

**THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S
FY2021 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
BUDGET REQUEST**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S FY2021 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE BUDGET REQUEST

Thursday, July 23, 2020

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:40 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eliot Engel (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Mr. ENGEL. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any point. And all members will have 5 days to submit statements, extraneous material, and questions for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules. To insert something into the record, please have your staff email the previously circulated address or contact full committee staff.

As a reminder to members, staff, and others physically present in this room, per guidance from the Office of Attending Physician, masks must be worn at all times during today's proceedings except when a member is speaking in a microphone. Please also sanitize your seating area. The chair views these measures as a safety issue and therefore an important matter of order and decorum for this proceeding.

For members participating remotely, please keep your video function on at all times, even when you are not recognized by the chair. Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves, and please remember to mute yourself after you finish speaking. Consistent with House Resolution 965 and the accompanying regulations, staff will only mute members and witnesses as appropriate, when they are not under recognition, to eliminate background noise.

I see that we have a quorum and I now recognize myself for opening remarks.

Mr. Barsa, welcome. I am glad that you are here and that you realize it is important to appear before Congress and answer questions. We have had some difficulty getting Administration people to appear before Congress, so your being here is really appreciated. Somebody said it was like spotting a unicorn.

Pursuant to notice, the committee is convened today to hear testimony on the Trump Administration's foreign assistance budget request for the year 2021 fiscal year. Your predecessor Administrator Green and I did not agree on everything, but he did a good and serious job and I know that he did value the importance of foreign assistance as a tool for American foreign policy. I really think he was terrific.

But whatever Mr. Green personally felt, it certainly did not align with the Administration's views which we have seen again and again in the budgets the Administration has sent up to Congress. A budget request is a lot more than numbers on a page. It is a statement of values and priorities.

And the Administration's values and priorities say that we should cut our international affairs budget by roughly a quarter. That we should cut funding for global health. That we should cut food aid. That we should cut democracy assistance. Frankly, it is almost what we have come to expect. And after three and a half exhausting years, we have all heard the Administration's message loud and clear, and the message seems to be we do not care.

We do not care about the good that our development efforts do all around the world. We do not care about the people and the communities that benefit from this work. We do not care about the harm done to American leadership when we pull back from the global stage. We do not care about the people who work at USAID. And we do not care about Congress which has resoundingly rejected every budget that the White House has sent up and which we will again. We get it. This starts at the top and we all understand the President.

One of the reasons I think foreign assistance is so important is that it is a reflection of our country's compassion and generosity, the character of America that is at the heart of our foreign policy when we are at our best. Apparently, the President does not think that way. He does not look back on things like Lend-Lease, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, or PEPFAR as the hallmarks of strong global leadership.

This is a President who praised the Chinese Government's tactics after Tiananmen, who writes off most of a continent using a term that I will not repeat here. Praising the Chinese Government's tactics after Tiananmen, it is really, really off base. So, unfortunately, we know what to expect. We know to expect a 50 percent cut to family planning because the Administration's crusade against women's health says it is better for women and girls to die rather than have access to reproductive services. We know to expect reduced assistance to Central America because the Administration has an anti-immigrant agenda that says we should scapegoat desperate people rather than get at the root causes of migration.

But what is especially galling about this year's budget that was sent to us is that even in the middle of a global pandemic, one that has come at the cost of nearly 150,000 American lives, the Administration wants to still slash funding for global health efforts. The slight increase requested for global health security is good, but it is overshadowed by massive proposed cuts elsewhere.

Taken with the Administration's withdrawal from the World Health Organization, which despite its flaws, I believe, is the international body best equipped to coordinate a global response to COVID-19, it is almost as though we are waving the white flag.

So, Mr. Barsa, I am afraid you are a nice guy, but you are going to run into a little bit of skepticism today as you try to make the case for this erosion of our foreign assistance budget. I think we are also going to need answers from you about a number of troubling management decisions that you have apparently made since

taking over for Administrator Green. So I will soon recognize you for 5 minutes to summarize your opening statement, pending which I will yield to our ranking member, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. McCaul, for any opening remarks he has.

Mr. McCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important hearing.

Acting Administrator, I should say, Barsa, it is good to see you again. Thanks for being here. I want to start out by thanking you and your team and your partners in the field. Especially amidst this global pandemic, the tireless work of the men and women of USAID to save lives around the world is critical.

The United States continues to be the global leader in foreign assistance spending, supporting economic, and providing food, shelter, and health resources for the most vulnerable populations. This vital work continues as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, the United States has provided 1.5 billion to over 120 countries to control the spread of this deadly disease. This commitment builds on over two decades of U.S. investments of 140 billion in responding to infectious disease outbreaks and strengthening health systems.

The President's Fiscal Year 2021 USAID request appropriately prioritizes funding to key policy priorities. This includes implementation of the Administration's Indo-Pacific strategy; resources to counter malign activity and disinformation campaigns of China, Russia, and Iran; support for our allies and our partners in the Middle East; support for interim President Guaido and democracy in Venezuela as well as countries supporting Venezuelan refugees; prioritizes funding for the United States International Development Finance Corporation which provides a critical alternative to China's predatory lending to developing countries; and it also advances WGED initiative to promote women's empowerment and economic opportunity, which I strongly support.

Unfortunately, the request also cuts key global health and humanitarian assistance resources. Globally, almost 80 million people are currently displaced around the world. That number is expected to rise because of COVID. The World Food Program is estimating that 270 million people will need urgent food assistance due to COVID-19, an 82 percent increase from last year. And COVID-19 is already erasing hard-fought gains to reduce extreme poverty and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases.

As expected, authoritarian regimes and terrorist organizations are looking to exploit this chaos for strategic gain, such as in areas like the Sahel. So as the disease spreads in the Middle East, Latin America, and across Africa, existing economic hardships, political challenges, and humanitarian emergencies will worsen. In other words, it is now not the time to cut this key aid. I am deeply concerned the impacts of COVID-19 will push more fragile States into conflict.

Our assistance must prioritize prevention and further destabilization in addition to the long-term impacts including on education assistance, food security, and vaccine distribution. This global pandemic continues to spread and the work that we do overseas makes us safer here at home. And as I have said before, successful

diplomacy and development is cost effective. Fully funding our foreign assistance programs will ultimately save taxpayer dollars.

With today's growing fiscal challenges, we must double our efforts to ensure that every dollar spent is strategic in advancing U.S. interests. So I look forward to hearing from how our assistance will be used to push back on China's malign influence and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and ensure continued U.S. leadership around the world.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Thank you. I thank my friend. I agree with his testimony and I think it is very important the points that were made by both the Chairman and the Ranking Member.

So our witness this morning, Mr. Barsa, John Barsa, the Acting Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development—Mr. Barsa, we are happy to have you here and you are recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN BARSA, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR OF
THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. BARS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today. It is an honor and privilege to testify in front of the committee and I look forward to your questions. I would also like to thank you for your bipartisan support which has allowed the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, to mount the robust response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic that has touched nearly every person around the world both at home and overseas.

The United States must continue an aggressive, comprehensive response that expands health, humanitarian assistance, and addresses the ongoing second order effects such as food security, economic growth, and preventing democratic backsliding. I am committed to doing so using all available resources, whether current year or future supplemental, and not let any opportunities rise for our adversaries to fill the vacuum in a turbulent world.

Every day, USAID's highly professional and dedicated staff work to deliver development solutions and build self-reliance in partner countries, project American values globally, and advance our foreign policy and national security objectives. The President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2021 for accounts that USAID fully and partially manages is approximately \$19.6 billion, including \$2.1 billion for USAID global health programs and \$5.9 billion for the Economic Support and Development or ESDF fund.

USAID will use these resources to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives by fostering stability in partner countries, promoting free, fair, and equitable societies, and expanding opportunities for American businesses. Our investments will also strengthen our national security by addressing the drivers of violent extremism and combating the spread of infectious diseases, each of which represents a potential threat to the homeland.

Faced with COVID-19, America is demonstrating clear and decisive leadership. The United States has mobilized to combat the virus both at home and abroad by committing more than \$12 billion for the response to this pandemic. USAID has acted decisively

since COVID-19 cases first began to rise internationally, working with the U.S. Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and State as part of an all-of-America response.

With \$2.4 billion in emergency supplemental funding generously appropriated by Congress including nearly \$1.6 billion for foreign assistance implemented by USAID and the State Department, we are providing health care, humanitarian assistance, and economic security and stabilization efforts worldwide. This funding is saving lives by improving public health education, training healthcare workers, strengthening laboratory systems, supporting disease surveillance, and boosting rapid response capacity in more than 120 countries around the world.

We are providing assistance to support communities and equip them with the tools needed to mitigate the impact of the virus. The U.S. response to COVID-19 builds upon decades of American investments in global health. In the 21st century alone, the United States has contributed more than \$140 billion in global health assistance.

Over the past 20 years, USAID's funding has helped Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, vaccinate more than 760 million children, which has prevented 13 million deaths. Last month, the United States committed \$1.16 billion to Gavi over the next 4 years, with the goal to immunize 300 million additional children by 2025.

The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative, PMI, has helped save more than seven million lives and prevent more than one billion malaria cases worldwide since 2000. America has invested more than \$85 billion to fight HIV/AIDS through PEPFAR, the largest commitment by any nation to address a single disease in history. PEPFAR has saved millions of lives in Africa. USAID continues to invest in global health security to address existing and emerging zoonotic diseases, which account for more than 70 percent of new infectious disease outbreaks. We invested \$1.1 billion in this critical area since 2009.

Even as last month, we declared an end to the tenth Ebola outbreak that has affected the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo since August 2018. We are now scaling up a response to fight the confirmed eleventh outbreak in northwestern DRC. These investments in global health throughout the decades have enabled partner countries to strengthen health systems and democratic institutions, enabling them to better respond to global health crises.

We are in unprecedented times with the rapidly evolving situation on the ground in almost every country. We are working aggressively to obligate all of our resources for COVID-19 as swiftly and effectively as possible. At the same time, we want to ensure that we are accountable for the effective use of funds for COVID-19 and are good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

As we consider how to prevent the next health crisis, we have to address the root causes of these outbreaks. I remain focused on USAID's efforts on helping partner countries on their journeys to self-reliance and will continue to build on the vision that each one of our programs should look forward to the day when it can end. Our investments in global health throughout the decades are a cornerstone to this approach.

We have learned that outbreaks and epidemics are often exacerbated by failures of governance and transparency and when we do not address poor governance and conflict, we wipe out investments in health, education, and other basic social services. We also recognize that health emergencies have consequences that can rapidly require broader development assistance whether support for orphaned children, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, livelihoods, and addressing the deeper root causes of instability and governance.

While a hallmark of our journey to self-reliance effort is using analytics to measure progress, we must also measure regression to see how we may need to adjust our programs. Looking long term, we remain committed to helping communities in our partner countries through this pandemic and its second and third order effects. The COVID-19 pandemic is not simply a health crisis and our response cannot be just a health response. We must use the totality of development tools at our disposal as well.

To focus on how to best operate in the COVID-altered world, I established a temporary agency planning cell, an executive steering committee called Over the Horizon to guide the effort. While the USAID COVID-19 Task Force manages near-term challenges rising from the pandemic, the Over Horizon team will perform research, conduct outreach and prepare analyses around key strategic questions to help USAID prepare for lasting challenges to the developmental and humanitarian landscape in the medium to long term. It will then provide this information to the executive steering committee composed of senior leaders from across the agency who will craft recommendations for my consideration.

We are already planning for the medium and long-term impacts of COVID-19 and because I am committed to make sure that USAID will remain a trusted partner, the preferred partner, in countries across the world. Again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify before you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barsa follows:]

**Written Testimony of the Honorable John Barsa
Acting Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development
before the
Committee on Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives
Thursday, July 23, 2020
Hearing on the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2021**

Introduction

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and Members of the Committee – thank you for inviting me to testify today. It is an honor and privilege to testify in front of your Committee, and I look forward to your questions.

I also would like to also thank you for your bipartisan support, which has allowed the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to mount a robust response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic that has touched nearly every person around the world. The United States needs to continue a targeted and comprehensive response that spans not only health and humanitarian assistance, but also economic, security, and stabilization assistance. This is not just a health crisis. As in our country, the second and third order effects go well beyond the health consequences of the pandemic. So it is in the national strategic interest of the United States to also address the ongoing second and third order effects of the pandemic, such as food-insecurity, economic recessions, and democratic backsliding. I am committed to doing so by using all our available resources, and I do not intend to allow our adversaries any opportunities to fill the vacuum in a turbulent world.

The President's Budget Request

Every day, USAID's highly professional and dedicated staff work to deliver sustainable development solutions, build self-reliance in partner countries, provide life-saving humanitarian assistance, project American values globally, and advance our foreign-policy and national-security objectives.

The President's [Budget Request for Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2021](#) for accounts that USAID fully and partially manages is approximately \$19.7 billion, including \$2.2 billion for USAID's global health programs and \$6.1 billion for the Economic Support and Development Fund (ESDF). USAID will use these resources to advance U.S. foreign-policy and national security objectives by fostering stability in partner countries; promoting free, fair, and equitable societies; and expanding opportunities for American businesses. Our investments will strengthen our national security by addressing the drivers of violent extremism and combating the spread of infectious diseases, each of which represents a potential threat to the Homeland. The sum requested reflects the Agency's commitment to the responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources and maximizing the impact of every dollar we manage.

In terms of humanitarian assistance, the President has requested nearly \$6 billion for the International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) account, which—when combined with carryover

resources from FY 2020—will enable the United States to support an average annual level of nearly \$9 billion for FY 2020 and 2021 for overseas humanitarian assistance alone. This maintains the United States’ role as the largest humanitarian donor in the world.

The Response to Covid-19 / Global Health

Faced with COVID-19, America is demonstrating clear and decisive leadership. The United States has mobilized to combat the virus, both at home and abroad, by allocating more than \$12 billion that will benefit the global COVID response.

USAID has acted decisively since COVID-19 cases first began to arise internationally, by working with the U.S. Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and State as part of an All-of-America response. With \$2.3 billion in emergency supplemental funding generously appropriated by Congress, including nearly \$1.7 billion for foreign assistance implemented by USAID and the State Department, we are providing health care; humanitarian assistance; and economic, security, and stabilization efforts worldwide.

This funding is saving lives by improving public health education, training health-care workers, strengthening laboratory systems, supporting disease-surveillance, and boosting rapid-response capacity in more than 120 countries around the world. We are providing assistance to support communities affected by COVID-19 and equipping them with the tools needed to mitigate the impacts of the virus.

We are also forging partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others to help respond. Leveraging the strengths of other partners allows U.S. investments to go further and do more.

For example, USAID has a long partnership with Hadassah Hospital, in the State of Israel, and a new one with Pepsi and Sodastream is underway to invent a high-flow respirator for COVID-19 patients, which would be available for medical centers in Jerusalem neighborhoods with an especially high incidence of the virus. The open-source designs can be downloaded for free for assembly anywhere in the world and have already been used in the Republics of El Salvador, Guatemala and Turkey.

The U.S. Government’s response to COVID-19 builds upon decades of U.S. investments in global health. In the 21st Century alone, the United States has contributed more than \$140 billion in global health assistance:

- Over the past 20 years, USAID’s funding has helped Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, vaccinate more than 760 million children, which has prevented 13 million deaths. Last month, the United States committed \$1.16 billion to Gavi over four years, to support Gavi’s goal of immunizing 300 million additional children by 2025.
- The U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) has helped save more than seven million lives and prevent more than one billion cases of malaria worldwide since 2005.

- The United States has invested more than \$85 billion to fight HIV/AIDS through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest commitment in history by any nation to address a single disease.
- USAID continues to invest in global health security, including to address existing and emerging zoonotic diseases, which account for more than 70 percent of new infectious-disease outbreaks. We have invested \$1.1 billion in global health security since 2009.
- Last month, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) declared an end to the tenth outbreak of Ebola in the DRC, which devastated families in eastern DRC for almost two years. The United States was the DRC's principal partner in ending this outbreak, contributing to the response and building local health institution capacity to handle new outbreaks, like the Ebola outbreak in northwestern DRC announced in June, as well as other health threats facing Congolese populations. We are now scaling up a response to this outbreak.

Over the years, USAID has continued to invest in bilateral health work in countries to train frontline health care workers, ensure medical facilities have the proper equipment and medicine, and establish disease-surveillance and risk-monitoring networks.

We also have invested heavily in building national capacity for laboratory research and testing. And because so many infectious-disease outbreaks in humans are of animal origin, we have helped governments, academia, and the private sector improve health surveillance networks among livestock and wildlife—work that has facilitated the collection and testing of more than 100,000 samples in high-risk areas over the past decade.

These investments in global health throughout the decades have enabled governments, civil society, and others in our partner countries to build capacity and strengthen health care and democratic institutions, which enables them to respond better to health crises.

We are in unprecedented times, with a rapidly evolving situation on the ground in almost every corner of the earth. We are working aggressively to obligate all of our resources for COVID-19 as swiftly and effectively as possible. At the same time, we want to ensure we are accountable for the effective use of funds for COVID-19 and are good stewards of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

I should note that, as is typical in our humanitarian programs, our partners have the ability to begin working as soon as USAID commits resources to them from the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account. They do not have to wait for the final obligation of funds to begin work, and we reimburse them afterwards when we sign an agreement.

On average, our Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is obligating COVID-19 supplemental funding from the IDA account in 37 days from the time we receive a proposal from a partner. This is 40-percent faster than our previous timelines, and I intend this to become our new standard timeline.

To accelerate the pace of processing awards and ensure the full obligation of approved supplemental funding from the IDA account, BHA is implementing the following measures:

- *Quicker Turnaround*: Imposing stricter deadlines on partners to develop applications and on BHA staff to provide technical approval;
- *Prioritization*: Fast-tracking all COVID-19 proposals for review over non-COVID-19 applications; and
- *All Hands on Deck*: Creating efficiencies across the spectrum of USAID's business processes, from BHA's field teams and headquarters staff, to the Office of the General Counsel, to the Office of Acquisition and Assistance in the Bureau for Management.

Over the Horizon

The world has been altered by COVID-19. So while we continue to address the current global health crisis, we need to consider the second- and third-order effects left in its wake. I remain focused on USAID's efforts to help communities in our partner countries on their Journeys to Self-Reliance, and will continue to build on the vision that each one of our programs should look forward to the day when it can end. Our investments in global health throughout the decades have been a cornerstone of this approach.

We have also learned that outbreaks and epidemics are directly related to governance, transparency, and capacity considerations. For example, the robust international response to the recently ended Ebola outbreak in eastern DRC was notably challenged by a humanitarian crisis, weak institutions, marginalized and impoverished communities, and insecurity. Yet thanks to healthcare capacity and expertise – supported by USAID and U.S. government long-term investments in the country, the DRC government and international community was able to contain outbreak spread within DRC borders and prevent a global pandemic.

More often than not, we have the tools to prevent outbreaks from becoming epidemics—but we are hampered when countries such as the People's Republic of China and other malign actors do not disclose information transparently or share pathogen samples, and instead destroy samples, obfuscate facts, imprison medical personnel, and silence journalists.

We also recognize that health emergencies have consequences that rapidly require broader development assistance—whether support for orphaned children, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, stabilization for livelihoods, and addressing the deeper root causes of instability and governance. While a hallmark of our effort to promote the Journey to Self-Reliance is using analytics to measure progress, we must also measure regression to see how we might need to adjust our programs.

Looking to the long term, we remain committed to helping communities in our partner countries and addressing the pandemic's second- and third-order effects. The COVID-19 pandemic is not simply a health crisis, and our response cannot be just a health response. Already, the spread of the novel coronavirus and actions to mitigate COVID-19 have had significant secondary

impacts—among the most devastating is in the areas of food security and nutrition. At the beginning of 2020, conflict, poor macroeconomic conditions, and weather shocks were already driving high food-assistance needs across the globe.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), funded by USAID, estimates 113 million people will be in need of humanitarian food assistance this year, which represents an increase of approximately 25 percent in the span of just one year. The onset and progression of the COVID-19 pandemic, and measures taken to suppress its spread, are likely to increase the magnitude and severity of acute and chronic food-insecurity. An estimated 148 million more people will face extreme poverty and food insecurity as a result of COVID-19.

We must proactively—and comprehensively—address the many ways that this crisis has eroded food security and driven malnutrition worldwide. To that end, USAID is working with the World Food Program and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including faith-based organizations, to invest over \$165 million of COVID-19 supplemental humanitarian resources to address food-insecurity in 21 countries, including in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republics of Colombia and Ecuador, the Lebanese Republic, and 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that already were experiencing high-levels of hunger before the pandemic.

