OIG, State OIG will be looking at the draw down once it is done. In other words, we will be auditing it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Oh, please. So if you are presenting information delineating the risks of specific drawdowns, you are going to wait until after it is done and you are going to assess the damage? I am puzzled by that.

Mr. LINICK. Well, we have, first of all, we haven't seen plans for a drawdown, number one. And we don't want to get involved in the policy issues. We have warned the Department that a drawdown needs to be done carefully to avoid fraud, waste, and abuse. So they understand. We have provided them with our past work on this. So we have a track record.

So everybody sort of knows what is at stake here. At the end of the day, we can't get involved in the drawdown and say you can't do this or you can't do that, because that would be beyond our role as an Office of Inspector General. But I believe that we have acted responsibly by being very proactive in trying to prevent the fraud before it occurs.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Before I turn to Mr. Price, I like to personally request, and I certainly would want to share it with this committee, your memos regarding concerns about drawdowns.

Mr. LINICK. Absolutely.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And any response that you have gotten from the Secretary of State or nonresponse that you have gotten from the Secretary of State.

Mr. LINICK. We would be happy to provide them.

The CHAIRWOMAN. For those who have been to Afghanistan and been very involved, this is problematic, which is an understatement.

Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I would like to turn to Ms. Calvaresi Barr with a related question which has to do with the unusually wide gap that has opened up in this administration between congressional intent, as expressed in the appropriation of funds, and what is actually carried out on the ground.

And I do have some general—I do have some curiosity about the extent to which that represents a red flag for you and would call for some analysis when we are talking about funds being just cut off in the middle of the year; or, for that matter, reports about funds moving out very slowly and in ways that really frustrate congressional intent.

But let me turn directly to the cutoffs. These cutoffs—let's just focus on the West Bank, Gaza cutoff and Triangle countries of Central America cutoff, let's focus on those.

Ostensibly these cutoffs of funds in the middle of the fiscal year are linked to foreign assistance reviews, very broad reviews, not about specific programs, but about whole countries. And they have been accompanied with rhetoric that suggests a punitive intent.

You know, the Central American countries aren't doing enough to stop the flow of migrants and so we cut off the funds designed to help them prevent the flow of migrants. I am not saying it makes sense, I am just saying it suggests a punitive intent.

The same with the Palestinian aid. These people supposedly aren't cooperating satisfactorily in a process that has totally marginalized them.

So there is a punitive intent that is suggested. There is this ostensible tie to a review. I want to ask you about that. There was a review, as I understand, the Trump administration undertook a review of assistance to South Sudan, but the funding continued during that review. And I wonder what the normal practice is, first of all, how narrowly focused these reviews normally are and if they usually involve a total cutoff of funds.

And then I want to, if we have time, want to get into the question of what does this kind of abrupt cutoff do to the way these programs work or don't work on the ground.

But if it you could answer me about the cutoffs and the line, the ostensible link to reviews, and what your office has to say about this to the extent to which you have looked at it or would intend to.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Thank you very much for that question. And I will start by saying that policy decisions that are made, as Steve indicated, are something that the IG comes at from an oversight perspective and we stay clear of commenting on sort of policy decisions. But what we need to do as an IG, as an effective, independent IG, is to look at the effect of those decisions, the effect of those drawdowns.

I want to start with where you ended on your question, which is—

Mr. PRICE. Before you do that, I do want you to talk about that and I appreciate that, and I don't expect you to comment on my comments about the rhetorical overlay here, but the process is a legitimate question. And I am asking you about the process and what the normal process is and the ostensible tying of a total cutoff across a whole region or across a whole country to some kind of broad review. I mean, what is the process here?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. So decisions are oftentimes made. Sometimes these decisions are made and they take the diplomats overseas and other mission folks overseas by surprise.

As we saw, Steve and I, along with the DOD IG, travel into theater quite a bit, and our lead IG construct, and when we met with diplomats as well as senior career folks, both at State, DOD, and USAID, you could see that they were struggling to figure out how to adjust to the cuts that were coming in.

In the case of USAID, I have seen the impact that it has on the implementer community. USAID relies on implementers oftentimes to do its work, particularly in those tough environments. And that type of "one day we are on, one day we are off" creates very chaotic operations in terms of what are we supposed to do next.

So what you see happen on the ground is you see, whether it be State, DOD, or USAID, looking at what the directive is, what the cut is, and coming up with scenarios about how they will manage to that.

On your questions with regard to West Bank, Gaza, the Northern Triangle countries, and South Sudan, we have ongoing work in those areas. In West Bank and Gaza, obviously key consideration is all the money that goes into conflict mitigation, risk mitigation, peacekeeping kind of efforts, and we have looked at over 100 grants there that were in place for that.

That program will be affected by decisions about funding cuts. Our job, and we are looking at what is the impact of those decisions on those programs. In my opening statement I talk about the importance of and the Administrator talks about the importance of getting to a point where there is an end for the need for foreign assistance.

So what that means is there has to be consistency, there has to be sustainability, there has to be local capacity built up. If program decisions go on ebb and flow and ebb and flow, it really impedes the ability to get to that sustainable end for a need for foreign assistance.

So we are on it. We are looking at the close down of West Bank Gaza funding, looking at that process there.

For the Northern Triangle countries, we have staff in San Salvador. We have been very, very concerned with the CARSI initiative, which is the security initiative, given the flow, migration, and the real security risks that work there. We are looking at the impact of those programs on what that means for that entire region.