In addition to emergency food aid, we are addressing disruptions to agricultural production, trade, and local markets; the loss of livelihoods and nutrition; and the deterioration of essential social services, like water and sanitation, while building longer-term resilience. Each of our lines of effort plays an important role in strengthening food and water security and reducing the deterioration of development progress.

At the same time, we recognize how important democracy and citizen-responsive governance are in responding to the outbreak, and we are investing funds accordingly. Unfortunately, we are seeing democratic backsliding, closing space for civil society and crackdowns on freedom of expression, including for members of the press, as the pandemic continues to unfold. To counter this trend, we are helping support civil-society organizations and independent media outlets, strengthening the rule of law, working with national electoral commissions, and combatting disinformation—because we know responsive, transparent governments are better-equipped to help their populations deal with this crisis and eventually prevent the disease from coming back to our shores.

USAID also has begun to think about how we can successfully execute our mission in the COVID-altered world, in a way that is flexible and agile.

To focus specifically on operating in the COVID-altered world, I established a temporary Agency Planning Cell called Over the Horizon, to guide this effort.

While USAID's COVID-19 Task Force has managed the near-term challenges directly related to the pandemic, Over the Horizon will perform research, conduct outreach, and prepare analyses around key strategic questions to help the Agency prepare for lasting challenges to the development and humanitarian landscape in the medium to long term. We are taking a hard look

at our policies, programming, resources, and operations to determine what needs to be realigned or reprioritized as a result of the pandemic. The planning cell is working in concert and providing information to an Executive Steering Committee, composed of senior leaders from across the Agency, who will craft recommendations for my consideration.

Partner countries have a choice in development assistance partners, development models, and governance systems. USAID's approach emphasizes free and open, enterprise-driven development to build resilient market economies founded on democratic principles and good governance without strings attached.

This approach stands in stark contrast to development models promoted by authoritarian regimes. This contrast has grown even more stark during the global response to COVID-19, as the Chinese Communist Party has worked to leverage the pandemic to advance its political propaganda focused on spreading disinformation.

We are planning for the medium- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 now because I am committed to ensuring that USAID will remain a trusted partner, the preferred partner, in countries across the world.

Hurricane Preparedness in the Caribbean

USAID—which leads and coordinates all U.S. Government international disaster assistance—is ready to respond to the 2020 hurricane season with a team of disaster experts and pre-positioned emergency relief supplies strategically located throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. USAID is also coordinating with relevant U.S. Embassies, national emergency-management offices, and humanitarian partners to plan for potential storms.

Year round, USAID works to reduce the risk and impact of future disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, by coordinating with local governments and humanitarian organizations in the region to develop emergency and evacuation plans; train national disaster-response organizations and first-responders; and educate vulnerable communities so they know what to do when the next storm hits. USAID has a regional office in San José, Costa Rica, and disaster experts based across the region ready to respond to disasters when needed. In addition, BHA maintains a team of emergency food-security experts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2019, USAID deployed a Disaster-Assistance Response Team (DART) to respond to Hurricane Dorian in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The DART—which at its height comprised 106 members, including search-and-rescue personnel—led and coordinated the U.S. humanitarian response to the devastating storm. In addition, USAID delivered approximately 53 metric tons of relief supplies to the Bahamas from our warehouse in Miami—enough to help at least 54,000 people—via commercial airlift, U.S. Coast Guard transport, and a flight donated by UPS. USAID also provided emergency food assistance, including by swiftly working with the World Food Program to distribute 14,000 ready-to-eat meals immediately following the storm.

In FY 2019, USAID provided more than \$34.5 million to programs in Latin America and the Caribbean to help communities prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the impact of disasters. This includes more than \$15.2 million in funding to reduce the risk of disasters in the Caribbean.

To reduce the threat of devastating storm surges, USAID has launched a new project with the U.S. National Hurricane Center and national disaster-management agencies across the Caribbean to advance preparedness for, and early warning of, hurricanes. This program will save lives and help protect property by improving mapping for areas vulnerable to storm surge and strengthening forecasting for countries across the Caribbean.

In addition, just last year, my predecessor, former Administrator Mark Green, traveled to Barbados to announce an additional \$10 million investment to bolster disaster preparedness and response across the Caribbean with the help of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, also known as CDEMA. These new resources will support activities that minimize the damage of disasters, reduce the loss of life, and enhance response efforts. This support is central to the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership, a forum for collaboration across U.S. government and Caribbean agencies on resilience against natural disasters in this region.

We have all witnessed the generosity and compassion our fellow Americans show each other when disaster strikes. It is this generous American spirit that drives USAID's preparedness for, and response to, hurricanes in the Caribbean as well.

Venezuela

This Administration stands in solidarity with Interim President Juan Guaidó, his administration, the National Assembly, and the Venezuelan people as they work to recover their country and future. USAID will continue to support them in that noble effort.

Since FY 2017, the United States has provided more than \$856 million in humanitarian, economic, development, and health assistance inside Venezuela and across the region, including nearly \$611 million in humanitarian assistance and approximately \$245 million through the Department of State and USAID in economic, development, and health assistance.

Those resources are helping to meet immediate humanitarian needs, like food and safe drinking water; stem the spread of infectious diseases; and assist those who have fled to other nations in search of food, medicine, and other basic necessities because of the shortages caused by the mismanagement and venality of the illegitimate Maduro regime. We are also supporting institutions like the National Assembly and independent media, and promoting the defense of human rights and the fight against corruption through NGOs and Venezuelan civil society. Of particular concern to us now are the systematic atrocities being committed by the Maduro regime and its transnational criminal allies against the environment and indigenous communities in the *Arco Minero* across the southern reaches of Venezuela. Illegal gold mining in this region is propping up Maduro, fueling drug-trafficking and terrorist groups, and robbing Venezuelans of their natural resources.

Additionally, across Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID is also providing assistance to support Venezuelans who have fled the chaos and tyranny in their homeland—as well as the generous communities that are hosting them.

Even as we extend this financial and technical support today, we are continuing to plan for the future. In 2019, USAID signed the first bilateral assistance agreement between USAID and a Venezuelan Government in decades. This agreement allows us to expand our support to the National Assembly, a critical lifeline that keeps the hope of democracy alive within the country.

And, as we have for years, we will continue to support human-rights defenders, civil-society organizations, and the legions of reporters and media investigators that hold Maduro and his cronies accountable, even at great personal risk.

After a democratic transition, the bilateral agreement will allow USAID to fund efforts to repair health-care institutions that have collapsed, and to deploy much-needed resources to restore commercial agriculture. The \$205 million from the Economic Support and Development Fund and Global Health account included in the President’s Budget Request for FY 2021 will further these efforts, predicated on the assumption that progress towards a democratic transition will occur over the coming year.

Outbreaks of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

On June 25, 2020, the Government of the DRC declared an end to the outbreak of Ebola that has affected the Eastern part of the country since August 2018 and caused more than 3,470 total confirmed and probable cases and 2,287 deaths. This declaration came after 42 days—double the 21-day incubation period of Ebola—without a new confirmed or probable Ebola case in the DRC’s Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu Provinces.

Even though this Ebola outbreak is officially over, USAID’s work in the eastern DRC has not ended. It is essential to monitor and provide follow-up care to survivors of Ebola for an extended period of time. We will continue to provide community engagement and education to minimize the risk of transmission from survivors, as well as to mitigate their stigmatization.

On June 1, 2020, the DRC Ministry of Health declared a new outbreak in Équateur Province in the Northwest of the country, and USAID has mobilized assistance to contain the newly declared outbreak while we continue to remain vigilant in eastern DRC.

USAID’s assistance in both the eastern and western DRC outbreaks has primarily focused on breaking the chain of transmission, including through investments that strengthen the prevention and control of infections in medical facilities, bolster disease-surveillance and case-finding, expand access to vaccines, improve laboratory diagnostic capacity, and raise awareness about Ebola in at-risk communities.

Locusts

The swarms of desert locusts in East Africa are the worst to hit the region in decades: billions of pests are eating their way through crops, vegetation, and livestock pastures. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Kenya, and the Federal Republic of Somalia are the most-affected countries to date, though the locusts are present in, or have previously invaded the Republics of Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, and Djibouti; the United Republic of Tanzania; and the DRC. Heavy rains and flooding since 2019 have provided ideal wet conditions for locusts to breed, which has contributed to the large scale of the outbreak.

Through the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), USAID is helping the Governments of Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Sudan control infestations of locusts within their borders and guard against additional invasions. To date, USAID has provided nearly \$20 million in humanitarian assistance to support regional efforts to control the locust swarms in East Africa.

USAID-funded programs are training community members, local officials, and scouts on the early detection, surveillance, monitoring, and reporting of locusts. USAID is also helping teams obtain equipment, including GPS, radios, and eLocust3 tablets—which gather field data and transmit it in real time to government officials and FAO staff.

USAID is closely monitoring the potential impact of locusts on food security for vulnerable families. Timely and effective control operations in affected areas are critical to mitigating a potentially significant impact on people's ability to provide food for their families in 2020, especially as the pandemic of COVID-19 persists.

USAID development assistance is bolstering this emergency response with investments to build up local institutions to better monitor, mitigate and manage crop threats like locusts. Research efforts carried out by U.S. university partners are helping countries determine how best to respond to today's locust outbreak and those to come.

Advancing International Religious Freedom

Preserving religious freedom and protecting the rights of members of ethnic and other minority groups are essential to any free, democratic, and just society. These ideals resonate particularly with Americans—our country was founded by those who sought to be free from persecution, and our diversity has long been a source of strength and vibrancy.

History has shown that the marginalization or persecution of individuals on account of their religious identity or beliefs may be a first step towards a broader deterioration in freedoms. As Vice-President Pence has often said, “An attack on one faith is an attack on us all.”

USAID supports religious and ethnic minority communities around the world, including across the Middle East, where pluralism has existed for thousands of years. Since the destruction of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS Caliphate), USAID has invested across the region to help members of persecuted minority groups heal and restore their communities. That includes

through direct partnerships with local, faith-based organizations, with many of whom we are working for the first time.

On June 2, 2020, President Trump signed an Executive Order on Advancing International Religious Freedom. USAID will work together with the State Department to implement this directive in all our programs around the world.

Women's Economic Empowerment

No country can make meaningful progress without the inclusion of half of its population. Empowering women to participate fully in economic and civic life is essential to achieving more equitable, stable, and prosperous societies.

USAID has long prioritized the inclusion of women throughout our programs. Our experience shows that investing in women and girls accelerates development outcomes and yields dividends across the areas in which we work, from the prevention of conflict to health to economic growth. Economically empowered women are key drivers of self-reliance; when women thrive, their families thrive, and their communities and countries prosper.

We are proud to implement the White House's Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP). Through the W-GDP Fund at USAID, we are making investments that advance each pillar of the initiative: women prospering in the workforce, women succeeding as entrepreneurs, and helping women overcoming barriers to full economic participation. USAID's investments in women's economic empowerment, including from the W-GDP Fund, reached nearly nine million women around the world last year. The President's Budget Request for FY 2021 includes \$200 million for the W-GDP Fund, resources that will enable us to build on that success. We will expand existing activities and create new, innovative partnerships and programs to facilitate greater private-sector engagement; scale entrepreneurial skills-training for women; increase their access to finance, markets, and business networks; break down the legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers to their empowerment and equality, including gender-based violence; advance digital literacy; and expand efforts to recruit, retain, and promote women in male-dominated industries. The resources sought in the President's Budget Request for FY 2021 will help us make progress towards W-GDP's ambitious goal of reaching 50 million women in the developing world by 2025.

Women's voices and leadership are also vital to preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism, and supporting post-conflict recovery. Our new Implementation Plan for the U.S. Government's *Women, Peace, and Security Strategy* (WPS) outlines the steps USAID is taking to break down barriers to women's participation in peace processes and political transitions; to promote women's essential role and ensure their protection; and to provide women with skills and training to increase their engagement in political and civic life.

More on Transformation: Establishing New Structures

The world is constantly changing, and it is imperative that we at USAID change along with it. From the new nature of humanitarian and development needs, to shifts in government versus private financial flows, to innovative new technologies that have reshaped the way we work—today's landscape is vastly different than it was just 20 years ago. Former Administrator Mark Green set USAID on a bold path of Transformation, through interconnected reforms to our workforce, structure, programs, and policies. We initiated this process with one goal in mind: building the USAID of tomorrow, an Agency better-placed to respond to dynamic challenges, foster self-reliance, and one day end the need for foreign assistance.

] We have implemented a number of those reforms through milestones like the development of our Self-Reliance Metrics, the release of our Country Roadmaps, the launch of our *Policy Framework*, the publication of our first-ever *Acquisition and Assistance Strategy*, and the implementation of our *Private-Sector Engagement Policy*. The latest milestone in our Transformation is the formal establishment of several new Bureaus, the culmination of a rigorous process of design and consultation aimed at creating a structure that is more field-oriented, functionally aligned, and responsive to the evolving needs and challenges in the countries where we work.

In late Summer 2018, we submitted nine Congressional Notifications (CNs) on Transformation to Congress. I am pleased to announce that we have legally established the Bureaus for Resilience and Food Security, Humanitarian Assistance, and Conflict Prevention and Stabilization. These three Bureaus, which have since become operational, will elevate and align our humanitarian assistance, investments in stabilization and preventing and mitigating conflict and building out resilience that strengthens food security and for the long-term. The CN for our proposed Bureau for Policy, Resources, and Performance—which would bring together our strategy, policy, and budget teams through joint management of our Program and Operating Expense resources—remains outstanding. This is a critical remaining piece of our Transformation. I ask for your support for the CN, which you have had for 18 months. The other members of USAID's leadership team and I are available and eager to answer any questions you might have so that we can move forward with that process. We also will be submitting CNs for changes to our Bureau for Global Health, the last and largest Pillar Bureau to undergo Transformation, as well as a revised CN for adjustments to our Bureau for Management and a CN for a reorganization of our Office of Security. We ask for your swift consideration of these proposals as well.

Over the last couple years, we have been unveiling outcomes of our Transformation. We have launched new policies, overhauled our procurement and hiring processes, consolidated existing Bureaus and launched new ones, and taken steps to better empower our workforce.

But we are not done. There's more on the horizon as we continue to work towards becoming more nimble, effective, and efficient.

Thank you for your continuing support of a transformed USAID.

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Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much for your testimony. Let me say this. Over the past several years, this Administration has attempted several rescissions and other methods of slowing down or stopping foreign assistance spending. As a result, we have seen funding obligated in fits and starts with a scramble at the end of the fiscal year. We saw this again with the slow disbursement of the COVID supplemental funding hampered by policy indecision and extra layers of bureaucracy.

The Foreign Affairs Committee has strongly objected to these tactics in the past and fully expects the resources provided by Congress to be fully utilized in the manner for which they were provided. So, Mr. Barsa, let me ask you this. How much of USAID's expiring funds have been obligated to date?

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, I do not have the exact figure in terms of the number of funds to date, but I know we are making good progress and we certainly expect to have all of our expiring funds obligated by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, let me say this then. Do you commit to obligating all expiring funding as well as current supplemental COVID moneys before the end of the fiscal year?

Mr. BARSA. Certainly that is the goal. That is the direction given to my staff and I look forward to working closely with you and your staff to keep you apprised regularly as to the progress we are making toward the goal.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. If Congress provides additional COVID supplemental funding, how will you ensure that the money will get out the door where it is urgently needed?

Mr. BARSA. Certainly, we have had a—this has been a learning process. This pandemic just has affected the entire world, so I am happy to say that as a learning organization we have improved our processes for getting money out the door expeditiously, so we are very grateful for the Congress's generosity with the past supplementals. Should there be another supplemental, I am very confident that we have the systems in place to get money out expeditiously and in a responsible manner.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you. As I alluded to in my opening statement, there have been several recent management decisions under your leadership at USAID and some of those are very troubling to myself and some of my colleagues. The recent influx of appointees serving your Agency has a record of homophobic, anti-immigrant, Islamophobic, and other derogatory comments appears to be in direct contradiction to the Agency's aims and an affront to the dedicated career staff who serve at USAID.

So is this the kind of person you want representing USAID and the American people? What message are we sending to USAID employees by allowing appointees like Merritt Corrigan who has referred to a "homo-empire," and the "false pretense of women's equality with men?" Those are obviously troubling to us. I hope it is troubling to you and I hope that that is not allowed to continue.

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, what I can commit to you and your colleagues on the committee is that all USAID employees regardless of hiring category are held to the same high moral, legal, and ethical standards that USAID has always had in place.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay, thank you. I now turn it over to our ranking member, my friend Mr. McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Administrator. The Consulate in Houston just got closed yesterday, and the Chinese Communist Party has been doing this for decades. They have been stealing intellectual property. They are currently trying to steal the research and development for our vaccine for COVID-19, a virus that they are responsible for coming out of Wuhan, China and now they want to steal our vaccine to save the world. The irony is just mind boggling.

They are a force to be reckoned with and I think if anything comes out of this experience, this twilight zone experience we are going through, it is the people are waking up to who the Chinese Communist Party are and what they have done to the world and what they have done to us for the last two decades.

Now your Agency has role in this. I want to commend my dear friend, I wish he was staying with us, Mr. Yoho, for his probably one of the best bills ever passed out of this committee, the BUILD Act, and the Development Finance Corporation, which is going to be our key to defeating the Chinese Communist Party in its Belt and Road Initiative in developing nations.

And so my question to you is—I think the DFC has a major role. I think Adam Boehler is doing a great job. I do think Congress should fully fund the DFC. The DFC, after all, does return on its investment. It is one of those departments or agencies that actually does not spend all the money, actually, money comes back to the Treasury. I mean that is—how about that?

So my question to you is, I see USAID and there are other entities like EXIM Bank, but can you explain to me how you can transform your Agency to work more effectively in this countering Chinese Communist Party initiative that the DFC is taking on right now?

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, Congressman. Certainly, all of us when we come to whatever positions we have, we bring our previous experiences. So, certainly, I came to USAID from the Department of Homeland Security where I certainly had plenty of exposure to malicious, malevolent Chinese intent in any number of spheres. So coming over to USAID initially heading up the Latin American Caribbean Bureau, I, you know, certainly saw firsthand how, you know the Chinese were trying to exert their influence with debt diplomacy, onerous deals where they are taking advantage.

So their businesses, I mean there cannot be a greater contrast in terms of our development roles. We have what is sincerely a construct called the Journey to Self-Reliance. We help countries stand up on their own with their economies, democracies, and their systems, but the Chinese model development could not be more of an opposite.

We seek to set up and emphasize free, open enterprise-driven development to build resilient market economies founded on democratic principles and good government. Certainly, the Chinese, you know, their efforts to undermine sovereignty leading to unsustainable debt or forfeitures of strategic resources and assets, it could not be further from the truth.

So I agree with you. The BUILD Act has been an incredible piece of legislation. I want to thank you all for your support of that.

Adam Boehler and I, who, Adam, of course, leading the DFC, he and I communicate regularly. As you all know, I sit on the board of DFC. So one of the things Adam and I have been able to do is ensure that we have communications at all levels between USAID and the DFC. So not only is their communication at the leadership level in Washington, DC and, more importantly, in the field, we are working closely together.

So USAID staff in the missions, in the field, are uniquely positioned to be able to find potential deals, potential private sector partners. By having that close coordination and communication with the DFC, we are able to bring these potential deals and opportunities to the DFC's attention where they can come in and help finance the deals.

So I am happy to say that the relationship between USAID and DFC is very strong and looking forward to continued cooperation in years to come.

Sorry, do you have a question?

Mr. MCCAUL. No, go ahead.

Mr. BARSA. No. As I say, one of the best ways to counter China is to continue to do what we do. We have no better development model. Our efforts to help countries stand up on their own on the journey to self-reliance is vastly different from the Chinese model. So we are very proud to provide this alternative to countries and we are very proud of our work countering China and we will continue to do so.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, I want to thank you for that. And thank you for your service at the Department of Homeland Security. And also it is exactly what I wanted to hear, you know, I mean working together, coordinating together, there is a lot of overlap between these two entities, I think, and the more you can coordinate and work together, not just to provide foreign assistance and humanitarian, which is vitally important for the Nation and the world, but also in this very important foreign policy that we are embarking on to counter this malign behavior from the Chinese Communist Party.

So, sir, let me just say thank you for that and I look forward to following up with you. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Mr. Barsa, I hope you take back some of the criticisms and problems that we have with what was submitted. I hope you take it back and I hope we can have productive discussions on how to improve it. We met with Mr. Green all the time and came up with putting our heads together and coming up with good things that are needed, so I hope we can establish that with you as well.

I will now recognize members for questions under the 5-minute rule. Under House rules, all time yielded is for the purpose of questioning the witness. Because of the hybrid format of this hearing, I will recognize members by committee seniority, alternating between Democrats and Republicans. If you miss your turn, please let our staff know and we will come back to you. If you seek recognition, you must unmute your microphone and address the chair verbally.

I will begin by recognizing myself for 5 minutes.

Okay, we will go to Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. Listening to the first three speakers, it is surprising to see the Administration cutting our foreign assistance budget. I think the Chairman and the Ranking Member were eloquent as to why we need to expand what we spend to help the developing world, and the Acting Administrator explained how the money that we do spend is spent effectively. Yet the Administration seems hell—bent on cutting this aid at a time of pandemic which is taking lives around the world and at a time when the disruption caused by the pandemic is leading to hunger, food insecurity, and debt, and at a time when this cutback is going to increase the influence of our geopolitical rival.

The particular cut that is being suggested is a 35 percent cut from what we appropriated last year. Down to 627 is what the Administration suggests, rather than the 9.5 billion we actually appropriated and this continues a trend. It would put our aid at less than one-tenth of 1 percent of our GDP at a time when there is general acceptance in the international community that nations should strive to spend seven-tenths of a percent, and many countries are above that, and when the average for wealthy nations is 0.4 percent.

So I wonder if the Acting Administrator can explain what—how would you explain to our men and women in uniform that they may be deployed, they may die in future crises that could have been avoided with expenditures far lower than what we spend in defense and war? How do we explain this Administration's cuts?

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, as you know, the budget you have before you today was developed over a long period of time, certainly started out long before the outset of the global pandemic. And as you are aware, certainly—

Mr. SHERMAN. If I can interrupt you then.

Mr. BARSA. Certainly.

Mr. SHERMAN. Then since the pandemic has arrived and Democrats have proposed substantial additional assistance in the supplemental appropriations bill, are you a strong advocate for that supplemental appropriation knowing that the original budget that you put together was before the pandemic?

Mr. BARSA. Certainly. We are in touch with OMB and State Department on a daily basis.

Mr. SHERMAN. How much should we have in supplemental appropriations for international development aid and assistance?

Mr. BARSA. OMB and the White House are fully apprised on the challenges we are seeing on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. SHERMAN. I need a number.

Mr. BARSA. I do not have a number for you, sir. That number you seek is part of a larger deliberation with OMB and the White House. It is part of a much larger package.

Mr. SHERMAN. Can I count on you and the Administration to advocate for a robust number?

Mr. BARSA. You can absolutely count on me to advocate for what I believe are our needs.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay. In May, our colleague Ami Bera joined with—introduced, many of us cosponsored, the bill to participate in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, the CEPI, an

alliance of countries and private partners whose mission it is finance and coordinate the development of vaccines for high priority.

The Administration has talked of discontinuing the PREDICT 2 program and moving to something else that seems ill-defined. Are we going—do you support CEPI? Do we continue PREDICT 2? And if we are not continuing PREDICT 2, what is the successor program?

Mr. BARSÁ. Okay, regarding CEPI, we certainly recognize there is an opportunity to leverage Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation, CEPI, their mandate to develop vaccines. Their goals certainly align with the objectives of USAID's global health security program to prevent the amplification and spread of emerging threats. So we are currently looking at potential partnership with CEPI. I have nothing to announce today, but we are having internal discussions about possible partnerships with them.

Regarding the PREDICT project, the PREDICT project was—had a normal life span to it, so it was extended past its normal termination date. So what we have is a follow-on project called Stop Spillover which is a natural follow-on to that. So.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay, so you do have a successor program.

Mr. BARSÁ. We do.

Mr. SHERMAN. I do want to ask, your predecessor stated on the record that USAID is committed to the clearance of land mines and unexploded ordnance in Artsakh or Nagorno Karabakh. Do you continue that dedication?

Mr. BARSÁ. Oh. Certainly, Mark Green, the predecessor's, dedication was well-founded. Happy to have received reports that we have almost had diminishing returns in terms of huge success rates in terms of the amount of work that has been cleared to date.

Mr. SHERMAN. We still need to finish the job.

I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH.

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

Mr. BARSÁ. Thank you, Administrator Barsa, for your testimony. I thank you for the work you are doing on COVID-19. You know, Congress in a bipartisan way came together and provided substantial new money to combat this insidious disease. My own state of New Jersey certainly has had its disproportionality in terms of death and sickness. Half of all of those who have died in my State were in nursing homes, so hopefully there are some lessons learned there for all of us going forward. But again, thank you for your leadership on that.

I would like to bring up two issues, the first is the Ebola issue. I remember I chaired four hearings on the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and Liberia. We all came together and we came up with significant amounts of money to combat that horrible manifestation of that disease. Likewise, that is happening again and I know we have spent \$342 million at USAID on the Ebola issue and I want to thank you for that.

And unlike Liberia and Sierra Leone, the DR Congo experience, there are now therapeutics. There is a vaccine that helps to protect our healthcare workers and, of course, other people. On June 25th, the Minister of Health for DRC declared the end of the Ebola out-

break in eastern DRC. It has affected 3,470 confirmed cases, about 2,287 related deaths.

But as you pointed out, there is a concern about a new outbreak. Maybe you could speak to that because vigilance, obviously, needs to be very robust. And again, thank you for the deployment. It is a story that has not been told by the media or anybody else that there have been vaccinations. I remember we had the doctor from Samaritan's Purse after he healed having gone to Texas come and testify at my hearing. He was one of the lucky ones who survived.

So many others, obviously, succumbed to death. But all those lessons learned from that horrible experience have now been applied and our government under both Administrations, the previous and this one, continue to work hard to find therapeutics and vaccines. So you might want to speak to that.

Second, on the Desert Locust crisis, I have introduced a bill joined by my good friend and colleague from California that frankly sets up a working group to try to be proactive on this locust problem. Obviously, it is a—Ms. Bass, who is our chairwoman; I am the ranking member of the Africa Committee. We have made it clear that we really want a forward thinking—this is not the last time the potential of a crisis here exists, you know, we are going to see it again and again. So this working group would come up with best practices on eradication hopefully on killing these bugs before they ravish the crops.

And on the food insecurity issue, FAO and others have all pointed to a looming crisis, but I still do not think we have done enough. I am not saying you, but I think as a world we have put \$20 million into the effort, but perhaps you could speak to that as well because you and I have talked so many times over the last 5 months. Kip Tom, who is our Ambassador to the U.N. food agencies, I have talked to him several times as well.

This idea of a new bill, and thankfully the chairman is putting it on the docket for next week, would create a working group that would really, hopefully, be forward thinking and do even more to mitigate this crisis.

Mr. Barsa.

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, Congressman. Thank you for your long-time support of USAID. It truly is the honor and privilege of a lifetime to lead the talented men and women of USAID, specifically when you see how for the Ebola, for our disaster assistance response teams, the way they deploy into the face of whatever crisis, and for, as you mentioned, Ebola, the herculean efforts in combating Ebola.

You know, we are so happy to see that, you know, while the outbreak in eastern DRC, you know, has ended, we remain very concerned and vigilant. We are monitoring nearly 1,200 Ebola survivors in the east DRC. We are monitoring the new outbreak in the northwest DRC. And we are always on the lookout—we are cognizant of the constant threats of new Ebola outbreaks occurring not just in the DRC, but other African countries as well.

So one of the things we are able to do is as the outbreak was coming to end in the east, we were able to pivot resources and re-deploy staff and equipment to deal with the outbreak. So watching that, watching the professionalism of the men and women that are

able to do that, it is a great source of pride for me. And, certainly, I have learned a lot since becoming Acting Administrator of USAID, and part of what I have learned is the life cycle of a locust.

Certainly, with the economic contraction of the pandemic, food insecurity is very much on my mind particularly in Africa. So one of the things I have learned, so certainly while aerial spraying is the preferred method to treat infestations, it has to occur in certain periods of the life cycle after the locusts hatch but before they grow wings. So what is key then is monitoring to ensure that the available aircraft with pesticides can deploy during that window.

So it has been challenging to maintain monitoring with the pandemic and some rains that are occurring right now, but we are adding additional resources to the monitoring to ensure that our partners at the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, can deploy aircraft and pesticides to meet and get to the locusts during that crucial period when they are most vulnerable to eradication.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much.

Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Okay, we are now going to call on Mr. Meeks who is coming here—he is not here, but he is going to come—

Mr. MEEKS. I am here though.

Mr. ENGEL. I know. All New Yorkers are always here, so.

Mr. MEEKS. But thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me first echo your concern about the appointment of Ms. Corrigan given the record of statements and I believe bigoted comments that she has made, and there should not be any tolerance for that at USAID or anyone that is heading an Agency such as that. So I want to, you know, first say that I strongly support your comments earlier.

And it is particularly important because most of us, just about all of us in the U.S. Congress this week are very heavy hearted and have a very heavy heart today with the passing of a great American and a true humanitarian, Congressman John Robert Lewis. And, annually, Representative Lewis and I, along with Representative Hastings, have proposed language to the State and foreign operations appropriations bill supporting efforts to foster diversity and inclusion in international affairs and provide protections for minority and indigenous populations abroad, so this year is no different. And in my estimation, there is no greater way to honor and continue Representative Lewis's legacy than by bolstering diversity and inclusion initiatives here in the United States and abroad.

I am going to have probably more questions than I expect to be able to, Ambassador Barsa, you will be able to answer, so I am going to try to ask them quickly. But maybe before or also afterwards, or I should say afterwards, you will give me some answers in writing if I cannot get to all of them. So let me also state that I want to reflect to the record that I believe that the Administration's requested budget cuts to humanitarian accounts are the wrong thing to do morally and it also absolutely sends the wrong message to the world.

So my first question, Mr. Ambassador, is do you agree that upholding diversity and inclusion while allocating and distributing U.S. foreign assistance is in our national interest? Do you agree with that?

Mr. ENGEL. Microphone.

Mr. BARSA. I am sorry. Yes, I very much value diversity and inclusion. Yes.

Mr. MEEKS. So therefore there should be accountability in that regards, and the first critical step to accountability on diversity and inclusion is tracking and reporting granular data as it relates to the companies, the organizations that USAID contracts with. So does USAID, to date, capture self-reported data on the composition of the companies it contracts with as it relates to gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation of shareholders, the board, and senior management?

Mr. BARSA. We certainly have the same, the high standards for diversity and inclusion of all the work. You are asking about the certain mechanics in how we hold our partners accountable. I am afraid I do not have that data with me, but I am happy to respond to the question for the record or work with you and your staff afterwards.

Mr. MEEKS. Very good. I would like to see the data if you have it, if it is on record, so that we can see it and know what kind of, you know, the number of African Americans that are on these various boards, et cetera, the diversity of the companies you are working with so that we can see the transparency.

And I would say that it would be a good idea that if you have this data that it be published annually for transparency and for accountability. And I would also like to work with you in regards to being committed to erasing the barriers for companies, including, you know, let you know that we are working together so that small and minority-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises and universities and nongovernmental organizations, currently, that many have come to me about encountering difficulties navigating the acquisitions and assistance process at USAID. So I would love to work with you on that end in the future.

Time is running out quickly. Let me just run this right past you. I am concerned, you know, we often talk about providing alternative development solutions to Chinese loans in Africa. However, the Chinese have effectively mobilized billions in loans each year to strategically gain access to major ports, railways, and other vital infrastructure and markets in Africa. And we have the largest financial markets in the world and I believe we can make deep inroads and have a greater impact in Africa by USAID, so I would like to talk to you in regards to that.

Also I just want to bring to your attention and ask you about, you know, the COVID pandemic has been devastating to livelihoods of hundreds of millions in Africa as well as those of African descent. Likewise, as we talk about, you know, Colombia, you know very well that I have been one of the co-chairs of the Colombia Caucus and Colombia is one of our strongest allies in the Western Hemisphere and I would hope that we would have a plan that we are looking at, you know, to make sure that African Colombians and indigenous community leaders and that we are protecting African Colombians and indigenous communities with USAID funds and assistance and efforts to protect these individuals.

I see I am out of time so I yield back. But I look forward to talking to you, and if you can answer some of these questions in writ-

ing afterwards or let's set up a meeting so that we can talk about some of these important issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you, Mr. Meeks.

I wonder if the witness would like to answer some of those questions?

Mr. BARSA. The witness would like to answer all of the questions. Certainly, there were a lot of topics covered there.

So, Congressman Meeks, certainly, as we have discussed before as you may be aware and others may be aware, as a former staffer here in the House of Representatives working for a former member here, I fully appreciate the role of Congress in not just appropriations and authorization, but oversight. So I certainly value and I know intuitively the best government is government where there is communication. So if I do not get to anything right now during my testimony, I look forward to getting back with QFRs and continued conversations at any point in time.

So a lot of things were being touched on right there. Certainly, and I will try to get them in order. Regarding infrastructure investments by the Chinese in Africa, certainly as we have discussed before, the partnership between USAID and the DFC is key in terms of helping identify other investments that we can make. One of the best things we can do to counter Chinese influence and Chinese investments is to gather information of onerous deals where the Chinese take advantage of other countries and their vulnerabilities and share that with other host countries so they do not go down the same path and allow the Chinese to take advantage of them. So we work on the information sharing.

We also work on alternatives development investment. Regarding Afro-Colombians, so as certainly heading up the Latin American Caribbean Bureau when I traveled to Colombia it was a great honor and privilege to meet with Afro-Colombian leaders within Colombia and other groups that have been traditionally disenfranchised. And I was proud to see the work USAID does in empowering them and helping ensure they are fully integrated into the economy and society, so I am pleased with the work going on in Colombia. I understand there is more to be done, but I am very proud of the steps we have made.

Congressman, there was another issue. I should have written it down. But anything I have not got to I am happy to respond to QFRs or followup meetings or phone calls.

Mr. ENGEL. Yes, there were a few other questions that Mr. Meeks had and so we will followup with you.

Mr. BARSA. Okay, happy to.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Chairman, will the chair yield for a question?

Mr. ENGEL. What? Who is asking?

Oh. Well, I am about to call on Mr. Chabot because he was here.

Mr. MAST. So no?

Mr. ENGEL. Well, I am willing to—Mr. Chabot?

Mr. CHABOT. Go ahead, if it is quick. Yes, go ahead, Brian.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Chabot. It is simply a question. Mr. Meeks was looking for diversity numbers.

Mr. BARSA. Oh.

Mr. MAST. And I was wondering, is there a metric that Mr. Meeks wanted to see met? Not just these numbers out of the blue, was there an expectation? Maybe Mr. Meeks could answer that later on somebody else's time, but that was the question. What number does he want to see met for all of those things that he was asking about.

Mr. ENGEL. All right. Thank you, Mr. Mast.

Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. And thank you, Mr. Barsa, for being here today and answering our questions. A number of us on both sides of the aisle have done a lot of work on the Rohingya genocide over the years, and I want to particularly recognize somebody who is not here or someone that is not in Congress anymore, and that is Joe Crowley, who had been very involved in this for a long time and I had worked directly with him. I cannot tell you the amount of work and how committed he was to this cause. There was a lot of other people, but he is not here to pat himself on the back, so I will. I mean, he was very committed, and a real loss to this institution, I believe.

So I was hoping that you could update us, Mr. Barsa, kind of what is going on. What is the outlook on the intermediate long-term for the Rohingya? And how does the Administration's budget request reflect efforts to support the Rohingya, as well as to hold the Burmese military accountable and alleviate the desperation of a million Rohingya refugees who are currently in Bangladesh rather than in their own country?

Mr. BARS. Thank you, Congressman. Certainly, in relationship to our government-to-government contacts, I would have to refer you to the State Department. But I am proud to report, since August 2017, the United States has provided more than \$951 million in emergency assistance to assist in the Rohingya. This support is to the refugees, the affected host communities in Bangladesh, and multiple conflict-affected populations within Burma with humanitarian development assistance.

We work with impacted host communities by providing support and development assistance. For example, 17 percent of the people in Cox's Bazar live below the extreme poverty line which is a full 5 percent higher than the rest of the community or the rest of the country, and we fully recognize that host communities have borne the socioeconomic brunt of the Rohingya refugee influx so our efforts go in to support not just the refugees themselves, but those host communities who are sheltering to give them space.

So I wish I had an answer as to when this crisis would end, but we are doing what we can to support the Rohingya.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. With all that is going on around the globe and in this country, it is easy for us not necessarily to remember those people, but there are an awful lot of people suffering, so. And I know the Administration is committed to improving that and we want to thank you for that.

I will move to another line. Last year, Congressman Connolly and I, in a bipartisan manner, introduced the Global Health Security Act, which I am pleased to say was included in this year's NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act, in which among other things affirms U.S. commitment to the Global Health Secu-

rity Agenda. Could you discuss how investments made under the Global Health Security Agenda have helped member countries cope with the latest global health security crisis, COVID-19?

Mr. BARSÁ. Thank you, Congressman. The United States of America and the United States people by extension are the most generous people in the history of the world. So our investments over decades in global health have enabled countries not just to deal with a crisis or an outbreak at hand, but to build infrastructure and capacity.

So we know, for example, clean water is an essential health service, and not all the countries have—able to provide clean water to all their populations the way they should. So part of the larger health investments we make are things like access to wash, clean water, and access to sanitation.

So a country's ability to respond to the pandemic is not just, you know, access and availability to PPE. It is the infrastructure that has been developed with the assistance of USAID over decades to help with detection, with communications, with all manner of services. Healthcare responses are best built upon an existing infrastructure. And so we are proud to be—I am proud to be leading the Agency, you know.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. BARSÁ. Yes.

Mr. CHABOT. Absolutely. And I am trying to get one more question in, so I will cut you off there. I apologize.

But the United States cannot solve every problem. We wish we could, but we cannot solve every problem around the globe. Could you identify some problems that you took a hard look at when crafting this budget and said this is just a problem the taxpayers could not or should not have to foot the bill?

Mr. BARSÁ. I do not have a specific example, but certainly we realize that USAID cannot do it alone. So I am happy to report that I have had regular meetings with counterparts in the U.K., Canada, to realize that a lot of developmental challenges are challenges that the developed world should tackle together.

So, while we are the most generous country in the history of the world, the most generous country now in development assistance, fully cognizant that not all the stress should be borne on our shoulders and that we should be working collaboratively with other countries.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. I appreciate it, and yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chabot. We now go to Mr. Deutch of Florida, who is with us virtually. How is the weather down there?

Mr. DEUTCH. We are doing Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks, Acting Administrator Barsa, for your testimony. We appreciate you joining us for this important hearing.

For nearly 60 years, across both Democratic and Republican Administrations, USAID has performed invaluable lifesaving work around the world from combating the spread of HIV/AIDS to providing access to safe water and family planning to investing in nutrition and education. And in an era of unprecedented humani-

tarian catastrophe even before COVID-19, the dollars invested in U.S. foreign assistance helped make our country safer.

During the pandemic, the importance of USAID has only grown. The supplemental funding for USAID's humanitarian accounts is a critical tool in the global pandemic response. As chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee, I know how critical our aid is to the Middle East and North Africa where over \$150 million provided to MENA countries supports pandemic response as well as vulnerable refugee populations.

But there is more work to do, and now more than ever reckless cuts to U.S. foreign assistance only undermine U.S. national security and global stability. USAID's importance and the importance of U.S. foreign assistance, particularly as we are seeing now for global health, is an issue of bipartisan agreement. And all of us on this committee, including my friends across the aisle, have rejected and will continue to reject cuts to USAID's budget that politicize the Agency's work, undermine its effectiveness, and threaten global and U.S. national security.

And, Acting Administrator, the bipartisanship is why I must join my colleagues in expressing deep concerns about recent appointments at the Agency. For the President to knowingly appoint people with a history of derogatory comments about refugees, LGBTQ people, and women, which also deeply contradicts USAID's mission, actually undermines the important efforts of USAID around the world.

Their past statements call into question their ability to effectively lead this important Agency and its dedicated work force, and I am not so inclined, Acting Administrator Barsa, to share your full confidence in these appointees and I would urge you to reconsider your support for their appointments.

Now with my remaining time, I would like to ask about the region that I focus much of my time on and in particular the West Bank. In August 2018, the Administration announced a freeze on all assistance to the Palestinians in the West Bank of Gaza subject to a White House review. At the end of 2019, Congress passed a law that I authored with Mr. Wilson to help remove legal barriers and restore Palestinian assistance. The assistance as you know provides funding to things like hospitals in East Jerusalem, Israeli-Palestinian co-existence programs, it fosters stability which benefits and strengthens the security of both Palestinians and Israelis, and it furthers the prospects for peace.