We are also very, very concerned about the program money getting into nefarious hands. Therefore we have many of our agents out conducting fraud awareness briefings, trying to identify where the money is going, and making sure, to many of the points made earlier, that there are strong procurement, strong award protections in money that flows. At USAID alone \$17.6 billion goes into awards per year. We have got to get this right.

So the final point that I would make is that oftentimes while there is a cut in funding or there is proposals for cuts in fundings, some of these programs have long pipelines. They have money that is still in them and that the programs will continue to go on. That is why we keep our eye in that area. Those funding cuts doesn't mean OIG out, it means OIG in even more.

So we are on the programs in those regions. We are going to look at the effect of any type of drawdown, we will look at the pipeline of funds, and hope to assess have we lost the ground that our good investment up to this point has provided. And it goes to my top management challenge about sustainability.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you.

I think what we have heard is very important, Madam Chairwoman, about the kind of analysis that needs to be done, of course of these programs effectiveness in general, but the effects of draconian cuts of the sort that have been made, just in the middle of the fiscal year all the money stops. Of course it doesn't immediately stop on the ground. But our understanding is that it is pretty well having a detrimental effect now in both in Central American situation and the West Bank, Gaza situation.

I think we have discovered on this committee that we don't have perhaps as many options as we thought we did when this kind cut comes down in the middle of the fiscal year.

The chairwoman, to her credit, has written our bills for next year in a much tighter way, in a way that will not permit the administration to be as fast and loose with this funding as they have been. But in the near term, not so clear, not so clear what our options are.

But your assessment is extremely important to us at this moment as we contemplate this and also go forward.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And I know this issue is of great concern to members on both sides, and so we will continue the discussion.

Mrs. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you both for being here.

And Inspector General Calvaresi Barr, I am going to read directly from your testimony before I get to my question.

“Our work continues to show that USAID’s upfront analyses of multimillion dollar projects fall short of fully assessing beneficiary countries’ internal controls, environmental threats, and ability to strengthen local skills and secure public- or private-sector commitment to sustain U.S. efforts. In addition, we identified gaps in USAID’s ongoing monitoring and evaluation that limit its ability to apply past lessons to better ensure sustainability of future development efforts.”

To the chairwoman’s comments earlier about Afghanistan, I have had the privilege of going with my colleague Susan Davis from California on a bipartisan women’s CODEL, now eight times, around Mother’s Day. What is unique about this codel is not only do we spend time with our troops and encourage them and be with them and hear about their challenges, but also what is unique about this codel is that we get to spend a lot of time with Afghan women and folks from USAID that are administering programs.

My concern is that the purpose of the initiative which has been in place since 2014 to promote women in the Afghan economy, to provide a new generation of Afghan women with leadership skills to make contributions to their government, society, economy, and I enthusiastically support the mission of these programs, but what I am concerned about is the metrics by which we are assessing the success of these programs.

So it is one thing to say, Madam Chairwoman, that we have enrolled X number of women in school. It is another thing to say, okay, well, where are they now? How are they contributing to the Afghan economy? What are the reasons that they—if we have a job placement program and these women are able to either work in security forces and be trained effectively or have a job, a small business startup, whatever it may be, if they are removed from the workforce, what are the reasons why?

If an Afghan girl is in a school and she is given the opportunity for an education, what happens to her next?

And do we have the appropriate metrics in place—and I don’t know that we do—to assess the contributions and the success of these women or the instances in which they were unable to continue either in their education efforts or in their support of the economy?

So if you would address that. I know that is a very specific question to Afghanistan. I think you could apply it around the world,

although the challenges are different based on what country we are talking about.

But I have real concerns as a member of this committee as to how we are assessing outcomes as opposed to just enrollment. If that is a real simplification, I understand. But if you could address that for me, I would really appreciate it.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Sure. Thank you very much.

Let me begin by saying that our office has covered the waterfront of work from both an audit perspective and an investigations perspective in Afghanistan. If I could start just by saying a little bit about that.

We have looked at—and it gets to the heart of your question about metrics—monitoring and evaluation, whether it was on the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, whether it is on the New Development Partnership work that they have that you have to prove that you have done what you have done in order to receive funding for program sustainability going forward, and we continue to look at that.

We found significant deficiencies in the ability to measure, the ability to monitor, and really show the types of outcomes that you are talking about that should be achieved.

On the investigations side of the house in Afghanistan, these are challenging environments to work in and the programming does cut across the gamut, right, of what populations like this are in need of. I can tell you, our investigations work in Afghanistan has uncovered corruption and fraud to such a great scale just in the public utility power industry. Our work resulted in the removal of the Ministry of Economy and the CEO of that public utility company.

Our work on AUAF with the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction has pointed to weak systems to be a good recipient of U.S. taxpayer money which has been invested for a long time there resulted in an administrative agreement to make sure AUAF gets its house in order.

With all of that said, we look at those programs, we look at other programs regarding health, education, women's empowerment going forward. And I think you are right when you say, and we read this in the press oftentimes and we find it in our reports when we do it, when they talk about success there could be disagreements on the measure, how successful or how bad, and we sort of see it all over the map.