But since the bill passed, the Administration has continued its effective freeze. The USAID mission to the Palestinians is effectively closed except for a few staff members who work on regional programming. In April, the U.S. provided \$5 million in international disaster assistance funds to help meet the challenges of COVID-19 in the West Bank, and Congress approved \$75 million in economic support funds in a bipartisan way subject to all existing laws and conditions in Fiscal Year 2020 that the Administration has not yet spent. And on July 9th, the House Appropriations Committee passed a bill providing \$225 million for development and humanitarian assistance in the West Bank in Gaza.

Can you tell us, Acting Administrator Barsa, what is the status of the Administration's review of Palestinian assistance and will it

be completed in time to program the \$225 million that the House recently appropriated?

Mr. BARSÁ. Congressman, thank you for your question. Thank you for your longstanding support of USAID and thank you for your efforts of passing ATCA.

So I wish I had an answer telling you that the interagency deliberations have completed, but discussions on how best to implement ATCA are still taking place at the interagency level and I look forward to working with you and your staff once I have something to report on the implementation. But it is currently being reviewed to find how best we can move forward.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate that, Acting Administrator Barsa. Can you provide some light into what that interagency process looks like? Who has reviewed, who still has not reviewed? What needs to happen for that to be completed?

Mr. BARSÁ. Unfortunately, I do not have the details. Certainly, as any major policy, there are many actors who need to be consulted with, but these internal deliberations are still ongoing and really look—and I share your hope that these deliberations can finish shortly so we can report back to you on how we are moving forward.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate that. Are you a part of those deliberations?

Mr. BARSÁ. My staff is, yes. Certainly.

Mr. DEUTCH. Okay. So—and, presumably, they report back to you. Can you share with us who else is part of that process? It has just been ongoing for a long time and certainly it feels like it is being dragged along. Who else is participating in those? Can you tell us that?

Mr. BARSÁ. I am afraid I cannot comment on those internal deliberations, sir. But I share your desire that the internal deliberations do conclude rapidly so we can move forward, which is the intent of Congress. I fully understand and appreciate that.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate that. Again, the goal is to strengthen security and stability to advance the prospects for peace. That is what this funding can do if we can get through this process once and for all. And I appreciate your commitment to help see it through and hopefully quickly.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Deutch.

We now go to Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Barsa. I appreciate you being here.

Administrator, you said earlier this year that the USAID should not be doing and does not do works untethered from national security, I think; is that right?

Mr. BARSÁ. Yes, sir.

Mr. PERRY. Sound about familiar? Okay. Is it your assessment that the State and foreign appropriations bill under consideration pursues agenda items that engage in works untethered from national security policy, currently?

Mr. BARSÁ. I have not seen the details of the legislation, but certainly it is my belief, certainly, conversations with other members of the interagency, we are all in agreement that USAID is the

method of smart power or soft power. Since our inception in 1961, USAID has played a role in the national security apparatus and we are proud to do so.

Mr. PERRY. Anything in particular that you would like to elaborate on based on your experience that you have seen in the past that you would prefer not to—for us not to continue to engage on or expectations that you have in the conversations that you have had about what we will be forced to engage in based on the agenda in the appropriations bill as you understand it?

Mr. BARSA. I am afraid I am not quite sure I understand your question, sir.

Mr. PERRY. So is there anything that we are going to fund and forced USAID to do in the past that we should not be or that you think that we are going to be?

Mr. BARSA. I am not cognizant of anything.

Mr. PERRY. Okay, all right.

How do you think that USAID can help counter the malign actors like Russia and China in the Arctic?

Mr. BARSA. Well, in the Arctic that is a little bit outside of my zone. I certainly do not have a mission in the Arctic, so I would have to maybe perhaps defer—

Mr. PERRY. Should we?

I am serious. I mean they are there and you are an instrument of national diplomacy and national security and you are not present, right, that is—but they are.

Mr. BARSA. In terms of economic development programs, soft power projection, no, I am not currently in the Arctic.

Mr. PERRY. And we should not be as far as you are concerned?

Mr. BARSA. Well, we are certainly looking at always opportunities. For example, in Greenland we are proud to be part of the stand-up of a mission there. We certainly are looking for opportunities. We have no commitment yet on programming in Greenland, but we are certainly looking at ways that we can build our expertise to help out there, if need be.

Mr. PERRY. Okay. And is China and Russia also pursuing opportunities in that location and others adjacent?

Mr. BARSA. In terms of their activities in the Arctic, I would have to refer you to State or DoD.

Mr. PERRY. Okay. What do you think that there are some of the more successful tactics in pushing back against the Belt and Road Initiative both on the State and local level from your agencies or your director at standpoint?

Mr. BARSA. I think one of the best things we could do to counter the Belt and Road Initiative is to communicate. As I said previously, one of the best things we have to counter China is to let people know and build awareness about our true and honest pathway to self-reliance. Our development models could not be more diverse.

So, certainly, when I was leading the Latin American Caribbean Bureau, one of the things I was emphasizing was information sharing within the Western Hemisphere. So if there was an attempt by the Chinese to engage in a country, you know, whispering sweet nothings in their ear trying to lead them down the path that lead to debt diplomacy or onerous deals favoring Chinese companies,

one of the things I was trying to emphasize then and I am emphasizing now, is the ability to communicate, to have my teams, my missions in the field, share information of the Chinese past practices because once other countries realize the pattern of behavior by the Chinese, the information becomes more clear.

Then when the United States, through our programming, our work with the DFC, we can provide alternatives, then it is much easier. So the best thing we have to counter Chinese influence is to be honest and open and tell people what they are. Faulty PPE during the COVID pandemic, deals that only favor Chinese companies, there is a slew of evidence to show that our model is the preferred model.

Mr. PERRY. Do you think you have been successful? I mean does it work because—obviously, the communication I would agree is important, but, you know, money talks, right, and most of these places, they are very aggressively seeking financial assistance in that regard. And so while the rhetoric and the track record is certainly viable but money talks, so how successful have you been?

Mr. BARSA. We have been pretty successful. So, you know, so money does talk, but then there is the short-term moneys like Okay, you can get a whole bunch of money from the Chinese right now, but long term to show that you are going to be strangled by debt for decades and you are going to lose sovereignty and autonomy. That is part of the thing.

So part of what we try to do by communicating is realizing, hey, this short term, you know, check you are going to get from the Chinese, you are going to be paying that back for decades. You are going to lose autonomy. You are going to lose sovereignty. So money does talk, so part of what we try to do is communicate the long-term financial implications and the political implications.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Perry.

We now go to Mr. Keating, virtually.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Acting Administrator, you say you coordinate with the Department of Defense and Health and Human Services. I am in Armed Services as well. Were you notified in February when for the first time in our history a pandemic put us on a level of alert from the Department of Defense? Did they communicate to you, if you coordinated?

Mr. BARSA. Certainly, in February I was still leading the Latin American Caribbean Bureau of USAID, so I am afraid I do not have any answers as to what may have been communicated with the DoD at that time. I am happy to provide an answer for the record.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you so much. I co-chaired the subcommittee, we have had hearings, on Europe and Eurasia. Our allies have come together in unprecedented ways in Europe under the COVID-19 pandemic. Don't we have a force multiplier in general and specifically on by working with our closest allies?

Mr. BARSA. Well, we do, absolutely, sir.

Mr. KEATING. And do you think it undercuts everything you have said this morning in that case when the Global Response Pledge by these allies, and looking at North America alone, Canada were the co-chair. Didn't Mexico—Mexico participated in this, yet the

U.S. is absent. Forty-seven countries pledging to this, and do not you think that undercuts our efforts? We are sending at best a mixed message. Can you explain why that is in our best interest not to work with our allies on the Global Response Pledge?

Mr. BARSA. Regarding specifics of that pledge, I really cannot comment on that. But I can tell you is we—

Mr. KEATING. They have raised over \$18 billion together on this, but the U.S. is absent.

Mr. BARSA. In terms of the actual interaction, I would have to get back with you on details. But what I can tell you, I am in regular contact with my counterparts in the developed world—the U.K., Canada, and other contact group countries—so we are in coordination.

Mr. KEATING. Well, contact is one thing. If we just said—sorry, my time is limited, Acting Administrator. But you just said money matters. So, you know, it is nice to be in contact. Look at Mexico is involved in this. Forty-seven countries are involved and we are absent. It just strikes me as we are making a statement and a contradictory one to everything you said.

Mr. BARSA. Well, Congressman, I am afraid I am sorry. I believe we have some connectivity issues.

In terms of the larger principle of coordinating with other donor countries, that is very important and we certainly do do that. I cannot really comment. I am happy to get back to you in terms of that specific argument. But just because we coordinate internationally does not mean that every venue—coordination happens in a variety of different ways.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay. I—

Mr. KEATING. But this is such a pronounced one. It is a global pledge. And this is a no-brainer for the U.S. and we are not there, so I really think it is sending some kind of message to our close allies. It undercuts everything you are working for in USAID, and I find it just not only contradictory but mind boggling that we are not part of this.

In any case, I just question too when we are pulling out of the WHO, does not that curb our ability to work along the same lines you are saying? I agree, and you will never get a better supporter of USAID than I am, and this is something that is bipartisan on the committee, but when you claim these other major actions being taken, you cannot see how that undercuts your mission?

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, again, thank you for your long-term support for USAID. We are very grateful for that. Just a little bit of context in the World Health Organization. So last year, the World Health Organization received 4 percent of overall U.S. funding on global health issues. Ninety-six percent of our funds went to organizations or activities outside of the World Health Organization.

So—and since the decision was made to withdraw, we have been actively looking for alternative partners. Our commitment to global health remains strong. We will not be retreating from any corner of the world stage when it comes to global health matters.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay, thank you. We are going to have to leave it at that.

Mr. KEATING. But I have 10 seconds left. If you are looking for things, how about the Global Pledge, global response? It is there right in our face. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Keating.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, Chairman Eliot Engel, and we appreciate your strong and longtime bipartisan efforts on behalf of our country.

I am also grateful, Administrator Barsa, that you are here. Your prior service as a congressional staffer, you worked with a superstar, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, so I know you are well-trained. And, indeed, with our colleagues, Congressman Deutch and Keating, I have a great appreciation of what USAID has achieved around the world.

And you should correctly as you have pointed out, we are the most generous nation in the history of the world. And in line with that, with the Wuhan virus global pandemic, it is exacerbating the existing humanitarian crises around the world including as the World Food Program has estimated that there will be an 82 percent increase in people needing food assistance as a result of the pandemic, how is USAID prioritizing food security to respond to this?

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, Congressman. And yes, it was an honor to serve under Lincoln Diaz-Balart as well. I am certainly grateful for that in my life.

My first full day as Acting Administrator USAID was on April 13th. On that day, I sent out a video to the entire USAID work force laying out my three priorities. Priority 1 was the physical and emotional well-being of staff, priority number 2 was continuing our important operations around the world, and priority number 3 was thinking through the second and third order effects of the pandemic.

It was clear to me as I assumed the reins of my current position that the secondary, tertiary effects of the pandemic, its effect on fragile societies, economies, and democracies were things that are going to be with us for a while. Understanding this, seeing this coming down, I set up a planning cell within USAID. We are calling it the Over the Horizon Task Force.

Part of the goal of this task force was to break outside of silos and think collectively about the challenges that USAID is going to be faced with, not just in the next 3 months or 6 months, the next three, six, five, 10 years down the road. So food insecurity is certainly one of those challenges. As we have seen, we have economic contraction throughout the world which has led to disruptions in supply chains, abilities for people to harvest food, get food to market, so we are very concerned about that.

So our USAID partner of FEWS NET, they forecast globally a 25 percent increase in the number of food-insecure people in 46 vulnerable countries. So we are very much looking at again, the secondary and third order effects of the pandemic. This Over the Horizon Task Force, their work it should be completed by the end of the Fiscal Year and the data they provide from this comprehensive view is going to inform not just our decisionmaking at USAID, but it will inform conversations with OMB and the products of that

analysis will be shared with you and your colleagues here to help inform your decisionmaking as well.

Mr. WILSON. Additionally, I am really encouraged to see our relationship with India developing. I was honored to be with President Trump and Prime Minister Modi in Houston, the largest welcome program in the history of the United States, to welcome a foreign head of State. To see the relationship and the positive development that Prime Minister Modi has achieved, the world's largest democracy—America, the oldest democracy—what is our relationship now with India?

Mr. BARSA. I think it is a wonderful success story because our relationship has evolved from a traditional donor-recipient relationship to a peer-to-peer relationship. We are actually, right now, we are proposing a U.S.-India development foundation where we would help India mobilize their own resources to address the country's most serious developmental challenges looking to use innovative finance tools.

So that peer-to-peer relationship we have there is something we are extremely proud of and we look forward to working with them.

Mr. WILSON. And then another issue that has to be addressed is human trafficking, and so what are you proposing to address this?

Mr. BARSA. Well, again, similarly to food insecurity, I am concerned about human trafficking as well because certainly, again, during this COVID-affected world we are seeing malign actors not just at a State level, but criminal elements as well trying to take advantage of the situation. So all of our programming has historically had an aspect of countering human trafficking, trying to give light to it, trying to give capacity building and reporting and what not.

So again, just like food insecurity, I am afraid on the human trafficking front we may be seeing increases. I do not have the data in front of me right now, but my gut tells me that we need to be more on the lookout for that and that is certainly the message I am putting out to our missions.

Mr. WILSON. Well, we are grateful for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, sir.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

We now go to Mr. Bera.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, when I think about, you know, one of the best investments that we have made, you know, post-World War II, it really has been the aid and development plan. If you think about the history of what we have been able to accomplish in the last 75 years, the Marshall Plan, probably the most successful aid and development plan in the history of the world. Rebuilding Japan, you know, stepping up and taking Korea from one of the poorest nations in the world 40 years ago to this remarkable developed economy.

And, you know, Acting Administrator, you talked about PEPFAR and the millions of lives that that investment has saved, that is a testimony to the real impact of aid and development around the world, but also to the men and women that serve as our partnering and implementing agencies and NGO's and I thank them for the work that they do every day.

We face this unprecedented, you know, challenge, probably the biggest global challenge since World War II in the global pandemic, COVID-19. And, you know, Mr. Keating alluded to this a little bit and Mr. Sherman also talked about the legislation to authorize CEPI that Congressman Yoho and myself have introduced, the SAFE Act, Securing America from Epidemics. We think this is a smart piece of legislation and authorizing and, you know, funding CEPI would be incredibly helpful.

We also know the global alliance that is coming together with Gavi and CEPI and I appreciate your mentioning Gavi in your opening remarks. Part of this is the COVAX Pillar which, you know, is part of Gavi's initiative. When we think about it, there is roughly 200 COVID-19 vaccines currently under development around the world and that is why we need something like this COVAX Pillar.

You know, we may need more than one vaccine to beat this virus. We do not know which country is going to develop that vaccine, but we do know if we all work together at a global level, you know, if, you know, for instance the United Kingdom comes up with the successful vaccine for seniors, the United States may come up with one that works better for kids, you know, we have got to all work together.

And, you know, I think the President said it, you know, Dr. Fauci said it, and, you know, as a physician, I believe that until we find a safe and effective vaccine, manufacture not 300 million doses for the United States but six to seven billion doses, potentially, for the world and then distribute and vaccinate the world, we will not defeat this virus.

So, you know, I think that is why it is incredibly important for us to be part of this global alliance with Gavi, with CEPI, et cetera. And, you know, it is kind of this principle of safety in numbers that, you know, we do not know which vaccine is going to work and we can pull resources from around the world that does not preclude what the Administration is doing in terms of bilateral agreements. I believe it is complimentary to some of these bilateral agreements with the manufacturers.

Acting Administrator Barsa, would you share that opinion that, you know, it is important for us to be part of this global vaccine coalition, and how best can we engage in this?

Mr. BARSA. Oh, absolutely, I do agree with you. Certainly, we are proud of our work with Gavi. And again, for CEPI we are looking at ways we could potentially partner with them. But one of the things I think it is worth reiterating is vaccines are just one portion of the response. The holistic response to not just this pandemic but other healthcare emergencies, as again I mentioned before, my belief in the importance of having access to wash, water and sanitation services.

So a response to a pandemic, while vaccines are important, the holistic approach that we have at USAID gets to the infrastructure helping governments, you know, respond to the health crises. Often times you will see a health crisis and it follows a political border because sometimes there are challenges in terms of governance and governance ability to provide clean water and clean services, which is why our health accounts being fully integrated with the best of

our development portfolio we feel is the best way to build capacity for governance to strengthen their health systems and response.

But we certainly, certainly agree with the critical role vaccines, you know, have, should we have a vaccine. That is a portion of it, access to clean water, any other things also are critical, so proud to have that integrated here in USAID.

Mr. BERA. Great. And, you know, in my remaining time, you know, a few members who brought up the Chinese approach, you have brought it up, the economic coercion, et cetera, we will never have the resources as a single nation to necessarily combat the billions that China is able to do. You touched on multilateral coalitions of like-minded nations, and certainly when I have talked to the EU, our allies in Australia, et cetera, can you maybe give a quick example of some of the multilateral conversations that are taking place with regards to aid and development?

Mr. BARS. We are certainly, and similarly as I mentioned the DFC communications between organizations occurs at different levels, certainly at the staff level we are coordinating with the EU and others and I have participated in contact meetings and virtually via Zoom with counterparts in the U.K., Canada, and the rest of the developed world, so we are discussing it at different levels.

Mr. BERA. Right. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay. We are going to have to go to Mr. Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate it.

Mr. Barsa, thank you for being here. I appreciate the accolades Mr. McCaul said about the DFC, but that was a team effort. That was this body. That was Congress working the way it is supposed to on a bilateral, bipartisan manner. And we need to continue that because we are focusing on what is best for America, and if we do that things work out a lot better instead of dividing.

What the DFC does need and that is for all the members here, is it is critical that it has equity authority. We put in \$150 million that would run that but only if it has equity authority. If not, we need a billion dollars for that to work properly. And I know you know the numbers. You have talked with Adam Boehler, and it is imperative that when you are talking with the Administration or members of the Appropriations Committee, your ex-boss, recommend to him and how important it is to have that.

I want to move on and I want to go into some things and, you know, I tend to be real blunt on things and I know I offend some people sometimes. I know that is hard for people to understand, and I do not mean to, it is to call things out. And I heard Gregory Meeks talking about—and I have got the utmost respect for Gregory Meeks. The diversity, hiring, and things like that so that we have an array of all people involved, and I agree with that 100 percent.

But do you feel or are you mandated by Congress that that is the role of you as the Administrator for USAID or should there be a separate GAO person to do that or a special diversity inspector general? Real quickly, if you could answer that.

Mr. BARS. Certainly. My time in and out of government for decades of service, certainly different, you know, every organization has offices of civil rights or diversity. Certainly, I do believe the need for having a diverse and inclusive work force and to make

sure that everyone has opportunities not just in hiring, but in able to advance in terms of overall responsibilities and who should be in charge for the executive branch——

Mr. YOHO. Okay. And his question was he wanted the numbers on that. We have had that mandate for a long period of time, right? Do you have any feeling it is not being fulfilled?

Mr. BARSA. I am certainly cognizant that we can do better.

Mr. YOHO. Sure.

Mr. BARSA. So we recently had a GAO report that showed where USAID is doing better and I embraced the report and look forward to committing to improve at USAID, certainly within my span of control, what I can do at USAID.

Mr. YOHO. And that is all you can do.

Mr. BARSA. Yes, sir.

Mr. YOHO. What I want you to do is, you have people that monitor that stuff that make sure that is done. Your job is to make the mission and get responses from the mission. As I look at what you do, I have this pie chart and I am sure you have seen it. It is from CRS July 17, 2020, and it talks about, you know, where the money goes in USAID. You know, 26 percent humanitarian, 32 percent health and population, 12 percent—but when it comes down to the things that really make a difference in a country, which is infrastructure development, and I know that kind of flows into DFC, there is only 3 percent that goes in that.

We were talking about Ebola. I do not want to put you on the spot, but Ebola was discovered in the early 1970's, about 1974. The Canadians had a vaccine that was going through phase 1 trials, I think it was in 1976 or 1978, and it was tabled. Since the discovery of that virus, there has been a total of 12,950 people die from Ebola, total.

All right. So we knew about it, we could have done something, and this is why it is important that the bill Ami Bera and I have cosponsored for the authorization, the SAFE Act for CEPI is so critical that we get that through there, because what CEPI does, as you know, coordinates efforts between other nations to bring this together so that we are ahead of the next zoonotic, and it is important that we do that. I think your mission, and I do not want to tell you what your mission is, but you should triage any country we go into.

And I hear this body wanting to ding a President because he is cutting budgets. You know, in medicine with your eyes, there is myopia, there is hyperopia, and then there is another one called fecalopia. One is nearsighted, one is farsighted, and the other one is self-explanatory. We as a body, if we do not focus 15 or 20 years from now where this country is going to go, you think this budget cut is bad today, look at the pandemic. Look at the decrease in revenues. Look at the unemployment. And this body wants to ding a President.