So it definitely goes to the heart of needing to have for these programs right up front what is important, what is the goal of the program, what is it that we are trying to measure. If these programs are about building capacity and sustainability, we don't just look at the number of women that were educated, we go beyond that. We look at how has that resulted in a different state of living for them, job opportunities for them, security, a whole range of things, and we found that those metrics are often missing.

The Administrator has, I want to get this point in, has recognized the importance of metrics, he is very metrics driven, and you are seeing now in many of the programs that are being rolled out on his journey to self-reliance, he makes sure—he wants to make sure that those metrics are established correctly in the first place.

Mrs. ROBY. And I appreciate that.

And, Madam Chair, if I may, I would appreciate any detailed information that you can provide specific to programs for Afghan women and girls. And I want to see the good, the bad, and the ugly, anything specific that you can drill down there for me. I would appreciate that.

But, Madam Chairwoman, I would just say, I express your concerns on an abrupt drawdown. And I think part of what we are hearing right now is the ability to assess a lot of these dollars that are being spent on behalf of Afghan women and girls has to do with the security situation and our ability to get to certain parts of the country where it is volatile.

We have made tremendous gains, but it is extraordinarily fragile. And so it is very important that as these dollars are being implemented, that this committee takes a keen interest on these metrics and the success, not just of who is being enrolled and how many are being enrolled, but following those women and those girls throughout their contribution to the country.

So thank you very much, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. And I look forward to working with you and following up. Thank you.

Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Rogers, for holding this hearing.

I wanted to ask Mr. Linick a question. Just yesterday our subcommittee held a hearing in which one of the witnesses was John Lansing, CEO of USAGM, who testified that the purpose of Voice of America and other USAGM programming is to provide those who live under corrupt and nondemocratic regimes access to unbiased and accurate reporting. These programs are critical to our soft power all around the world, but have a very important role to play in restricted countries like Russia, Iran and Cuba.

USAGM has proven to be riddled with corruption and grift. A New York Times article just on Monday reported that a high ranking adviser had been found guilty of stealing \$37,000. The same report noted that reporters have accepted bribes from foreign officials and have faked new stories. This undermines the whole purpose of USAGM.

I wanted to know if your office will be investigating these issues. Have you looked into them? And what underlying management concerns do you think exist in USAGM that might contribute to such negligence?

Mr. LINICK. Thank you for the question.

The individual you mentioned who stole \$37,000, that was our investigation, it was an OIG investigation, and we presented it to DOJ who ultimately prosecuted that individual, the chief strategy officer.

We oversee USAGM and through that Federal entities who receive money, as well the grantees, as well as the language services. So we are involved in overseeing USAGM in a very broad sense. We oversee them through inspection—excuse me—through investigations, through audits.

On USAGM, we have focused on governance and resource management, as well as misconduct, as I previously indicated. And with respect to USAGM, since that was the focus of your question, in terms of resource management we have found a lot of issues over the years in our management challenges. We have identified that IT has been ineffective, their information system, they have deficiencies in all the major domains that we look at. We found problems with property and accounting and hiring practices. So they span the gamut of issues.

I will say on the governance front, though, we did a report in 2014 where we looked at the board. We found that the structure, the then structure, was dysfunctional. It was a part-time board. At the time there were chronic vacancies, there was no CEO managing day-to-day operations, and there were perceptions of favoritism because folks who were on the board were also sitting on some of the grantees boards, and then there was a perception that they steering their favorite grants to the grantees.

Mr. LINICK. Since then we made a number of recommendations. We recommended that there be a full-time CEO managing day-to-day operations. There has been a law that since passed for a presidentially appointed CEO and an advisory board. We did assess that recently, and we did find that they are on the right track.

In terms of governance, we found that the board was cohesive and collaborative, that they have eliminated the perceptions of favoritism because all of the board members now sit on all of the grantees, so they weren't cherry-picking.

We found there was increased use of digitization and media, social media, YouTube, things like that, and the editorial independence of the grantees and the Federal entities were being respected.

So that is sort of a big—an overview of our work over the last 5, 6 years.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. I appreciate all that information. I would just ask that your office stay on top of this. Yesterday, when we asked him, he didn't, to my memory, mention any of this. He mentioned reshifting or improvement in personnel allocations, for example, but didn't really mention IT, accounting, or even board issues specifically. So I would look forward to continuing to look into this.

My second question, if I have some extra time, is for Inspector General Calvaresi Barr.

Over the last 2 years, your office has investigated failures in the contract administered by USAID and implemented by Chemonics. This contract, as you know, was intended to support the Global Health Supply Chain, is worth \$9.5 billion, and was the largest contract ever awarded by USAID.

And, according to an October 2018 advisory published by your office, this contract experienced major delays in the delivery of health commodities and was exposed to vulnerabilities related to commodity tracking, supply chain data access, reporting, commodity inventory access, labeling, and other issues.

At the time of the memo's publication, your office was encouraged by increased engagement between the bureau and Chemonics. So I wanted to find out what types of safeguards might be in place

to ensure that this doesn't happen again. Do you believe that the aggressive oversight required over contracts of this size is possible?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Yes. Thank you. I thank you for that question. This is a very, very large contract at \$9.5 billion and being an IDIQ at that.

Let me begin by pointing to some of the risks that we found in that realm of that contract and the work, which is on the Global Health Supply Chain in Africa. There we have uncovered a number of risks with regard to the logistics as we know that is happening with those commodities in Africa, the storage, the facilities of those, the recordkeeping of those.