By god, it is time that we raise up our vision and we look down the road of where America is going, because China is killing us around the—I should not say killing. They are beating us around the world and we can do better and we need to do better. And it is people like you and your organization that if you focus on a mis-

sion, you are going to make a significant impact for generations to come. And if we do not, we will be but a footnote in history.

I yield back, and I am sorry I did not ask you a question.

Mr. ENGEL. But we enjoyed it anyway, Mr. Yoho.

Mr. YOH0. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Next, we have Ms. Titus, virtually.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to the Administrator for being here. You know, I so admire the work of USAID. I have encountered parts of, or members of your team all around the country and places I have visited through the House Democracy Partnership and I always think that you do so much with so little. And the soft power that you exhibit and you provide is such a big part of our diplomacy and that keeps us from having to use military means.

But I am a little concerned with the—or not a little, I am a lot concerned with some of the people that you have on your team and you have defended them recently. And I know that Merritt Corrigan has been mentioned but she is not alone. And as somebody who has made statements that are contrary to, I think, what should be the goal or the mission of USAID, indeed, what has been stated as the mission, you have got Merritt Corrigan who called the U.S. a “homo-empire with a tyrannical LGBT agenda” and said that “women’s biological imperative is to be mothers.”

You have Mark Lloyd and he is the new religious freedom advisor who has shared numerous Islamophobic posts to his Twitter and Facebook pages, even called Islam a “barbaric cult.” And then there is Patrina Mosley who is advisor to you on the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. She comes from the Family Research Council that has been designated a hate group that spews anti-LGBT views and opposes sexual and reproductive rights.

Now USAID’s role is to champion the values of respect, empowerment, and diversity around the globe. You know, you have—you want inclusion, you want equality. You have a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination and harassment. I wonder how you reconcile these peoples backgrounds and agendas with the agenda of the Agency, how you are keeping track on what is going on in these various minority groups with these people now in charge of it, and what, how and where you are going to deal with that during this pandemic which often exacerbates the discrimination and harassment of these very same groups?

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, ma’am, and thank you for your long-term support for USAID.

As Congressman Yoho alluded and as everyone else has alluded, the importance of the USAID mission is critical. We are mission-focused. And I can again assure you and your colleagues that every USAID employee regardless of hiring category is held to the highest legal, moral, and ethical standards that USAID has always had.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. TITUS. Well, it just seems a little contrary to what you are supposed to be doing to have people in these leadership positions to take contrary positions or have a contrary agenda. How are you checking on some of this policy? How are you monitoring maybe the

impacts of COVID on the global LGBT community or on women's rights in some of these places where the virus has led to more violence perhaps or more harassment, more discrimination, if you have people in charge of these divisions who do not really have that mission in their heart even if that is what it says on their application form?

Mr. BARSA. Well, certainly, as I mentioned before so early on it was clear to me that this pandemic was more than just a healthcare crisis. The effect on fragile societies, democracies, and economies are going to be long-term and serious, so when you have economic contraction in any country in the world, you often see things that flow from that. Some of that is increased levels of violence, as we spoke before in possibilities of human trafficking, and particularly for women and other minorities who are more vulnerable. Women throughout the world have a greater percentage of involvement in informal economies, for example, so when you have economic contractions, those informal economies are the ones that are most often affected first.

So in terms of the onset of the pandemic, you know, our concern is that because of the secondary, tertiary effects of this pandemic, a lot of our work promoting inclusion and, you know, for women into the workplace, into the economies and societies, our protection of LGBTI, a lot of these things are put at risk. So we are increasing our surveillance on all these efforts and we are doing our best to rise up to the challenges as they present themselves.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. TITUS. Well, I hope that is the case. I know that people do not work for USAID because of the money. It is not a job they are going to get rich on. They do it because they care, that it is in their heart to go and pursue these kinds of programs abroad. It helps the people there and then it also helps us.

It just seems to me that it would be extremely difficult to pursue that agenda of equality and empowerment if you do not have it in your heart and, apparently, in the hearts of many of the people you have at the top levels is a very different kind of feeling that is not about those things that USAID has long stood for and pursued.

I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Ms. Titus.

Mr. Mast.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, most in this hearing, I do not know how many are still watching online, but it seems most have left. But an argument that I have heard over and over, bipartisanly, is one of the most frustrating arguments that I hear coming off of Capitol Hill. It is bullshit. That is the best way that I can say it and this is the argument. That people come into this room and stand on this Hill and continually say, well, what do I say to the service member going overseas that we could have prevented it by sending some U.S. taxpayer dollars somewhere else? That is a false narrative. It is a false argument that it is either one or the other, either we send something over in terms of U.S. aid or the U.S. service member has to go somewhere else and fight. That is not the truth and it should not be put forward on this committee. It is one of the worst things that I hear over and over.

Now I do not want to diminish the work that USAID does or the people that go out there and do it. They do some yeoman work, some outstanding work in some terrible places across the globe. But my colleague, Mr. Sherman, he posed the question early on. He said, what do we say to the service member who comes home injured, you know, saying that we could have prevented this by sending that food over or this over? We cannot allow that argument to continue. It is not true. It is a false argument.

You say to that service member, thank you for your service. Thank you for knowing full well the hazards of your chosen profession. Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, our men and women who put on a uniform in defense of this country, they know exactly what it is they are signing up for. They know exactly the hazards and the risks that are posed to them by the jobs that they choose to go out there and do, and they are proud of the work that they ask to go out there and do on behalf of every citizen of the United States of America.

And that is my biggest ask out of this hearing for anybody that is still watching online that is still in their offices or back home that did not come here to the floor of this hearing room, pay attention to that. Stop making that argument. Stop using our service members as an excuse to send the taxpayer of some U.S. working citizen over to some other country.

It is not to say that there are not good uses over there, but that cannot be the excuse because it is a false narrative. Here is a true narrative. Every time we send a dollar overseas somewhere else, we are taking a dollar that could have otherwise been spent here in the United States of America. So let's ask this question. Either we are in an outbreak and a pandemic or we are not. Either we are or we are not.

But if we are, is there a better time to take those dollars that would have gone somewhere else not on U.S. soil and keep them here on U.S. soil helping American citizens, helping people in our cities, helping people in our towns, helping people in our areas that are affected? If not now, then when do we say keep those dollars here in the United States of America? We do not need to look at this as though if we cut 35 percent from foreign funding this year that that is something that goes on in perpetuity forever or whether it is 20 percent or 10 percent or whatever that cut might be. Now is an important time to keep dollars on U.S. soil. Probably has not been a more important time in my generation to keep those dollars here to help Americans, to help people in our communities.

And the argument is that we have to send it over to somebody else and then we are using our service members as this false narrative to say that is why it has to be done. I will repeat my statement in the beginning. That is bullshit. And I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

I respect my friend from Florida's service. He talks about false narratives. He just presented one. The dollars going overseas are an opportunity cost because those are dollars not being invested in America and that has been proved false for decades. Dollars going overseas through effective programs are investments for America. They are investments in laying the groundwork for trade and in-

vestment. They are laying the groundwork for the creation of many kinds of new jobs for Americans. They are investments for expanding our economy. And as we are learning in COVID-19, we do not live on an island all alone. We are part of humanity. When something happens over there, it can affect us over here. Investing in health infrastructure globally protects Americans.

So I reject the narrative we have just been given, and I hope most Americans watching will too as well. Foreign assistance can be, when it is effective, a very inexpensive investment in all Americans' future and it protects the world from all kinds of harm—cyber, physical, economic.

Mr. Barsa, I did not hear your answer other than a reassertion that AID is committed to equity and fairness, but Ms. Titus ran, you know, gave you a catalog of individuals in your Agency who have spewed hateful statements about LGBT members, about those who adhere to the Islamic faith. You have one member on your staff from the Family Research Council that has been dubbed a hate group.

Are those people's views representative of yours or of the current philosophy governing AID?

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, I have to reiterate what I said before. While someone is working for me at USAID, regardless of hiring category—civil service, foreign service officer, or political appointee—everyone is held to the same high legal, moral, and ethical standards that have always existed.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Barsa, that does not answer the question. That begs the question. These are people with a history. Are you comfortable with that history in hiring them and having them on your payroll in representing the United States of America?

Mr. BARSA. I have systems in place to ensure that people who are representing the United States as USAID employees do live up to the high standard.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So if somebody came to you with an explicitly hate-filled, racist rant and a history of it, posting it, tweeting it, going on bots and spreading it, as long as they said, well, that was then, this is now, I will adhere to the standards of AID, from your point of view that is a qualified employee or at least it is not a disqualified potential employee?

Mr. BARSA. Throughout the appointment of political appointees occurs as a conversation between the White House and whatever agency in place. So regarding the vetting and placement of employees, I would have to refer you to the White House. What I can assure you, once they are in as an employee of mine at USAID, we have certain standards that we uphold people to.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, I have been working with AID for over 40 years and I have never seen it peopled with individuals who have those kinds of records and I think it is a shameful moment for AID, and it is shameful if you are right that those come from, because they are political appointees from the White House. It is another blot on this White House.

Let me ask real quickly, the proposal is you take a 50 percent hit. Given the pandemic we are involved in and its ramifications in refugee camps, its ramifications in aggravating the HIV/AIDS crisis that is expected to grow by 10 percent over the next 5 years,

how in the world can you absorb a 50 percent cut and do your job in meeting those many, many crises around the world?

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, Congressman. As you are aware and your colleagues are aware, the budget you see before you was certainly developed, started, the process that got us here with this budget started long before the outbreak of the pandemic, so extremely grateful for the generosity of the U.S. Congress with supplemental bills. I understand there is another one being negotiated right now. But the budget you see before you was developed before the pandemic.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So will there be a revised budget presented to Congress in light of the pandemic and in light of, and the analysis of the impact of the pandemic on your obligations and your opportunities to respond?

Mr. BARSA. So certainly my understanding is negotiations on a potential supplemental are taking place right now between OMB, the White House, and the appropriators. So certainly, we are in contact, close contact with OMB in terms of the challenges we are seeing here and now. And, certainly, one of the things I mentioned previously in the testimony, on my first day I put out an announcement to my staff that one of my biggest concerns was the secondary and tertiary effects of the pandemic.

So I have stood up an analytical cell. We are calling it the Over the Horizon Task Force to look outside of silos to look at things like insecurity, a backsliding in democracy, holistically, what the challenges are going to be before us not just in 6 months, but in 6 years on the out years. So this, the product of this analytical cell, this Over the Horizon Task Force, will go to inform conversations that we have with OMB, and the product of that task will be given to your colleagues to help inform your decisions so we can all be making data-driven decisions when it comes to allocations—

Mr. CONNOLLY. When can we expect to see that?

I know my time is up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARSA. The planning cell is due to be finished by the end of the fiscal year, so the end of September.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So we will see a revised budget by the end of—

Mr. BARSA. I am not saying you will see a revised budget. So the analytical cell, the Over the Horizon Task Force, which is looking at holistically the challenges, I should have that information to inform conversations about budget, that information should be available by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I know my time is up. I would just say to you as the committee of jurisdiction that is the originator of the authorization for AID, I would hope that we could get a revised budget that is much more realistic in light of the pandemic. My time is up and the chairman has been gracious. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I too, add me to the list as I stated earlier. I am incredibly saddened that you will not be back with us. Of course, I do not know if I will be back with us or not either. But, regardless, you have been nothing but class to me and I really appreciate it. And I still want to take you up

on that offer of hanging out with you in New York City 1 day. Somebody said that would be like an episode of Seinfeld, me and you up there, so I kind of look forward to that. That would be really cool.

Thank you, sir, for being here. I am really concerned about China and the Belt and Road Initiative. I guess I come from it from a little different angle. My father fought in the Pacific, fought the Japanese all the way across the Pacific, and then he went to China after the War, a short while, and fought the Communists. And I learned at a very early age some of their goals and things that were maybe a little different than some of my buddies growing up did.

And so I looked at them, I have always looked at China through, I guess, rose-colored glasses. Or not rose-colored glasses, but you know what I mean. I am just always very skeptical of anything they do, any initiatives. And I am wondering if you could explain to me a little more how we are responding to their Belt and Road Initiatives. And just I mean in a more of—I do not need the—I do not want all this technical garbage, I just want to know from the heart what you say that you all are doing.

Mr. BARSA. Well, thank you, sir. Well, from the heart, I did not have any family that fought in the Pacific in World War II, but I had a mother who fled communism as a young girl, as a young lady, and so I have a visceral mistrust for communist systems and I know what they do and how they abuse their people.

So, but coming in so you go with the data, so it is not just a visceral mistrust of the Chinese when you look at the data what they are doing across the world with debt diplomacy, with these one-sided deals where, you know, somebody said earlier money talks, but they give the promise of money in the short term, but with these long-ended conditions which basically tie up countries so they lose their autonomy, lose their sovereignty.

So one of the best things we can do is to provide alternatives to the Chinese development model. We truly have a development model which is premised on what is called a journey to self-reliance where we help countries stand up on their own, to stand up and get up on the own feet. So what we are doing across the world, you know, it differs. What we are doing in Latin America, showing, you know, deals that the Chinese did in Jamaica, letting other people know.

So our missions in the field have a key role in helping share information with countries who might be tempted to fall for Chinese lies. We also help with infrastructure development. Again, we mentioned our work with the DFC. We help find ways so we can invest in deepwater ports and other infrastructure in ways that benefit countries. Again, the best thing we can do to counter China is to be more open and talk about what we do.

Mr. BURCHETT. Well, what is working specifically? When you mentioned deepwater ports, I note for the record that actually China is building the deepwater port in Israel, which to me is alarming, but that is on another subject. But I would like to know what is working and what can we do more of that is working?

Mr. BARSA. Well, I can give you more details and anecdotes either for the record or following up with you later on, but an exam-

ple right now is what we have done in the Solomon Islands. We supported a critical infrastructure assessment by Solomon Island engineers. Bina Harbour in Malaita Province is one of the last undeveloped deepwater ports in the South Pacific where China has been angling for increased influence. USAID staff led the infrastructure scoping mission together with several agencies to assess the port and complementary infrastructure.

And because of our efforts and our openness, ultimately, the government turned away from Chinese support. That is one example. Happy to followup with you and your staff with more examples as well.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. Well, I appreciate that.

And, Mr. Chairman, I believe I am just about to run out of time, so I will yield back, maybe to Mr. Castro. I am not sure.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Burchett, you said such nice things about me, you can have all the time you want.

Mr. BURCHETT. Oh, okay. Well, if you bring me one of those New York pizzas. I actually drove through your area this past week. I have never been to New York and it is not Knoxville, Tennessee, I will tell you that.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, we want you to come back.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. ENGEL. Please do.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, brother.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Castro.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Administrator, for being here to testify. And as some of these questions or part of the question may have been asked, I apologize. I was on the House floor.

So as we speak about the meaning and significance of USAID global leadership during one of the greatest health crises the world has known, it is critical that USAID representatives carry out the true message and mission of USAID in a way that reflects U.S. values. However, a series of recent political appointments to USAID contradicts these values. At least three recent positions have been filled by personnel that have histories of Islamophobic, homophobic, and anti-immigrant comments. I speak specifically of Merritt Corrigan, Mark Kevin Lloyd, and Bethany Kozma.

Some of these comments include, "America is a homo-empire," ruled by the "tyrannical LGBT agenda" and Islam a "barbaric cult" and women should not hold office because they will "always advocate for themselves at the expense of men, and revel in it."

So, I know you did not make these comments, but you are the Administrator. And can you please explain to us today why these people remain in their leadership positions at USAID and will you take action to replace them? And, if not, please explain how USAID will mitigate the damaging message their representation imparts to partner countries and agencies and to USAID personnel who remain under the leadership of these people.

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, as the Acting Administrator of USAID, it is my responsibility to ensure that each and every employee of USAID, regardless of hiring category—civil servant, foreign servant, or political appointee—lives up to the highest legal, moral, and

ethical standards that USAID has always held in place. So I am proud to say that the work of USAID overseas and here at headquarters remains unimpeded by this. So we are very proud of the way we are executing our work, and again I can assure you and your colleagues that every employee is held accountable.

Mr. CASTRO. And I appreciate that and I do not doubt your sincerity in wanting it to be a place that respects all people. But you have some folks in key positions who have made very bigoted comments. Have you had a conversation with them? Have you admonished them, at a minimum? What action has been taken?

Mr. BARSA. I am not going to comment on personnel decisions, but again I can assure you and your colleagues that we have the mechanisms in place for oversight and ensuring that every employee regardless of hiring category actually lives up to the standards that we have and have always had.

Mr. CASTRO. I just want to convey to you what a damaging message it sends around the world for USAID, which is a development organization and it is supposed to help people in need, people of color, LGBTQ people, vulnerable people all around the world, to have folks like that in the employ of an agency, really, any Federal agency or government agency, but in the employ of what is our gem of reaching out to the world, USAID.

Can you tell me what role Johnny McEntee and the Presidential Personnel Office, PPO, play in pushing these people as nominees? Did you or someone at USAID first recommend them or were their names initially put forward by PPO?

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, certainly in this Administration and in my previous service in the Bush Administration, the placement of political appointees is with all Administrations, conversations between the White House, obviously, through the Office of Presidential Personnel, primarily, and the host executive branch agency.

Mr. CASTRO. Okay. I yield back, Chair.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much. Mr. Espaillet?

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Administrator, for being before our committee. Again, I also want to stress my displeasure, my objection to the precedence of folks that have made anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, Islamophobic statements in an agency that is really there to help other countries develop, and that should be an agency that recognizes diversity and allows for those diverse groups within the agency and in our country and abroad to develop.

And so I am concerned that these statements will hamper, if not break the development of good programs in countries that need the help, particularly during this pandemic across the world. And I would like to see the Administrator perhaps put out a statement that names these individuals and actually moves away from their statements in an unequivocal way to send a clear message that the Agency and his leadership does not stand for what those folks had to say. At the very least, if not look into their past impressive practices and see whether those practices will impair the Agency's ability to do the great work that they should be doing across the world.

My question is regarding—I know that, Mr. Barsa, you have a vast experience in Latin America and the Caribbean, and we see how the pandemic is now spreading throughout Latin America and

the Caribbean, Brazil, Mexico. We know that it hit early on Ecuador really hard, the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean and other island nations. And I want to know what is our plan with regards to the distribution of PPEs, ventilators, and other equipment, lifesaving equipment to those countries.

We can whine and complain about China, but the fact of the matter is that they go in there and they take ownership of major projects. I know that we have attempted to do that, but we have not done it in a significant way in the region. Right in our backyard we are being outflanked by China because they are coming in maybe in a predatory way, which I disagree with, but they are coming and taking on major projects and major infrastructure projects that are critical to the development of those countries.

So I want to know particularly now during this pandemic in the Caribbean and in Latin America, what is the plan for USAID to distribute PPEs, ventilators, other important equipment to help those nations? Mr. Barsa?

Mr. BARSA. Thank you, Congressman. Certainly, so my time, you know, my experience in dealing with natural disasters at Department of Homeland Security, one of the lessons it is ingrained in me, how disasters evolve over time. So a lot of the assumptions and decisions that are based in one period of time may be revisited as information changes, so we are seeing just that with this pandemic. So part of the benefit of us having our presence in this country's missions, we are able to work with the host countries in seeing what the needs are as it develops.

So regarding PPE, right now we are—we have a policy in place where our implementing partners are able to purchase PPE locally, but we are constantly assessing what the needs are in a particular country. The pandemic is hitting countries differently, so it would not be prudent to come up with a cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all to respond to the pandemic. So our response—

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Yes, but let me say, for example—

Mr. BARSA [continuing]. In each country is tailored to the specific challenges. So be it—

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Let me say, for example—

Mr. BARSA. Oh.

Mr. ESPAILLAT [continuing]. Administrator, you know, rapid test kits, which are needed everywhere because this is testing, tracing, treatment, the TTT. Rapid test kits, they are direly needed in many places across Latin America and the Caribbean. What are we doing to provide that to those countries?

Mr. BARSA. There is a comprehensive view we have toward the pandemic. Understanding that test kits are part of the response, they may not always be available, certainly in amounts we like, but again in terms of the tailoring of our response, the response of the pandemic in Haiti is different than the response in Dominican Republic and different from the response in Colombia. So we look to see what assets are available and what is needed. We try to tailor response in the best way possible to the country's specific needs.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Okay. Let me just say that it has been very difficult for the Latin American and the Caribbean and they are in dire need of test kits, of ventilators now, of course PPEs, and we are coming right into hurricane season. I want to know, Mr. Barsa,

what preparations has USAID done to help Caribbean countries that are on the pathways of hurricanes and will be hit hard right in the middle of this pandemic during this hurricane season? Is there any preparation from USAID to assist these countries?