Our work has resulted in, as a result of weaknesses in the Global Health Supply Chain, has resulted in 41 arrests, 30 indictments, and has prompted the Global Health Bureau to have a third-party monitor overseeing the programming for health supply commodities within Africa. Our work spanned eight countries.

So that raised an eyebrow, right? The investigation's work points to the effect of something gone wrong. That is the effect. Now my office is engaged in trying to figure out, why is that happening? What are the root causes of it?

So you may be pleased to hear that we are looking at—we are doing two audits going forward. One is we are looking back at the contract and how it was awarded. So that is the first audit.

The second audit that we are doing is, because of those weaknesses that we have uncovered in the supply chain, we are following up to look at, how have those weaknesses been addressed? What is being done different from USAID's perspective in terms of its oversight of the contract and that work?

But we also have to look to, and it gets to an issue we discussed earlier about capacity of some of these host countries. So I don't want to paint the picture that all these problems that we found necessarily rely—or lie with Chemonics. But when you are transferring funds and supplies that are very, very needy and very valuable, particularly in Third World countries, you need to make sure that the host government has the capacity to receive them, to do their own inventory controls, has strong internal controls.

So when we look at this and we dissect this, we are going to look at the contract and how it was awarded, because we, too, have concerns about award management at USAID, and we are going to peel that onion back.

But secondly we are going to look at the weaknesses that we found through our investigations, which are eight countries, and again, those numbers are 41 arrests, 30 indictments, and there is more that go on as a result of that. We are going to look at how well those weaknesses are being addressed in terms of local capacity, the implementer's responsibility, as well as USAID's effectiveness at overseeing those.

Ms. MENG. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. We look forward to your report, and thank you for addressing the issue.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate your willingness to hold this important hearing.

Thank you for joining us.

I am going to make some broad comments that can apply, have multiple levels of application. I hope my colleagues will agree.

I think these hearings really ought to start with some type of schematic, map, diagram of your overall authorities drilled down into agency and programmatic levels. Now, at USAID and State, that might fill this wall over here, but it will make it—take these important discussions, but can tend to be abstract or so narrow that they are not generalizable to the bigger principles that we ultimately have to legislate around, which are policy perspectives, mission ideals.

And in that regard, I want to ask you, Ms. Calvaresi Barr, regarding two questions. Regarding the reform plans that are underway at USAID, one particular point is this, that there is an attempt to implement a new risk management approach that will look at the most significant impact, what programs have the most significant impact. In other words, how well foreign assistance actually works under certain scenarios, what are the templates. That, to me, is the most important question here.

Secondly, I want to turn to the migration of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to the new International Development Finance Corporation and hear your perspective on how that is going, with particularly one question—and I think, Madam Chair, at an earlier hearing you tasked me with this, and I think it is very important: the equity investment question that is developing at the International Finance Development Corporation, how we are going to leverage our limited funds potentially into equity investments with private sector partner to achieve the very goals of the earlier OPIC mission in a more substantial way.

Are you familiar with what I am talking about there?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. I am.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. Good.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Okay. All right. Thank you.

Let me begin with sort of enterprise risk management and the importance of that, and it has a couple of different legs to that stool. So when you think about risk management, you have to think about when you are investing in these countries, and for the most part where USAID space is. We are going to be investing in countries that we know might not have the strongest foundation from a financial, internal control, procurement, or legal perspective.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So we tend to measure outcomes by how much money we have spent and what our intention is.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Yes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I recognize what you are saying, that the risk factors are compounded given the nature of certain—

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Yes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY [continuing]. Weaknesses of systems in other places. It is the very point of the assistance in the first place. So we have to tolerate in a nontraditional sense—

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Absolutely.

Mr. FORTENBERRY [continuing]. A different type of risk profile.

But the question is, what really works and is sustainable over the long term?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. So I think what—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. And then can be lifted as a template elsewhere.

I am sorry to keep giving you speeches, but the reality is we direct country by country different types of things, and so the job is made all the harder to find a standardization of template that actually works, but I thought that ought to be the goal.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Yes.

So, again, starting with the point of recognizing the environment that you are working in, you have to factor that in when you are talking about, so what are we getting out of this, right? You have to factor in, these are the problems, and you have to plan accordingly. What are the risks that mitigate those? That is what the Administrator is focusing on now.

Where there are successful models, and if I can sort of segue to your second question on OPIC and the DFC going forward, I think there is a general recognition, and it is part of the USAID's look forward, that leveraging private capital for foreign assistance is something that needs to be done and needs to be part of the equation. Not just the U.S. coming in, putting money in, because we oftentimes find, and our work has found, as soon as we leave, then what happens? You know, long afterwards those investments go down.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. If I could interrupt you. I think we really need to be careful with our language. Foreign capital investments. That implies—that has certain implications to it that sound very remote from the poorest of the poor, and yet it is not if we talk in the right types of language, that using the mechanisms of lending and capital, even on a micro scale, actually can be very empowering to people who are in very vulnerable circumstances and lend itself to long-term sustainability versus just writing a check year after year.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Yes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So I am just giving a little note of caution because the language of Western liberal economics in speaking of these abstract ideas of capital don't necessarily relate to the mission structure of what we are trying to do through USAID to help persons in very vulnerable circumstances.

So there is a task here—this is way beyond you, but you have got me talking now—there is a task here to update vocabulary as well when we talk in terms of both the implementation as well as the review of this. So just a little note of caution.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Okay. No, that is fine. And I was referring to the DFC and the establishment of the DFC as a way to sort of make us a player in that global platform, to leverage that capital for these organizations going forward. Let me get to that specifically because I know that you are interested in that.

We have done two audits now with regard to OPIC as it stands now. We looked at OPIC's goals and successes in producing energy in that sector in Chile. As a result of that, we found that there were problems with this, not only in the policies and the processes, but they weren't reaching the end goals that they had hoped to through that programming.

Our auditors then said: Why is that? What is getting in the way? Why aren't they doing this in Chile?

As a result of our deeper dive into it, we found systemic issues with OPIC's internal controls. And you look at what the FAR calls for, some of the most basic things were not in place. We had a number of recommendations, I think 16 to be exact. Two have been closed so far. So we have a ways to go.

We just released a report actually today where at the request of this committee looked at OPIC's compliance with appropriations requirements, and that report essentially found the same thing that we noted in the Chile look, which is that the internal controls need to be fixed. And if I might say, before we go to the DFC model, those are issues that should be worked on now before the transition occurs.

[The information follows:]

- In fact, the audit report made 16 recommendations. All recommendations were open as of July 11, 2019, but OIG had received and was evaluating a request from OPIC to close two of them (recommendations 12 and 13).

As of July 18, the two recommendations (recommendations 12 and 13) have been closed and 14 of the 16 recommendations remain open.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. So that is helpful. But I think it needs to lend itself again to the sense of mission of what we are trying to do here with the Development Finance Corporation in terms of a new mechanism of leveraging moneys that are out there that actually will create the outcomes we are achieving potentially with less cost and better penetration and better continuity for the long term.

So I am asking you to do something that may be beyond the mission of your own organization, is to not look at this in terms of punitive, problematic notations that are found in an audit, but saying, okay, these are the challenges that we need to build into the program as it transitions to something else based upon learned experience.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. I think we share the same concern and I think we are sharing the same language. DFC, we want to see that succeed. Any system that is in place, it goes to our top management challenge four, that has fundamentally flawed systems, such as internal controls, OPIC will be part of the DFC, that needs to be remedied.

So that success and that hope that is there for the DFC can be addressed. So these aren't minor issues, these are systemic issues that, quite frankly, are substantial and need to be addressed.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Chair, there is not a member that has gone to visit Africa that doesn't come back and say: China is everywhere. What are we doing? And here is a big part of the answer.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And they are here with their own people.

Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Great questions. And thank you for covering that piece.

Thank you both for being here.

I have spent the majority of my life in public service addressing issues of public corruption at many levels, from the local, State, and now at the Federal level. And as you both know, there are

many layers associated with that, and not all of it includes money exchanges. Some of it comes in different forms.

I would like to follow up on Chairwoman Lowey's question on your investigation into political retributions. The State Department strongly supported the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, known as CICIG, since it began operations in 2007. However, between 2017 and 2018, the Department's policy changed. It is unfortunate. It pushed for reform, CICIG, and did not object when the Government of Guatemala took a number of aggressive actions against the commission and its staff.

Did you look into what role political appointees at the Bureau of International Organizations, including Mari Stull, played in changing the Department's policy toward CICIG?

Mr. LINICK. No, we haven't looked at that issue. We may have received an inquiry about CICIG some time ago and I would have to get back to you, but that particular question we did not look into.

Mrs. TORRES. I hope that you will look into it in the future. CICIG is in the process of being completely shut down. It will be at the end of this month. It is not surprising to me that we have so many people from Guatemala fleeing at many different levels. Not only have Department employees worked against improving conditions there that I think have resulted in the number of more migrants fleeing the area in our southern border.

So I hope that I can follow up with you, whether it is here, in a private meeting, in a classified briefing, but I think it is something that we need to seriously look at.

My other question it relates to the lines, blurring the lines of political corruption. I understand that Secretary Pompeo has been traveling quite a bit to the Midwest, including to Kansas. I also understand that he may be considering a run for a Senate seat in Kansas. I am concerned that the Secretary may be using official resources for political purposes, which would not only constitute a possible Hatch Act violation, but also would fall within the Inspector General's mandate to investigate waste, fraud, and abuse. Have you looked into the Secretary's travel to Kansas?

Mr. LINICK. We have not. We will look into any credible allegations of misconduct, and happy to work with your staff if you have information about that.

Mrs. TORRES. If someone is looking to run for a political office and specifically taking certain trips to boost their profile within that State, I think that that is something that you ought to be concerned, since this is your area that you oversee.

I am a fan of USAID. I have been in the trenches with them throughout the Western Hemisphere. I am very concerned about what is happening with the personnel. They are understaffed. They are stressed. They have very little resources.

As it relates to the Northern Triangle, cutting off humanitarian assistance with partners that they have worked with in the region for several years now, I am very concerned about what will happen to those programs and how that will continue to impact our crisis at our southern border.

So I hope that you will continue to pay special attention to that, and you will come back to our committee with some real ways that we can address that for the future.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. As I mentioned, we have staff in Salvador and both on the audit side and the investigation side of the house. We continue to monitor the programs that are being funded in that region and particularly concerned about the security aspects of this. And as long as the programs are continuing and up and running, there is always a place for the IG's office. So we are there in full force.