Mr. BARSA. Again, Congressman, it is especially a great point of pride coming into USAID, especially from the Department of Homeland Security where I was so involved with so many disaster responses with FEMA, coming in to find a professional team at USAID so adept, so talented in disaster response.

But similarly to FEMA, our responses right now are modified based on the challenges of the pandemic. So we are closely coordinating with FEMA in coming up with best practices for hurricane response particularly when it comes to putting people in shelters. How do you do that with safe distancing? How do you do that with PPE for the displaced personnel?

So we are in constant communication with FEMA on sharing best practices and how to respond during the pandemic, but we are ready and we are braced for any hurricanes. Hopefully we will not have to, but we have seen, certainly, the reports that this may be a more active hurricane season than most, but we are prepared to the best way possible to respond.

Mr. ENGEL. Well thank you. And then we will——

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I am deeply concerned.

Mr. BARSA. Excuse me?

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I am deeply concerned about the hurricane season in the middle of the pandemic in that region.

Mr. BARSA. We all are. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Finally, the statement, on the statement, will you put out a statement on the appointees, their anti-LGBTQ, anti-immigrant, and Islamophobic statements?

Mr. BARSA. To ensure that there is no confusion, on June 24th I put out a statement publicly. It is available on the website. I can give it to you and your staff, reiterating our values—excellence, integrity, respect, empowerment, inclusion, and commit to learning. So I have reiterated——

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Will you name the names?

Mr. BARSA. I commit to you without naming names, because again all employees regardless of hiring category are held to the same high legal, moral, and ethical standards.

Mr. ENGEL. OK. We are going to have to go on to——

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Espallat. Mr. Guest?

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Acting Director Barsa, first, I want to thank you for taking time out of your schedule to be with us today. We are facing challenging times both as a country and challenging times across the globe. Also I want to thank you, you and I had the opportunity to visit by phone two and a half, 3 weeks ago to talk about some of our commonly shared interests and also to talk about some of the goals of USAID.

I wanted to talk to you, and I wanted to highlight a program that the USAID has there and that I am proud to say is housed in the 3d congressional district at Mississippi State University, Mississippi State's innovative lab for fish, and it is part of your Agency's Feed the Future Program. Since September 2018, and in part-

nership with other research universities, Mississippi State has the opportunity to manage that program and support USAID's aquaculture research and capacity building, and actually it has been implemented in five developing countries. We have seen that in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zambia.

And so this is a very important project, very important program where your Agency is able to partner with research universities so that we continue to export across the globe the opportunities for countries to better themselves and actually to be able to feed their populations. So, first of all, I want to thank you for your support of that program.

I want to thank Mississippi State University and my good friend Dr. Mark Keenum for partnering with USAID, and I want to thank Dr. Keenum for him being an advocate for global food security, as this program again will help feed more than 800 million people across the globe who suffer from hunger.

But I do want to ask you a question as it relates to again a topic that you and I had the opportunity to visit on a couple weeks ago, and that being the Nation of Venezuela. I know in your written report there on page 7, you address on page 7 and then page 8, you talk about the Administration's stand. You talk about how the Administration is working with the people of Venezuela to recover their country and actually to change their future as they seek to throw off the chains of a dictatorship that they are currently suffering. And so I just wanted to ask you for just a couple minutes if you could expand before this committee about things that USAID is doing specifically in Venezuela as we seek to help the Venezuela people again retake their country, and as you said, retake their future.

Mr. BARSA. Thank you very much, Congressman. Certainly, as I stated before, on the personal level of my mother having to flee Communist Cuba at a young age and growing up with that, certainly have a special place in sensitivity for the suffering of the Venezuelan people inside and outside of Venezuela. So I am proud to be leading an organization that is doing so much to alleviate or attempting to alleviate human suffering within the borders of Venezuela and helping with those displaced Venezuelans and to host communities and countries that are hosting them.

Certainly, to date, the United States has provided more than \$856 million in humanitarian and development assistance to support programs inside of Venezuela and with 17 neighboring countries. Our programs expand democratic spaces by supporting civil society organizations, independent media, human rights organizations, and the democratically elected national assembly and interim government of Juan Guaido.

Certainly, the suffering from the failed economic system of the regime led by Maduro, even before the pandemic, you know, we were seeing and hearing reports of collapsing medical systems, of malnutrition, and other suffering inside the border of Venezuela. Unfortunately, with the pandemic the situation has even gotten worse. Part of the tragedy before us is that Maduro's regime blocking our ability and other countries' abilities to get much-needed humanitarian assistance inside the borders of Venezuela.

It is extremely frustrating knowing that we could help alleviate human suffering and the regime will not let us get in humanitarian assistance, certainly in the scale necessary.

Mr. GUEST. Well thank you. And I am out of time, so, Mr. Chairman, at this point I will yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much. Ms. Wild?

Ms. WILD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Barsa, I do not anticipate that we will agree on everything, but I think there are a few things we can probably agree on. I would like to move through them quickly. Can we agree that responding to COVID-19 required Congress to pass emergency stimulus packages in both Houses to address the virus' spread in the United States?

Mr. BARSA. I am certainly grateful for the generosity of the U.S. Congress as a supplemental, and we have done our best to put that money to good use.

Ms. WILD. Can we also agree that we did not have sufficient money appropriated in Fiscal Year 2020 without those stimulus packages?

Mr. BARSA. Well, we certainly, throughout the budget process we could not anticipate something that had not occurred yet.

Ms. WILD. And can we agree that while we do not know when, there will probably be future pandemics?

Mr. BARSA. Well, I guess it is a mathematical possibility, yes.

Ms. WILD. Can we agree that addressing future pandemics will require global cooperation?

Mr. BARSA. We could agree on that, yes.

Ms. WILD. Great. Because eradicating a pandemic requires global cooperation, can you then, sitting here today as Acting USAID Administrator, commit to significant investments in global health and foreign aid in Fiscal Year 2021?

Mr. BARSA. I can easily commit to that because that is what we have been doing for decades.

Ms. WILD. Okay then. You would object to the decision to pull U.S. funding for the World Health Organization, and you would also object to the President's Fiscal Year 2021 budget which cuts foreign aid by 21 percent, especially since you know that international health organizations make up a large percentage of that foreign aid?

Mr. BARSA. I think this is where we part ways. No, and certainly, certainly the World Health Organization, the President's decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization was based on a number of factors, and certainly that is certainly the prerogative, and we certainly do not disagree with that decision.

As I stated before, in terms of our investments in global health last year, only 4 percent of the money the United States spent on global health, only 4 percent went to the World Health Organization. And since that decision has been made, we have been actively looking to find alternative partners to continue the work we have been doing throughout the world.

Ms. WILD. So now we need to find alternative partners because we pulled out of the WHO. The fiscal 2021 budget includes a 21 percent cut in foreign aid, but a 20 percent increase in modernizing our nuclear arsenal. How does that imbalance in the President's

priorities reflect our desire for global cooperation to deal with future pandemics?

Mr. BARSÁ. Ma'am, in my decades of service in government and outside of government, I have never met a government agency that said they had enough money. Certainly, these decisions on budgets are difficult ones that are Solomonic. You always have to, hey, I have scant resources, so in terms of the allocations between different agencies, I would have to direct you to OMB.

Ms. WILD. But you would agree, would you not, that the desire for global cooperation to deal with future pandemics is at odds with decreasing the budget for that kind of foreign aid?

Mr. BARSÁ. I am certainly cognizant that the decisions on the overall budget are difficult ones with scant resources and nobody has everything they would like to have. So we stand by the budget before you. It is the end of a—this budget before you is the end product of a process that started long before the onset of the pandemic.

Ms. WILD. But we have to adjust to changing circumstances.

Let me just ask you, do you have any idea what the COVID-19 pandemic has cost the American taxpayer?

Mr. BARSÁ. No, I have not seen—I do not have any of those figures before me.

Ms. WILD [presiding]. Well I would just ask that you heed the advice of President Bush's Deputy Assistant Administrator of USAID, Lester Munson, who said prevention is far cheaper than an ex-post cure.

With that I yield back, Mr. Chairman. I recognize Ms. Wagner for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Thank you. And I thank the Chairman, wherever he may be, for organizing this hearing.

And I thank you, Administrator Barsa, for your time this afternoon and for your service to our country. We look forward to working with you to strengthen our international development programming, promote support for humanitarian aid, and maintain robust U.S. leadership abroad.

Today, we are seeing rivals like China and Russia exploit instability and crisis to undermine democratic values and respect for human rights. The United States' insistence on collaboration and self-sufficiency makes us the partner of choice for countries seeking a helping hand to grow their economies, improve health systems, fight corruption, and so on. We must continue to play a leading role in helping marginalized, poor, and vulnerable people around the world build a better future.

Administrator Barsa, the Chinese Communist Party continues to disseminate dangerously inaccurate and misleading information about COVID-19 and its origins. How is USAID supporting programs to correct CCP falsehoods and ensure that our partners are basing pandemic response efforts on accurate information?

Mr. BARSÁ. Certainly, Congresswoman, thank you for your question. As part of your question, the premise of your question is these falsehoods are being perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Party, so one of the best tools we have in this information is to counter with our own information, to expose the lies when they occur, to find and to highlight instances of faulty PPE, faulty information.

So communication is one of our best tools. What we have going for us is the honest assessment of what we do, our developmental model, the options that we have in terms of helping countries on their journey to self-reliance to stand up on their own two feet. So we are doubling down on communications in the Indo-Pacific, Latin American Caribbean, and everywhere we are seeing the Chinese try to exert their malevolent influence.

Mrs. WAGNER. Thank you very much. When this global health request was developed we were not in the middle of a global pandemic. How is USAID working to prevent backsliding in our existing global health programs such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and maternal and child health?

Mr. BARSA. Well certainly the Chinese Communist Party's lack of transparency at the onset of the pandemic set us back and made things more difficult for USAID. Again, thank you again to you and your colleagues for the generosity in the supplemental bills so far.

When we first started our funding to respond to the pandemic, we initially targeted our efforts in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and Africa, some places that had high transit routes with China, which is more likely to be the start of this virus that started within China. Because of the lack of transparency we got there too late, so then we had to expand our work to now we are globally.

As was mentioned before, USAID has spent decades investing in global health infrastructure, access to clean water, strengthen epidemiological systems, a whole suite of activities, so we are proud of the fact that these investments have paid off in terms of better response, and it is lamentable that because of the Chinese all of these systems are being challenged.

Mrs. WAGNER. USAID is doing great work to advance the Indo-Pacific strategy, reassuring our allies and partners in the region. However, Southeast Asian countries on the front lines of escalating competition between the United States and China, I think, worry that a strategy focused on the Indo-Pacific will somehow diminish their role in regional affairs.

How will USAID promote Southeast Asian countries' centrality in achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific?

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Barsa, could you give a rapid response? Because I am told we are expecting a vote on the floor very soon.

Mr. BARSA. Very rapidly. We have a regional developmental mission in Asia, which is a regional hub for all activities in Southeast Asia, but the competition with China is certainly not limited to Southeast Asia. We are seeing, unfortunately, its competition worldwide. And happy to respond further with you with questions for the record.

Mrs. WAGNER. I appreciate that. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Mr. Phillips?

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Barsa. I appreciate your time today. I have to start by recounting our phone call on June 12th which I did enjoy, and I also shared some of the concerns shared by many of my colleagues about a number of the hires made. And rather than go over that ground again, I would be remiss if I did not bring it up, but I want to focus my attention on the Local Works program first.

As you know, it looks to advance locally led development in countries all around the world, which means local people becoming empowered to take the lead in the development process, including priority setting and decisionmaking, management, and a whole lot more. I love that program. I believe it holds up the Administration's priority of achieving self-reliance. I just welcome a very quick synopsis of your thoughts on the program, Mr. Barsa.

Mr. BARSA. I think the program is emblematic of exactly what we are trying to achieve, I mean self-reliance, to help private sectors in each country grow on their own, so to set the environment for the growth. I firmly believe that jobs aren't created by government but they are created by the private sector, so having these programs in place to help private sector and economies grow, exactly what is needed for long-term, sustainable economic development.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I could not agree more. And as you, of course, know, the program gets its funding from the Development Assistance Fund and the Economic Support Fund. You are also probably aware the President's budget requests ask that those two accounts be combined into one account, the Economic Support and Development Fund. Is that correct?

Mr. BARSA. Yes.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Okay. So I need to know, how can we ensure that such a valuable program on which we both agree is still fully funded and an important part of our development assistance when the core accounts that it funds are being collapsed into one and, unfortunately, significantly reduced, how can we reconcile that?

Mr. BARSA. Again, as I mentioned, Congressman, in my time, in my decades of service inside and outside of government, I have never been in a government agency or known of a government agency that had enough money as they would certainly like. Certainly, these are challenging times, scarce resources, so we stand by the budget before you. But you have my commitment that I and the rest of the USAID team will be doing our best with these precious taxpayer dollars to further these programs.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Levin? Okay, we move to Ms. Spanberger.

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

Thank you very much to the witness for being here. It is good to see you virtually like this. Thank you very much for testifying. USAID global health programs have been monitoring zoonotic diseases, so the diseases that spill over from animals to people, for more than a decade, and these programs have collectively been known as the PREDICT program. They leverage the expertise of health officials to respond quickly to disease outbreaks and prevent future outbreaks.

This lifesaving work has helped identify hundreds of viruses and enhanced the resilience of healthcare systems around the world. This Administration decided to shutter PREDICT ahead of having a replacement ready to go. Personally, this does not make sense to me given the proven effectiveness of this program, especially as experts have been warning for years about the very real threat of a pandemic.

Now I understand that there has been a short-term extension of the PREDICT program and a call for proposals for follow-on programs, but that is the basis of my question today. What is the status of extending PREDICT and/or setting up a successor program?

Mr. BARSA. Thank you for your question, Congressman. PREDICT was always planned on having a full life cycle and an end date. It is not that the PREDICT program is being shut prematurely. This is a natural evolution of the program and our follow-on program, STOP Spillover, was always planned to——

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Barsa.

Mr. BARSA. Yes.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Barsa, how can you say it is a full life cycle when we always have known that the future threats of pandemics existed? Why would the Administration choose to end a program that so far had proven successful without a replacement ready?

Mr. BARSA. Well, we——

Ms. SPANBERGER. So what is that successor?

Mr. BARSA. The successor is called STOP Spillover. It is building upon all the lessons learned from the PREDICT program and improving it, improving our ability to monitor zoonotic diseases. Instead of continuing something which may be outdated, again we are learning from the PREDICT programming, and our follow-on program which we hope to have an award by it in September, just a few months from now, is building upon all the successes of the PREDICT program to have a more robust, analytical——

Ms. SPANBERGER. What are these successes upon which STOP Spillover will be building upon?

Mr. BARSA. I do not have the exact data before me, but would be happy to get back to you and your staff on questions for the record or a separate briefing.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you. And what are the weaknesses of the PREDICT program that would require a new generation program and request for proposals?

Mr. BARSA. And again, happy to provide a briefing and more information to you, but it is not so much that there are weaknesses in the program, but just a natural evolution that you are going to have a followup program. But again, happy to get back to you with more details.

Ms. SPANBERGER. But Mr. Barsa, typically, within an evolution and evolution is continuous, here we have had a stoppage of a program that has been known to help our country and the world as it relates to the threat of zoonotic diseases and pandemics, and now we are in a process where we are receiving proposals for the next step in the middle of a pandemic? Do you understand the concern that many of us have that the timing is just inappropriate and hurting our ability to respond?

Mr. BARSA. I do not know if it is hurting our ability to respond. Again, our response—we can go back and have a more detailed discussion after the hearing. But again, this is always planned, I mean so we are no longer receiving proposals. That window closed on June 1st, and we are on the cusp of making an award and moving forward with the follow-on program.

Ms. SPANBERGER. But when the global pandemic struck, was there ever discussions that you were a part of or led or were aware of saying perhaps during a global pandemic where we are having massive closures, the U.S. economy is coming to a crushing end, and we frankly need our public health expertise, was there ever a discussion of maybe this is not the right time to pursue the shift?

Mr. BARSÁ. Well but again, certainly on how looking at how zoonotic diseases spill over and get into the human populations, that is on the front end. So, certainly, with the response to the pandemic, I mean a response comes from, you know, PPE, ventilators, access to clean water.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Yes.

Mr. BARSÁ. So again, the PREDICT program was extended, and this is the natural follow-on in STOP Spillover. In terms of the response to the pandemic, of course, we have been absolutely focused on that.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Okay. Well, certainly, given the death rates across the United States, I hope that while we are in a position we should focus on what has been working. We should focus on saving lives. And I continue to think that repeated attempts to cut public health programs, including those that catch diseases before they become the outbreaks and the pandemic such as COVID-19 that has now killed thousands upon thousands of Americans, I really cannot help but wonder about the role that PREDICT could have played in the lead-up to COVID-19 had it been able to halt the virus's ability to come to our country. And we are currently experiencing the costs of underinvesting in public health domestically and in coordination with our international partners.

And Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you for being here, Mr. Barsa.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. The gentlewoman yields back. Let's go back to Mr. Phillips because I cut him off prematurely.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Barsa, we had been speaking about the Local Works program. I appreciate your support of it. I encourage incremental investment because I do think it is one of the most compelling programs that we offer. I also want to talk about kids, youth. And the House Appropriations Committee included my request in their recent report that would "encourage the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in peace building and conflict prevention, management, and resolution as well as post-conflict relief and recovery efforts." We can all celebrate the fact that kids, youth are the majority population in many conflict-affected countries.

So my question to you, Mr. Barsa, is how will the Administration, how will you prioritize the role of youth in conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery, because I do believe they have a unique role to play. I would love your comments on that.

Mr. BARSÁ. Well thank you, Congressman. I think the old saying holds true, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So investments—

Mr. PHILLIPS. It is.

Mr. BARSÁ. So investments in education and making sure youth have access to education not just helps with economic integration and a country's economic development, but also in a societal and

political integration as well. And this is especially true in women by the way. We are always pushing for that.

So as part of our reorganization, we recently stood up the Bureau for Conflict, Prevention, and Stabilization to do just that, to put a focus to our efforts on investments to prevent conflict on the front end. So just like all the other things we have mentioned that are affected by the pandemic, I am also concerned about the challenges in education systems throughout the world and people not having access to education, so we are very attuned to the challenges and we are looking at our program to see what we can do in any number of countries to ensure that youth do have access to education because the consequences of youth in different countries not getting a full education are certainly negative and we would like to avoid that.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I appreciate it. I also want to talk about the GFA, Global Fragility Act. This week I passed an amendment in the NDAA that will expand upon the GFA to require that USAID ensures that the State Department's atrocity prevention framework is incorporated into the Country Development Cooperation Strategy in countries at risk of mass atrocities.

So my question to you, Mr. Barsa, is, does USAID have sufficient staffing with the right skills and training to successfully implement the GFA? And if not, what do you need?

Mr. BARSA. Congressman, first I want to thank you and your colleagues for your prescience in working on the Global Fragility Act. Certainly, again, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So in these fragile societies what the Global Fragility Act has done, what you did is you put a focus. So there are so many activities that USAID has involved with over the decades which go to support the concept and challenges of fragility.

In terms of the actual implementation of the act, as you know, certainly the act has tasked not just USAID but other elements of the interagency, so we are currently in discussions on the technical details of the implementation of the Global Fragility Act, and once those discussions are done I look forward to following up with you and your staff on the technical details of how we are going to implement the Global Fragility Act. But basically what we are doing is we are focusing many longstanding USAID activities to rise to the challenge of fragility.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. PHILLIPS. All right.

Mr. ENGEL. We move on to—

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Barsa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. The gentleman yields. Ms. Houlahan?

Ms. HOULAHAN [continuing]. Today. It was a pleasure to talk to you on the phone recently as well, and my questions will basically surround the same conversation that we had on the phone. I will take you up on your word that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and when we are talking specifically about the UNFPA, United—U.N. Population Fund—there was \$32.5 million that were appropriated for the Agency that I understand now will be transferred over to the International Organizations Bureau to USAID.

And while I think it is absolutely clear that no one can replace the work of UNFPA in places like Yemen and Venezuela and even in New York City, I want to make sure that we are going to continue to support the programs with the same mission that the funds were originally intended for. So I have not yet seen where Fiscal Year 2019 and Fiscal Year 2020 moneys appropriated for UNFPA will be reprogrammed. To where has the funding been relocated and specifically what programming is being supported, sir?

Mr. BARSA. So in terms of the details of how each, every dollar of those reprogrammed went to, I do not have that information before me, but happy to get back to you on questions for the record or a separate briefing for you and your staff.