Mrs. TORRES. My glass is always half full, and as it relates to El Salvador, they have a new President who seems to really be taking the issues of public corruption there seriously. He seems to want to work with everyone who is able and willing to help him address those issues, the issues of security within the region. I hope that we don't let this opportunity go to waste. I think that if we had been a little bit more willing to assist Morales might have not gone sideways in Guatemala as he did.

So, with that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am going to turn to Mr. Rogers, but I just wanted to follow up with Mrs. Torres' comments, because it seems to me throughout the course of this hearing you are doing the reports. The question is, what is the executive branch, what is the Secretary of State doing? Is there any response? Does anyone care?

And this is the challenge for all of us. You are doing the reports. We are getting the information. My colleagues mentioned West Bank and Gaza. We see dozens of examples where there aren't people in responsible positions who can make these changes.

So I am going to turn to Mr. Rogers now, but I do hope that we can follow up and make sure that this isn't just a hearing telling us that you are doing your job. But the question is, who are you reporting to and what are they doing about it?

Mr. Rogers.

Mrs. TORRES. Madam Chair, can I interrupt for a minute and ask for unanimous consent to enter two articles to the record that specifically relate to the questions that I was asking?

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. Of course. So be it.

[The information follows:]

## POMPEO'S DOMESTIC TRAVEL RAISES POLITICAL QUESTIONS

By Donald K. Sherman

March 8, 2019

<https://www.citizensforethics.org/pompeos-domestic-travel-raises-political-questions/>

Earlier this week, *USA Today* published a wide ranging interview with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo where, in addition to discussing President Trump's failed summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, Pompeo announced a series of domestic trips he is taking to potential battleground states in the 2020 election cycle: Iowa, Kansas and Texas.

Despite the obvious political significance of these states and the State Department's focus on foreign diplomacy, Secretary Pompeo "insisted" that his domestic travel plans were "not political or in any way intended to help bolster Trump's 2020 reelection campaign." Of course, as a federal official, Pompeo has to say that, because the Hatch Act bars him from using government resources and taking official travel to support political candidates like President Trump. Still, based on the Trump administration's prior practice, observers are right to be skeptical of Secretary Pompeo's domestic tour.

Last August, two senior White House aides revealed in a call with reporters that numerous "official" government events attended by senior administration officials were part of a coordinated effort "to help Republicans in the coming midterm elections." According to the White House staffers, the officials deployed to "purple" congressional districts included White House Senior Advisor and First Daughter Ivanka Trump, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, and then-Acting Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler. The aides also revealed that senior Trump administration officials had done 35 events in August alone with or affecting "targeted" House members including John Katko and Mike Kelly who won narrow reelection bids in November. In New York, for example, Secretary Perry toured a nuclear power plant with Rep. Katko and in Pittsburgh, Ivanka Trump visited the city's Robotics Row with Rep. Kelly. The visits were purportedly official government trips paid for using government funds, despite the fact that the true motive for them was admittedly political.

The Hatch Act prohibits executive branch employees, except the President and the Vice President, from "us[ing] his official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election." In cases involving mixed travel – travel that includes both official and political events during the same trip – the law requires that costs be properly apportioned between the federal government and the relevant political organization to ensure the government is reimbursed for taxpayer funds expended for political events. Following reports about the White House coordinating official travel to support political candidates, CREW, requested a review of the administration's compliance with the law. The agency tasked with enforcing the Hatch Act, the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), promptly opened investigative files into the conduct of Secretary Carson, Secretary Perry, Acting Administrator Wheeler and Ms. Trump. In the weeks following our complaint, OSC also found cause to launch additional inquiries into the Department of Labor, the Department of the Interior, and the Small Business Administration. All seven of these investigations remain ongoing.

In February 2018, President Donald Trump officially became a candidate for reelection for purposes of the Hatch Act. Since then, several White House officials have been found in violation of the statute for using federal resources to support his reelection efforts. In addition, the Trump White House has explicitly sought to deploy cabinet secretaries and other senior administration officials to bolster the campaigns of vulnerable Republicans in the 2018 midterm elections. To date, Secretary Pompeo and the State Department have not been implicated in any of those efforts, but the Secretary has also not shied away from political events such as the 2018 Value Voters Summit where he gave extensive remarks.

In an interview this month, Secretary Pompeo said it was “ridiculous” to suggest that his recent announcement of official travel to battleground states was politically motivated. Given the Trump administration’s track record with the Hatch Act and using taxpayer dollars to fund political travel, closer examination seems warranted.

<https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/15/vino-vixen-out-state-department-1101555>

**'Vino Vixen,' alleged blacklist creator, leaves State**

The wine blogger-turned State Department official allegedly created a list of career government staffers disloyal to President Donald Trump.

By **NAHAL TOOSI**

01/15/2019 01:41 PM EST

The "Vino Vixen," a Trump administration appointee who gained notoriety over allegations she created a blacklist of disloyal career government staffers, has left the State Department.

The employee, Mari Stull, had her last day at State on Friday, a department official confirmed to POLITICO on Tuesday. It's not immediately clear where she's headed to next or if she will land another position in the administration. Her alleged blacklist activities are under federal investigation.

Stull's nickname came from a wine blog she kept before entering government; she's also been a food and beverage lobbyist. At State, she was a senior adviser in the department's international organizations bureau, a division that deals with institutions such as the United Nations.