Ms. HOULAHAN. I would really appreciate that. And I would also like to know, has the full scope and scale of the previous UNFPA activities continued with any new partners that you are aware of? Specifically, do the beneficiaries support the UNFPA mission in what was originally intended, the essence of the intent of that money?

Mr. BARSA. Again, ma'am, to get to that level of granularity, I am afraid I have to give you a separate briefing or a question for the record. But I am absolutely happy to do so.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And I would very much appreciate that too. What I would also like to know here in this audience is: can you ensure us that any transferred funds that will be going to our existing international family planning will be going to international family planning and evidence-based reproductive health programs that support access to contraceptives, ending maternal death, ending child marriage, gender-based violence, and female genitalia mutilation?

Mr. BARSA. Absolutely, yes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. So you can guarantee us that that will be the case that those moneys will go toward that?

Mr. BARSA. Yes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. That is excellent. And thank you for that assurance because I would definitely like to emphasize that there are many organizations out there, of course, UNFPA is an irreplaceable partner, but we really need to make sure that we are clearly directing those resources toward their original intent. And thanks for that and I would love to followup with you on a subsequent conversation about that.

My next question has to do with access to comprehensive health services. And I think that we can both agree that gender-based violence is a critical impediment to personal safety, to the economic empowerment, and to the long-term well-being of women globally. Is that something we can agree on?

Mr. BARSA. Yes. Of course, yes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. In 2016, the global cost of violence against women was estimated to be 1.5 trillion, or basically 2 percent of the global GDP, or roughly the size of the Canadian economy. It is sometimes referred to as the shadow pandemic. So clearly Congress has made addressing GBV globally a priority by appropriating at least \$150 million annually. The Administration did not request any specific funding for this issue. Can you explain to me why not?

Mr. BARSA. Certainly, our efforts to address gender-based violence, USAID efforts, have reached approximately 8 million people in Fiscal Year 2019; 62 USAID operating units reported activities to provide critical support and care to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and child early and forced marriages.

We know in conflict settings, and right now we are especially concerned in this COVID-affected world, that there is a potential rise in gender-based violence, so as part of all of our programs and all of our missions being on the lookout, looking for ways to prevent gender-based violence is part of our programming.

Ms. HOULAHAN. So why has not the Administration specifically carved out that in their resources and what they have asked for?

Mr. BARSA. And again, as mentioned before, the budget you see before you is a product of tradeoffs and difficult decisions in terms of resource allocations.

Ms. HOULAHAN. So I understand that budgets are a process of tradeoffs, but they are also a reflection of our values. And it seems to me not only should our values be in combating gender-based violence, but the economics of it would compel us to be putting resources toward that because an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

And I appreciate your time and I look forward to followup conversations with you. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BARSA. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. We will now go to Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Barsa. Would you agree that when an effective vaccine or vaccines for COVID-19 are developed that it will be in the U.S. national interest for everybody in the world to have access to that vaccine, or at least in every affected country?

Mr. BARSA. Well certainly pandemics know no borders, so certainly it would be beneficial to have wide distribution of a vaccine, of course.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Okay. Beneficial to us, not just from a humanitarian point of view.

Mr. BARSA. Pandemics respect no borders.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Okay. And so should the United States do our share with our allies and partners to ensure that everybody who needs a vaccine gets one, given that many of the affected countries are developing countries that may not be able to do it on their own?

Mr. BARSA. Well again, as mentioned before, we are certainly proud of the work we have done with vaccines for any number of diseases.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I am not asking what we have done. Should the United States play its role with our partners, with our allies, our fair share in ensuring that a vaccine is distributed to everybody who needs one?

Mr. BARSA. I believe we should. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Okay. What have we pledged thus far to that global effort? I mean as you know a number of our allies and partners have made specific pledges to aid in the distribution and development of a vaccine.

Mr. BARSÁ. I do not have any fixed pledges to report to you today, but we are concerned. We are waiting on certainly the production of a vaccine. And we will certainly——

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So the answer is nothing. We have pledged nothing.

Mr. BARSÁ. I have nothing to——

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well you would know if we had pledged something, presumably.

Mr. BARSÁ. No, sir. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So the answer is nothing.

Mr. BARSÁ. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I think Canada has pledged about \$800 million. I think Norway has pledged, if I recall correctly, \$1 billion. You know, you were asked about U.S. attendance at conferences and you said we have other ways of coordinating with our allies and that is fine. But at the end of the day, as we were discussing, money talks and so far we have not made such a pledge.

This is something I think we are committed to in a bipartisan basis here. As you know, the Senate is now working up their answer to our opening bid on the next coronavirus relief package. I have spoken to a number of Republican senators about this, and my understanding from press reporting is that the Republican proposal in the Senate put forward a very generous number for U.S. contributions to eventual distribution of a global vaccine, but that the White House is pushing back on this.

So again, I want to press you. What is the Administration policy? Does the Administration believe that we should do our share as a large and wealthy country to fund the distribution of a global vaccine?

Mr. BARSÁ. I am afraid I cannot opine on negotiations between the White House, OMB, and the appropriators.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. But you know what the U.S. policy is, the Administration policy?

Mr. BARSÁ. I know that the United States people, the U.S. Government has been, we are the most generous people in the history of the world and our investments in global health infrastructure are unprecedented and——

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I know, but that is a talking point. And what we are trying——

Mr. BARSÁ. It is also reality.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I understand. Look, I have sat where you sit, sir, and I have been through the murder boards and read the briefing books, and I know there are all kinds of ways they teach you how not to answer the question. But what we need here is a clear commitment from the Administration. You have it from Democrats. You have it from Republicans, including strong supporters of President Trump on Capitol Hill. We want to do our share and right now my sense is that we are getting resistance. Not from USAID, but from the White House to ensuring that we do that share.

When a vaccine is developed that is a critical moment, and there will be a tendency by some to say let's keep it. Let's not give it to anybody else. We did it. We developed it. We invented it. You know that sentiment is out there. So I want to hear, and if I cannot hear

it from you, I hope you go back and urge the Secretary and others to be very clear about this, the United States will do its share.

Mr. BARSÁ. It is not a talking point, but it is a sincere belief. It is a sincere statement of fact that I am proud in the men and women and the investments USAID has made in global health infrastructure, our ability to respond to pandemics.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Has made, past tense. We are interested in what happens—

Mr. BARSÁ. Well and we are still responding. Our generosity is ongoing and continuing.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Okay. And we have pledged nothing. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay. Mr. Trone.

Mr. TRONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing today. Mr. Barsa, we have all seen reports of the authoritarian leaders taking advantage of the pandemic to increase their crackdowns on free speech and independent press. Why are outlets like—this is why outlets like Radio Free Europe are so critical, but the Trump Administration has slashed the budget to the Agency for global media, and this undermines our efforts to help our allies and our own self-interests to slow the spread of these far-right, anti-democratic ideologies that threaten our basic freedoms.

How would USAID, how are you going to continue to support these independent media in countries like Hungary, Poland, Turkey, if you are deprioritizing tools that are proven to be effective for decades?

Mr. BARSÁ. Well certainly one of the things I am very proud of at USAID is our efforts on countering malign, criminal influence, for example, which basically rests on four pillars to focus on democracy and rule of law, independent media, energy independence, and economic diversification. Through our efforts, we have been able to turn the tide on Russian disinformation, for example.

For example, in Georgia, in April, Facebook credited USAID's local implementing partner for the removal of over 500 pages, 100 Facebook accounts, and 120 groups which were created maliciously by the Kremlin to, you know, to sow false narratives. In Serbia, we built partners' skills in fact-checking and debunking false narratives to expose Kremlin information, and I keep going on with other examples.

So we are very proud of our efforts to bring light to efforts not just by the Kremlin, but by the Chinese Communist Party as well.

Mr. TRONE. Well if we do not use things like Radio Free Europe, we cannot get out the true facts and we do not have to spend all of our time debunking the bad facts.

Let's talk a second about highlighting the importance of countering malign Kremlin influences throughout Europe and Eurasia, yet your budget request seriously reduces the capacity building and anti-corruption programs. So how is USAID going to counter these Russian maligned influences, and how would programming be impacted if these reductions are all enacted?

Mr. BARSÁ. Certainly Congressman, as stated before, the budget you see before you is the product of a long process of difficult decisions about how to allocate scarce resources. So certainly our work

in fighting corruption, not just in Europe but throughout the world, remains a critical part of all of our programming.

Mr. TRONE. Syria, Iraq, enormous amount of disruption in infrastructure and population displacement. The Trump Administration is trying to encourage increased foreign governments to put investment in these areas to help them recover. But the question is: will the U.S. continue to invest more, and what foreign donors have actually stepped up and been forthcoming?

Mr. BARSA. In terms of actual dollar figures by other donors, I have to get back with you the questions for the record or later on to brief you as to who has contributed what. But certainly, just most recently on June 30th, Ambassador Jeffrey, the Special Representative for Syria, announced nearly \$700 million in U.S. Government humanitarian funding. And certainly this included \$368 million in USAID funding for food and non-food aid inside Syria to meet the needs of the region.

But in terms of actual dollar amounts contributed by other partners, I will have to get back with you and your staff later on for that—with that information.

Mr. TRONE. What other partners have contributed? Forget the dollar amounts.

Mr. BARSA. I am sorry, sir. You broke up. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. TRONE. Name what other partners have contributed and skip the dollar amounts.

Mr. BARSA. I would have to get back with you. I think I know the answer here, but I do not have those in front of me. I certainly do not want to give you incorrect information, but I would like to followup with you on that one.

Mr. TRONE. That would be great. And what risks do you see of underinvesting? What is going to happen if we do not get this right?

Mr. BARSA. Well the short answer is human suffering is going to continue. So that is why we are so desirous in Syria and certainly inside Venezuela, when we see human suffering we certainly hope for our ability to get humanitarian assistance into needy populations in a free, equitable manner. So that is why, you know, we value every taxpayer dollar appropriated to us, and we want to ensure that it is spent wisely getting to the people in need. And we are proud to say we have those structures in place to do just that.

Mr. TRONE. Well thank you, Mr. Barsa. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. The gentleman yields back. As you can hear, there is a vote going on, on the floor. We want to thank all the members for their questions.

Mr. Barsa, thank you for being here today. And the Committee on Foreign Affairs stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:25 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

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

Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), Chairman

July 23, 2020

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Pursuant to H. Res. 965, Members who wish to participate remotely may do so via Cisco WebEx. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>:

DATE: Thursday, July 23, 2020
TIME: 9:30 a.m., EDT
LOCATION: 2172 Rayburn House Office Building
SUBJECT: The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
WITNESS: The Honorable John Barsa
Acting Administrator
United States Agency for International Development

By Direction of the Chairman

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Thursday Date 07/23/2020 Room 2172 RHOB

Starting Time 9:39 a.m. Ending Time 12:26 p.m.

Recesses 0 (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Eliot L. Engel

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No

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

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

SFR - Connolly

QFR - Engel, Sires, Cicilline, Phillips, Omar, Spanberger, Malinowski

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 12:26 p.m.


FBI Committee Hearing Coordinator

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
X	Ami Bera, CA
X	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Dina Titus, NV
X	Adriano Espaillat, NY
	Ted Lieu, CA
X	Susan Wild, PA
X	Dean Phillips, MN
	Ilhan Omar, MN
X	Colin Allred, TX
X	Andy Levin, MI
X	Abigail Spanberger, VA
X	Chrissy Houlahan, PA
X	Tom Malinowski, NJ
X	David Trone, MD
	Jim Costa, CA
	Juan Vargas, CA
	Vicente Gonzalez, TX

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Scott Perry, PA
X	Ted Yoho, FL
	Adam Kinzinger, IL
X	Lee Zeldin, NY
	James Sensenbrenner, Jr., WI
X	Ann Wagner, MO
X	Brian J. Mast, FL
	Francis Rooney, FL
X	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
X	John Curtis, UT
X	Ken Buck, CO
X	Ron Wright, TX
	Guy Reschenthaler, PA
X	Tim Burchett, TN
X	Greg Pence, IN
	Steve Watkins, KS
X	Michael Guest, MS

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FROM REPRESENTATIVE CONNOLLY

Statement for the Record from Representative Connolly The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request July 23, 2020

President Trump's FY 2021 international affairs budget continues the Trump Administration's unilateral retreat from U.S. global leadership through a reckless disinvestment in U.S. foreign assistance amidst a global pandemic. As threats to U.S. national security grow around the world, the Trump Administration's response is to retreat from our international commitments, eviscerate assistance to vulnerable populations, and cut the financial and human resources that support U.S. foreign aid. Today, I would like to highlight three issues that are critical to U.S. national security, but that Trump's budget undermines: global health, refugee protection and humanitarian assistance, and democracy promotion.

At present, the world is enduring the worst global pandemic in more than a hundred years. Already there have been more than 15 million cases of COVID-19 and more than 600,000 deaths globally. Public health emergencies such as this one will continue to occur, often in fragile settings. USAID, as a core implementing partner of the Global Health Security Agenda, helps to strengthen partner countries' capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. Yet, the President's FY 2021 budget would cut funding for global health programs at USAID by 34 percent. Adding insult to injury, earlier this month, the Trump Administration formally notified the United Nations that the United States will withdraw from the World Health Organization, cutting off a vital source of funding for global health needs in the middle of a pandemic.

The United States needs to promote global health security as a core national security interest and be prepared to respond to these crises as they arise. That is why I introduced the bipartisan Global Health Security Act (H.R. 2166), which codifies our commitments under the Global Health Security Agenda and designates a senior National Security Council official responsible for coordinating the interagency response to a global health security emergency. I am proud that this Committee passed that legislation unanimously in March, and it was included in both the House-passed HEROES Act (H.R. 6800) and the House-passed FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 6359).

During this global pandemic, refugees are particularly vulnerable due to crowded settlements, poor underlying health conditions, and lack of access to handwashing resources or adequate healthcare. Furthermore, we are likely grossly underestimating the disease burden among refugees due to poor testing capabilities and lack of prioritization for those populations. These conditions could create a perfect storm of destruction not only for refugees, but also the neighboring communities and countries in which they are housed. Yet, Trump's FY 2021 request collapses four humanitarian accounts into one, and slashes it by 35 percent. At a time when humanitarian crises from Venezuela to Syria to Yemen are driving massive refugee flows, the United States should exercise its global leadership by supporting refugees. This Administration's budget and record low admissions goal for FY 2020 send the opposite message. That is why I reintroduced the Lady Liberty Act (H.R. 3376)

to require the President to set the refugee admissions ceiling at a minimum of 110,000 refugees annually.

The global rise of authoritarianism and extremism presents the most formidable challenge to liberal democracy in a generation, and many authoritarian leaders are taking advantage of the global pandemic to further crack down on democratic freedoms. According to Freedom House, more countries have been experiencing democratic declines than gains every year since 2006. In the face of this democratic backsliding, the Trump Administration's response is to disinvest in democracy promotion and disparage our allies while cozying up to dictators. President Trump's budget proposes to gut USAID's democracy promotion funding by 35 percent. This approach neglects the core values of freedom and democracy upon which our nation was founded, and endangers U.S. interests by allowing our adversaries to flourish unchecked. That is why I led a bipartisan appropriations letter in support of robust funding for democracy assistance that garnered a record 129 signers.

We need an empowered, premier development agency safeguarding U.S. interests abroad. Unprecedented global health and humanitarian crises, democratic backsliding, and other threats to global stability require dedicated American leadership and engagement. Rather than demonstrating the U.S. commitment to face these issues head on, this Administration's foreign assistance budget says we're going to take a back seat.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**Questions for the Record from Chairman Engel
The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
July 23, 2020**

Question:

“How much of USAID’s expiring funds have been obligated to date?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) expects to obligate all expiring funds by the end of the Fiscal Year, and we are monitoring our obligations closely. As of July 23, 2020, of the \$14.7 billion in expiring funds apportioned to USAID across all accounts, the Agency had obligated \$11.8 billion and had \$2.8 billion in unobligated funds (of which approximately \$1.7 billion was Program funds and \$1.1 billion was administrative and Operating Expense funds).

USAID is working with our Missions throughout the world, and Bureaus domestically, to obligate all our remaining expiring resources prior to the end of the Fiscal Year. Consistent with statutory provisions, USAID will continue to transmit all required Congressional Notifications for expiring funds, and will work with our Congressional Committees of jurisdiction to address any concerns.

Question:

“For the past three years, Congress has, with bipartisan support, rejected the Administration’s proposals to slash the International Affairs Budget. Why is the Administration continuing to propose cuts in direct opposition to clear bipartisan Congressional support? How would severe budget cuts to development assistance impact our initiatives, development goals, and strategic partnerships around the world?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The President’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 proposes \$19.6 billion in funds that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) fully or partially manages. The Request provides USAID with resources for critical priorities such as civil society, global health, humanitarian-assistance response, and the private sector in our partner countries. The President’s Budget Request for FY 2021 also will advance the Journey to Self-Reliance, achieve our shared development goals, support strategic partnerships around the world, and maintain the United States’ role as the largest single humanitarian donor in the world.

The President’s Budget Request continues investments in programs such as the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Fund (\$200 million), which aims to help women prosper in the workforce and succeed as entrepreneurs, and empower them in the economy. This investment directly accelerates progress across all the sectors in which we work, including peace-building, food security, and health.

Question:

“Much of the proposed funding being cut from the foreign assistance budgets is being redirected to international security and homeland security. Knowing that a strong international humanitarian policy and overseas investment has been shown to lead to increased peace and stability, both in the countries of operation but also for the United States, what actions will you take as Acting Administrator to convey these messages to the Administration in order to protect the USAID overseas humanitarian budget and programs, particularly during these uncertain times?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The President’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 maximizes the resources provided by the American taxpayer through reforms while still maintaining the United States’ role as the largest single humanitarian donor in the world. Specifically, the request includes savings through the modernization of international food assistance and the consolidation of all international humanitarian programming at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) while also expecting other donors to pay their fair shares. Part of these reforms already have taken place in the newly operational Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), which brought together USAID’s Offices of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) and U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) to streamline and leverage our expertise and resources to address humanitarian needs more robustly, both in protracted, complex crises and in response to natural disasters.

The President’s Budget Request for FY 2021 also builds on USAID’s efforts to advance the Journey to Self-Reliance in our partner countries and our efforts to maximize the impact of the American tax dollar. Our Transformation increases the effectiveness of foreign assistance through advancing our field-driven mission, strengthening our technical expertise, and supporting our operations and staff around the world in a more coherent way.

Question:

“The final FY 2020 appropriations act included guidance for USAID to restore its personnel levels to pre-hiring freeze levels (consistent with FY2016 staffing levels). However, the FY2021 budget request proposes a 5% cut to USAID’s Operating Expenses. Can you please clarify --is your intent to continue to downsize USAID or do you intend to rebuild USAID to recover from the negative consequences of the hiring freeze? Would this proposed cut impede or slow USAID’s efforts to increase staffing?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: It is not the intention of the Administration to downsize the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Agency’s Interim Strategic Workforce Plan has assumed a permanent U.S. Direct-Hire (USDH) workforce of 1,850 Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and 1,600 members of the Civil Service (CS), consistent with the Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 enacted in December 2019. The Agency plans to reach these levels in FY

2021. The Office of Management and Budget formulated the President's budget request for FY 2021 prior to the enactment of appropriations for FY 2020, and assumed our on-board levels would only reach 1,302 CS employees and 1,757 FSOs in FY 2021.

Question:

"For the last two years, the Office of Management and Budget has proposed rescinding previously appropriated foreign assistance funding. Congress pushed back both times in a strong bipartisan way. International aid saves lives, is cost effective, and is in the best interest of the United States. USAID has trusted partners that program these dollars responsibly. By proposing rescissions, we cause unnecessary inefficiencies and delay the disbursement of much needed programs. Are you aware of any efforts this year to propose rescissions? And if rescissions are proposed, will you stand up for your budget and protect the lifesaving programs you oversee around the world?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: We appreciate Congress's bipartisan support for the appropriations and programs of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID is not aware of any efforts by the Office of Management and Budget to propose a rescission this year. USAID is committed to obligating all of our expiring funds fully for our life-saving programs around the world.

Question:

"USAID had a largely successful track record consulting Congress on the proposed changes to the agency under its Transformation initiative, which led to significant reorganizations of policy and personnel within the agency. One of these was the formation of the R3 family of bureaus, which had general support from the Congress given the transparency the agency has demonstrated, and the stated mission of both the individual bureaus and their collective, reinforcing support of each other as reorganized. Under your leadership, will you commit to continue this approach of transparency and communication with the Committee?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: I am very proud of the progress we have made with the Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3) family of Bureaus and the Bureau for Asia, and I am grateful for your support. I look forward to continuing an open and transparent relationship as we work to complete our vision of the U.S. Agency for International Development Transformed.