Her deeply conservative outlook made her suspicious of such international organizations. She also harbored strong skepticism of career civil and Foreign Service officials who serve in nonpartisan roles at State. Stull was also among a handful of conservative appointees pushing a proposal to bar U.S. diplomats from using phrases such as "sexual and reproductive health" and "comprehensive sexuality education."

Last year, Foreign Policy reported that Stull was "actively making lists and gathering intel" about government employees she suspected of not supporting President Donald Trump's agenda.

Her actions reportedly spurred at least three senior officials in the bureau to leave. They also are reported to have led the State Department's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel, both of which are federal watchdogs, to investigate.

Democrats in Congress have expressed concerns about Stull's behavior as part of broader worries about how political appointees in the Trump administration are treating career employees in the government.

Many U.S. diplomats were sore that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo didn't fire Stull after the allegations against her became public last year. It was not clear Tuesday whether Pompeo played a role in Stull's departure.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Linick, a recent audit of the State Department's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls, the office that is responsible for licensed exports of defense items, articles, the audit revealed that the Department does not have a standard training program for embassy officers who conduct those end use checks on U.S. weapons sold abroad.

Why would the Department charge foreign service officers with the responsibility of end use monitoring, a program to prevent the unauthorized acquisition or use of U.S. military articles and technology, without having required training in that subject prior to a posting overseas?

Mr. LINICK. That is a great question. That particular report, not only wasn't there sufficient training for this end use monitoring, but we found that, as a result of staffing issues at the time, the Department lacked certain internal controls to assure that applications that were made for arms contained proper information and accurate information. We looked at 21 applications; 20 of them were approved without the required information of them.

We also found, as a result of lack of staffing, that the Department wasn't providing certifications to Congress as it is required to for arms exports over a million dollars in about 17 export deals.

Again, this was really a function of a staffing issue at the time, and I would assess that the reason there wasn't the training was because of a staffing issue. I am not sure. You would have to ask the Department.

But clearly there were some problems. I understand now that they have remediated those concerns and have addressed our recommendations.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, security assistance is a substantial enterprise, DOD and State providing about \$18 billion annually, of which \$8 billion are State Department funds.

DOD, the Department of Defense, has started workforce reform requirements which was mandated in the 2017 Defense Authorization Act, and they continue to build an enhanced school for security cooperation training. State does not have any such place to my knowledge. Is that correct?

Mr. LINICK. I am not sure about that. Clearly, if they don't, this might be a good model for State, but I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, it is important that we protect American military secrets and equipment, and we need people who have training to oversee and watch that practice and the embassies of the countries where these items are to be shipped. Do you agree with that?

Mr. LINICK. I agree.

Mr. ROGERS. Madam Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Linick, I want to raise a case that has recently come to light about a State Department intelligence officer who was apparently blocked by the White House from submitting written congressional testimony.

On the way to asking you about that, let me just back off and say, to the extent you can kind of translate our discussion today

into some specific statistics that would put a finer point on some of the management challenges, I want to request that you do that. Maybe you know some of this off the top of your head.

I liked Mr. Rogers' understatement that we have a management shortfall here that we have dealt with for years. Secretary Pompeo took office a little over a year ago. He has made claims to the effect that a lot of this management shortfall is being dealt with, that the appointments, senior appointments are being made, that morale is up, that diplomacy is again being respected.

I wonder what kind of specific figures do you have. How many ambassadorships are unfilled, for example.

Mr. LINICK. I don't have that—

Mr. PRICE. How many—

Mr. LINICK. Go ahead. I am sorry.

Mr. PRICE. How many are unconfirmed? How many are not named? Do you have that figure actually?

Mr. LINICK. I don't. I mean, you would have to ask the Department. I don't know. I don't keep a running tally of that.

Mr. PRICE. I think that is a legitimate request of the IG's office, that you could provide that kind of basic baseline information.

What about the pace of retirements?

Mr. LINICK. I don't have that information. Again, the State Department would have that.

Mr. PRICE. All right. Well, I am asking you if you could get that information and furnish it to us.

The morale is harder to get at, but surveys are taken about morale in one Federal department or another or in all the departments. Do we have information about any kind of measures of morale levels?

Mr. LINICK. Well, we are about to—we are finalizing a report on the hiring freeze and it does get at that issue. I am not in a position to sort of report on that now. But I can tell you, based on our inspections at posts, I mean in terms of the hiring freeze, that did have an impact on morale around the world.

Mr. PRICE. And there are other possible measures that I am not thinking of, I am sure. But, Madam Chairman, I think one way or another we need this basic information about the progress we are making or not making on these very serious management challenges. I think we need that for our hearing record.

So one way or another we ask you to help us get that information.

Now, let me ask you about an extraordinary case that just comes to light recently in news stories. Ron Schoonover, who worked in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research's Office of the Geographer and Global Issues, spoke before the House Intelligence Committee on June 5 about the security risks the U.S. would face by virtue of climate change. But now, apparently, the White House has said that he can't submit the Bureau's written statement that climate impacts could be possibly catastrophic, quote, possibly catastrophic.

Now, the State Department, apparently, stood by Mr. Schoonover, but the quashing of his testimony came from three divisions of the White House: Legislative Affairs, Management and Budget, and the National Security Council. In the meantime, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee demanded that the heads

of two Federal intelligence agencies provide documents about this incident, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Neither of them have complied.

I am not necessarily asking you to comment on this specific case, but I do want to ask you if this is the sort of case that you and your office would attend to. I mean, this isn't just a policy disagreement, this is a quashing of testimony to a congressional committee. How does a case of this sort come before you?

Mr. LINICK. So, I mean, our jurisdiction, obviously, extends to the Department's programs and operations, and when we assess whether we are going to do work, obviously, we cannot do programmatic or policy work, we don't have oversight over the White House.

But what we do is we look to see whether there are any rules. And I don't know, I haven't studied this at all, and this has not come before me. Are there criteria? Are there rules? Are there Foreign Affairs Manual violations? Are there regulations that have been violated? That is sort of how we do our assessment.

I can't comment as to these particular facts. You know, whether we would play a role in this depends on the answer to those questions.

Mr. PRICE. Well, I will ask you to take a look at this. I will ask that [inaudible] Story from the July 10 Washington Post be put in the record. But in the meantime we would appreciate your attention to this and advising us as to what your role—

Mr. LINICK. Sure.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

I just want to close on what I think is an issue that has been brought up by many of my colleagues, and I know we share a serious concern.

Now, of course, this bill has not been through the Senate. We hope one day soon we will be able to conference. But we have appropriated in our bill \$56 billion. That is a lot of money. And I know my colleagues take that responsibility very, very seriously.

Mr. Linick, your office has identified that the oversight of foreign assistance funding is a recurring challenge and noted in both 2015 and 2017 that the State Department's core financial management systems were not designed to track and report on foreign assistance funds. While both State and USAID have improved their financial management systems over the years, accuracy and transparency around how appropriated funding is spent is paramount.

And I want to make it very clear, we just can't tolerate waste, fraud, and abuse. It becomes a cliché because we talk about it so much. But we all take this very, very seriously. It is our responsibility.

So maybe you can tell me what improvements has the State Department made to track and improve the management of foreign assistance programs since these reports were issued? Is this a problem, a result, or representative of any systemic management issues? And can the State Department both track funds at the project and country levels and manage projects effectively?

So, for me, I have been on this committee for quite a while, I just don't get it. Both of you can respond. This is your responsibility. How can you say you can't track the funds? I know it is difficult in many of these countries where wars are going on, disease abound. But it seems to me if we can't keep track, how can I, as the chair, continue to argue for increased investments in foreign aid?

Take turns.

Mr. LINICK. You make a very good point. We have identified this problem, and they cannot still track by program, project, sector, in a management friendly way or in a way which would give them the kind of data to make important decisions about foreign assistance and how unspent fund are used.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Do you accept that?

Mr. LINICK. I think it is unacceptable.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good.

Mr. LINICK. And we have done two reports already and we are going to follow up on this. I mean, they have made modest improvement. We have basically said: Look, you need to, one, identify the data that needs to be collected, and they have. But that is only the first step. They need to harness the data. And this is a long expensive project, so it is not something that can be done overnight.

And the second thing is it needs sustained leadership to drive implementation of this. They have designated the F Bureau as the designated sort of bureau to lead this. The problem is there has been an acting—back to your original question—an acting director of F, and there hasn't been a lot of sustained focus on this particular issue. So while there have been improvements, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Would you like to comment on it as well?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. I would be happy to comment on that.

I want to say, this goes to the heart of our fourth top management challenge, which is addressing vulnerabilities in financial management and information security.

You are right in saying that the, in the case of USAID, has made improvements over time. There is only one material weakness that is left with regard to fund balance reconciliation between the books at USAID and that with Treasury. And it may take too long to go into those distinctions about that \$235 million that hasn't been able to be reconciled, but we are happy to report that for the amount that can be reconciled, which is slightly over \$100 million, they have made tremendous progress in getting that reconciliation figured out, and that amount is down to \$60 million now.

The problem and why this happened is because of legacy systems. A hundred missions around the world, legacy systems, different data dictionaries, different migration tools. They have now adopted a controlled system known as Phoenix to track their financial management, their programming as it goes out. They have new tools in place which are cash reconciliation tools.

So we are hopeful that these kinds of balances or inability to track the funds will be addressed with some of these changes. But I am here to say we, again, are on that, we do our annual financial statements work every year and we drill down on the issues there.

And there still remains that one material weakness, but from when I started to where we are today, at least we are down to one material weakness. So we will be diligent about overseeing that, to your point and to your concern.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, let me just say on behalf of Mr. Rogers and myself, we take our responsibility seriously. We lead this committee because we really care about the work that this committee does. And we are passionate about making sure that this money is spent effectively, as it should be, around the world.

And I would like to follow up with you in a month. I would like to know how improvements have been made. As far as I am concerned it is just unacceptable. If I go into a meeting and I am arguing for \$58, \$56 billion, that is a lot of money.

And I am not sure how we are going to end up in the Senate. But, frankly, it doesn't strengthen our case in helping people who desperately need our help in the world. And, to me, that is what the United States of America stands for and is all about.

So I hope you can follow up with us. We intend to follow up with you. And as far as I am concerned, if we can't account for the dollars that are spent, it makes it difficult for us to appropriate. And if all these open positions remain open, then it makes your job even more difficult, because who is doing the work, who is doing the oversight, here or around the world?

So thank you again for testifying. This concludes today's hearing. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned.

Thank you.

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