Question:

“Given that understanding, now that the Conflict Prevention and Stabilization Bureau (CPS) and its components are operational, will you commit to consulting with the committees of jurisdiction prior to any additional changes to the bureau's and office's mission statement and core values, including anything that would impact the ability to utilize appropriations?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Thank you for your interest and your support of the new Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS). We are honored to have the opportunity to shape and lead the Agency's elevated emphasis on preventing conflict and promoting stabilization as part of U.S. foreign policy. We look forward to our continued engagement and dialogue with Congressional counterparts as we continue on this important endeavor. We will ensure that CPS' programming and operations remain fully consistent with the relevant funding requirements and legislative parameters.

Question:

“We understand there are active investigations into Mr. Marocco's conduct during his tenure in the Executive branch. Was anyone at USAID aware of these prior to Mr. Marocco being hired at the Agency? Acting Administrator Barsa, you've stated that “the appointment of political appointees occurs as a conversation between the White House and whatever agency in place.” What consultation took place with USAID regarding Mr. Marocco's employment? Who, if anyone, in the R3 family of bureaus was consulted?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development always has held our employees, regardless of hiring category, to the highest legal, moral, and ethical standards, and we will continue to do so.

Question:

“USAID had previously notified Congress that, as part of the Redesign process with R3 leadership consisting of foreign service, civil service, and appointees, CPS would be headed by a civil servant, RFS would be led by a senior foreign service officer, and Trey Hicks, as a political appointee, would lead BHA. What is the justification for the change?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Peter Marocco serves as the Assistant to the Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS). The Administration determined it wanted to change CPS' leadership from a career civil servant to a political appointee.

Question:

“Previously, USAID had argued that Mr. Marocco’s appointment would “add to the heft” of the Bureau in interagency discussions. Yet Mr. Marocco has been the subject of multiple employee complaints at both the Department of State and Department of Defense, two of USAID’s primary interagency interlocutors. Given this pattern of conduct, why is USAID under the impression this will improve its standing in the interagency, rather than detract from it?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development always has held our employees, regardless of hiring category, to the highest legal, moral, and ethical standards, and we will continue to do so.

Question:

“The World Bank, the UN, and others have prioritized efforts to better work at the nexus of humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP Nexus) to address conflict prevention and fragility throughout all phases of crises and programming. How does the President’s budget ensure that CPS can fulfil the prevention component of its mandate in a robust way?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The President’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2021 and the flexible funding accounts provided by Congress will allow the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in its envisioned role as the technical lead and implementer for conflict-prevention programs in high-priority countries. The recent standing up of the CPS Bureau, and specifically the new Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention (CVP), strengthens USAID’s capacity and commitment to resolve conflict and prevent violence in support of U.S. national-security priorities.

In addition, CPS is part of the new Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3) family of Bureaus, designed to unite humanitarian assistance, development, and stabilization efforts with longer-term investments in prevention, resilience, and food and water security to create a unified intervention and programmatic pathway to assist communities to move out of crises. This closer strategic alignment of capabilities and collaboration among our investments advances U.S. foreign-assistance and national-security goals, and supports our global counterparts on their Journeys to Self-Reliance.

Question:

“Under your leadership, how will the new CPS Bureau prioritize and ensure conflict prevention is integrated across the entire agency to reflect the HDP nexus in its day-to-day operations, rather than the siloed lines of effort we often see today? Would you please share your plan for how the bureau will elevate prevention as a priority throughout the agency and be responsible for the Global Fragility Act?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Transformation of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which places the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) within the new Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3) family of Bureaus, helps elevate and integrate within USAID the prevention of conflict and other issues outlined in the Global Fragility Act (GFA). The R3 structure will ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing conflict across the humanitarian assistance, development, and stabilization nexus. R3 builds on USAID’s experience with efforts and expertise across the Agency to build resilience in areas of recurrent crisis. The new organizational structure is designed to overcome the challenge of siloed lines of effort.

CPS, as USAID’s lead on the prevention of conflict, already is creating deeper integration with all parts of the Agency in Washington, D.C., and our field Missions to support prevention efforts. CPS’ regional teams, through the Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention (CVP) and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), ensure seamless engagement to address regional and national challenges. CPS also brings dedicated senior leadership within USAID to discussions with the U.S. Government interagency around best practices in peace-building, preventing conflict and violence, and implementing programs to promote political transitions and stabilization. CPS further contributes leadership in civilian-military coordination to support U.S. foreign- and national-security policy in high-priority countries, to ensure the implementation of the GFA will benefit from essential civilian coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Question:

“Are the current funding streams for this Bureau sufficiently flexible to allow for prevention-focused work or are there barriers to the funding that Congress should consider for the future to better support that mandate?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Flexible funding is a critical component of the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and our ability to manage CPS programming effectively in a responsive, timely manner. USAID greatly appreciates the support from Congress on CPS’ flexible funding accounts and authorities.

Question:

“How does USAID intend to support the stabilization and conflict prevention of fragile contexts, such as in Burundi and South Sudan?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention (CVP) within the new Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) is the lead at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for designing programs in fragile contexts. CPS is part of the new Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3) family of Bureaus, through which USAID focuses on foundational elements that help prevent crisis and conflict from developing and keep countries on a track of inclusive growth and progress across critical indicators of human well-being. This stronger strategic alignment of capabilities and collaboration among investments advances U.S. foreign-assistance and national-security goals, and supports our global counterparts on their Journeys to Self-Reliance.

In the Republic of Burundi, USAID is funding a number of programs to prevent conflict. For example, the Agency is working to strengthen the resilience and cohesion of youth affected by violence to help equip them to manage trauma, engage with local authorities, improve their socio-economic condition, and peacefully manage conflicts. USAID is also working to increase the engagement of Burundian young people in peace-building activities and enhance their access to finance and economic opportunities.

In the Republic of South Sudan, USAID is empowering citizen action to mitigate communal violence and operate effectively in restricted political space by promoting dialogue, increasing the awareness of trauma, and facilitating access to information. Programming funded by our Mission in Juba will serve as a tool for flexible, strategic approaches to promote peace, civic engagement, and media opportunities across a wide range of local and national contexts. Programs like this fit within broader conflict-sensitive efforts, such as our Mission’s new scenario-based Strategic Framework, as well as the cross-donor [Partnership for Recovery and Resilience](#), which aims to strengthen communities with a strong focus on iterative conflict analysis and social cohesion.

USAID recognizes that actors at the sub-national level will drive much of the long-term change and resolution of conflict necessary in South Sudan. USAID seeks to improve prospects for peace in South Sudan through programming that supports civil society and credible actors to promote peace and reconciliation processes. Activities at the project level incorporate a people-to-people approach and empower citizen actors across a wide range of contexts and populations to advance peace, stability, and dialogue through local solutions, civic participation, and increased access to information.

Question:

“Reports indicate that USAID has been slow to obligate supplemental funding due to bureaucratic hurdles, policy indecision, and a desire to wait for State Department announcements. But, in the face of a global pandemic, we cannot delay. Your Agency committed to Congress that all of the COVID supplemental funding would be obligated by the end of this month. Assuming Congress appropriates additional funding to fight COVID-19 internationally, what will USAID do differently to speed resources to the field faster and in a more transparent manner?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Obligating supplemental funding appropriated by Congress for COVID-19 effectively and quickly remains our highest priority at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Providing our implementing partners with the necessary resources to manage critical emergency programs in health, water, sanitation, hygiene, protection, and food assistance on the frontline of the pandemic is at the core of our response strategy.

USAID is on track to obligate all \$558 million in supplemental funding for COVID-19 appropriated to the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account by July, 31 2020, just four-and-a-half months after enactment. USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) expedited its proven systems and procedures to obligate supplemental funding to our frontline partners on average within 37 days after receiving a proposal, approximately 40-percent faster than our typical timeline.

To remain compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, yet provide as much nimbleness as possible, the Agency established a webpage titled, “COVID-19 Guidance for Implementing Partners,” where organizations can find information on our available flexibilities in acquisition and assistance, and how to work with us to use them.

Question:

“What regions or countries do you expect to see an increase in COVID-related needs over the coming months? How are you planning for that?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The impact of COVID-19 has been global in reach. Through generous funding from Congress, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have provided assistance in more than 120 countries, and we continue to look for ways to maintain our decades-long leadership in health and humanitarian assistance. The United States cannot do it alone, though. We will work closely with other donors to identify ways to meet global needs and coordinate on ways to prevent future pandemics.

The pandemic will affect numerous countries in which USAID works. For example, the [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](#) at the University of Washington projects that the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republics of India, Iraq, The Philippines, and

Uganda will experience high case numbers and deaths over the next several months on both a *per capita* and absolute basis. Countries particularly vulnerable to the first- and second-order impacts of COVID-19 include those that have (1) weak health institutions; (2) a high level of social, political, or economic instability; (3) a lack of transparency and trust in their governments that leads to widespread misinformation or disinformation; (4) high levels of conflict and/or highly vulnerable populations, including refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers; and, (5) individuals who are marginalized or face discrimination. Given widespread country lockdowns, leadership changes, and the dynamic nature of how governments are messaging and educating their citizens on COVID-19, the specific countries and regions that are at highest risk will evolve in the coming months.

The United States will continue to be the world's leader in humanitarian and health assistance, in no small part because of the support of Congress, and we are now preparing USAID to meet the challenges and opportunities in a world reshaped by COVID-19. To this end, the Agency is undertaking a time-bound strategic review to look over the horizon at evolving humanitarian, development, and wider national-security and foreign-policy priorities. The Over the Horizon Strategic Review will assess the current landscape and future scenarios in a world altered by COVID-19, which will lead to a set of actionable recommendations to the Acting Administrator by Fall 2020 around how to adapt our policy, programs, and operations, to position USAID to achieve success in the medium to long term.

Question:

“This committee passed the Global Fragility Act last year to deal with this problem. How is USAID addressing weak and potentially failing states further destabilized by the pandemic?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken a number of immediate actions to prevent conflict and violence, promote stabilization, and encourage peace-building to address instability aggravated by the global pandemic. For example, USAID issued guidance that allows our Missions and other Operating Units to adjust the work plans for existing development programs, including those focused on peace-building, to address the effects of COVID-19. USAID also has used supplemental funding for peace and security efforts. For example, our West Africa Regional Mission funded community-level information campaigns to counter efforts by malign actors to erode social cohesion, sow inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions, and limit social liberties as the pandemic began to strain health care, close civic space, and undermine democratic accountability. In addition, USAID has issued new guidance to help our Missions and implementing partners apply best practices in conflict-sensitivity to the current environment, and to ensure the breadth of development and humanitarian activities are attentive to the specific risks of the context, follow do-no-harm principles, and optimize opportunities for positive change.

USAID also is preparing for the long-term effects of COVID-19, including the potential for increased fragility, through our “Over the Horizon” Strategic Review. USAID acknowledges that the pandemic and its follow-on effects will reshape the development and humanitarian landscape. Led by career staff and guided by senior leaders across the Agency, Over the Horizon

is taking a close look at USAID's policies, programs, resources, and operations, to determine how we must position ourselves to respond effectively in a world altered by COVID-19.

Question:

“This Committee has heard concerns from Madeline Albright, as well as the leaders of NDI and IRI, about democratic backsliding, with leaders taking advantage of COVID to restrict press freedoms, silence political dissent, and consolidate power in countries like Hungary, Bolivia, and Tanzania. How is USAID responding to leaders using their COVID response as a justification to quash fundamental freedoms?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The United States is committed to the protection of democracy, citizen-responsive governance, and human rights in the global response to the pandemic of COVID-19. Societies that respect and defend human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions, and the rule of law are best equipped to respond transparently and effectively to crises. A robust respect for human rights, as well as whole-of-society action, are necessary parts of the solution to public health crises. Governments must not use the pandemic as a justification for the repression of persons or ideas.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) knows that many autocrats and leaders of hybrid regimes are using the COVID-19 crisis as a pretext to tighten their grip on power by cracking down on political opposition, concentrating executive power, and curbing the ability of parliaments to exercise oversight. Repressive governments are using emergency powers to restrict freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and movement; limit digital rights; hold elections in a timing and manner that benefits them; and reduce transparency. In addition, many governments are intensifying crackdowns on independent media and journalists who are reporting on COVID-19, and entrenching or expanding digital surveillance.

USAID's programming has adapted rapidly to respond to these emerging trends during the pandemic of COVID-19. USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG Center) has mobilized quickly and responsively to provide technical resources, guidance, and design support to our Missions around the world as they develop new lines of effort aimed at combating democratic backsliding and/or to adapt existing programming during the pandemic. Many existing DRG bilateral, regional, and global programs were already operating in politically restrictive environments. Since the outset of the pandemic, some have pivoted to respond to increasing autocratic or authoritarian trends.

Using resources from the Economic Support Fund (ESF) provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020, USAID has funded activities to address and combat attempts to restrict press freedoms, silence political dissent, consolidate power, allow malign influences to flourish in unstable or conflict-ridden regions, and advance other related restrictions. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Bureau for Europe and Eurasia is investing \$5 million to assist civil-society organizations (CSOs) and independent media to increase public confidence in democratic

and governance institutions by empowering them to prepare for, mitigate, and address democratic backsliding. These activities will support civil-society actors to address issues related to independent media and investigative journalism; and the engagement, connectivity, and participation of citizens in governance processes and anti-corruption activities.

- The DRG Center is investing \$5 million to advance press and civic freedom by monitoring legal protections for journalists and CSOs; provide legal assistance where governments have used emergency laws related to COVID-19 to restrict rights; promote media integrity and communicate responsible information on the novel coronavirus; counter misinformation and disinformation; ensure the financial sustainability of independent media; and fund CSOs to promote transparent, citizen-centered governance. This work includes regional activities, as well as rapid-response, country-specific interventions in response to emerging needs (illustrative examples include in the Democratic Republic of Congo; the Republics of The Philippines, Mali, Moldova, Uganda, and Azerbaijan; and the United Republic of Tanzania).
- USAID's Mission in The Philippines is investing \$5 million to help civil society and the media to hold elected officials accountable for the response to the pandemic through case-documentation, virtual legal assistance, and rights-awareness campaigns.

For additional information regarding the U.S. Government's DRG responses during the pandemic to date, please see the public fact sheet, "U.S. Support for Democracy, Good Governance, and Human Rights in the Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic," issued on July 20, 2020, which is available at: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-support-for-democracy-good-governance-and-human-rights-in-the-global-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-2/>

For additional information regarding potential USAID programmatic responses to DRG issues related to COVID-19, please see the paper entitled, "COVID-19: Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Issues and Potential USAID Responses," issued in April 2020, which is available at: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/COVID_USAID-DRG-Issues-and-Potential-Responses.pdf

Question:

"Vulnerable populations have even fewer protections, and restrictions on movement can increase risks faced by those experiencing domestic violence. How is USAID addressing gender-based violence and needed protection in its COVID response? Why has this not been carved out of the budget?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The COVID-19 Task Force at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) expanded to include three Gender Advisors and an Advisor on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) to provide technical input to strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, and to provide technical guidance to our Missions and Bureaus to ensure alignment with the goals and objectives of the Administration's *Strategy for Supplemental*

*Funding to Prevent, Prepare for, and Respond to Coronavirus Abroad.*¹ For example, the Gender Advisor from the Bureau for Global Health helps develop and review all the Task Force's documents to identify and provide technical direction on ways to include gender considerations, particularly the needs of women and girls, to gain access to information and health care related to COVID-19. In addition, Gender Advisors across the Agency are prepared to provide technical assistance to our Missions to ensure they design a robust response to GBV, especially among marginalized and vulnerable populations, in their programming for COVID-19.

USAID's partners are responding to GBV, including by establishing and adapting secure and protected areas for women and girls; providing group-based and individual psychosocial support conducted by qualified professionals, with additional protocols to adapt to local physical-distancing measures; reinforcing GBV hotlines with additional trained staff; refining safety planning and risk-mapping, given current restrictions; and identifying "alarm" or alert chains especially to assist those unable to leave their homes.

Question:

"As this global pandemic is accelerating, we have heard reports that USAID's COVID-19 Task Force will be disbanded in September. The Task Force has been critical for coordinating USAID's response efforts – which will surely increase as the pandemic worsens. What are the criteria you will use to determine if and when to stand down the Task Force? If the Task Force is disbanded, how will USAID meet growing Coronavirus needs in the coming months?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The COVID-19 Task Force (TF) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided central coordination of the programmatic and operational response of the Agency's Bureaus, Independent Offices, and Missions. Under internal USAID policy in Chapter 112 of our Automated Directives System (ADS), Task Forces are intended to be short-term in nature. Within six months of the activation of a Task Force, the Task Force's Executive Director—in coordination with the Bureau for Management—must develop a stand-down plan and identify a target deactivation date based on input from members of the Task Force and key stakeholders. During this required deactivation planning, the Task Force considered USAID's programmatic response and obligation rate, the Agency's ability to transition the response to regular Operating Units, and the status of our active continuity-of-operations (COOP) incident. Based on these findings, as A-A/AID, I determined the Task Force should stand down on September 9, 2020.

USAID remains in an active COOP incident, and our COOP Plan is still in effect. As a result, I have endorsed the continuation of the Task Force's safety, security, and COOP function beyond September 9, 2020. Beginning on September 10, 2020, this function is the responsibility of the COVID-19 Readiness Unit. The Readiness Unit is smaller than the Task Force, but has the same authorities. Therefore, the Readiness Unit can act similarly and focus on further reconstituting and normalizing our operations as we continue to implement our *Roadmap to*

¹ Strategy for Supplemental Funding to Prevent, Prepare for, and Respond to Coronavirus Abroad, <https://static.politico.com/4f/68/adfdb19f4c9d996b4ced73de52e9/tab-2-strategy-for-supplemental-funding-for-covid-19-final-1.pdf>

Return and support the Department of State's efforts to implement its *Diplomacy Strong* framework. The Readiness Unit will engage across USAID to ensure that our programmatic and operational responses to COVID-19 meet the expectations of our stakeholders.

Finally, USAID recognizes that the pandemic of COVID-19 has had—and will continue to have—an extraordinary impact on the people, places, and partners to which USAID provides assistance. As such, on June 17, 2020, in conjunction with the Task Force, I announced the establishment of an Agency Planning Cell and Executive Steering Committee to conduct an Over-the-Horizon Strategic Review that would position USAID's development assistance to respond effectively in a world altered by COVID-19. These actions reflect USAID's commitment to continuing our response to COVID-19 while also stabilizing our worldwide operations and programming from response to recovery.

Question:

"The Administration recently donated more than \$5 million worth of ventilators to the government of Russia. This gift is only part of the Administration's plan to hand out ventilators worth more than \$200 million to various countries, some of which apparently don't need or can't use them². Given the very constrained resources to respond to COVID, specifically how is the administration deciding which countries receive ventilators and other assistance? Is it based on humanitarian need or are you balancing other interests? As the lead international development agency, does USAID inform those decisions? How? Has it supported the decisions on which countries to distribute ventilators to, based on its global health expertise?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Directorate for Resilience at the National Security Council selects the recipient countries, and sets the number of ventilators donated in coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Question:

"Recovery packages for developing countries offer an opportunity to "Build Back Better" and help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change and create sustainable jobs. What specific opportunities has USAID identified to ensure the COVID-19 response 'builds back better' - and drives development that is both climate smart and resilient to future climate shocks?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is investing across sectors to strengthen resilience to recurrent crises. Our field Missions are reviewing analyses conducted as part of the response to the pandemic of COVID-19 to determine how to pivot our existing programs and design new awards to "build back better" by addressing the primary and secondary

² "Trump is Donating Ventilators to Countries That Don't Need or Can't Use Them", *ProPublica*, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-is-donating-ventilators-to-countries-that-dont-need-or-cant-use-them>

impacts of the novel coronavirus. This period is one in which our Missions are addressing COVID-19, as well as other shocks and stresses, such as those linked to climate change, markets, and conflict. The intended results of these investments are to strengthen food and water security further; improve nutrition, health, and educational outcomes; promote peace and democracy; and strengthen resilience across all sectors to advance communities on their Journeys to Self-Reliance and a pathway toward inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

Question:

“Prevention is key to fighting COVID, and handwashing and safe sanitation are among the best tools we have in slowing the spread and in saving lives. It is our understanding that our bilateral WASH response has largely been constrained to settings with pre-existing humanitarian crises rather than including vulnerable communities living outside of an acute humanitarian setting. What is being done in areas outside of pre-existing humanitarian crises settings to implement WASH programming, support utility service providers, and support critical supply chains for items like soap and disinfectant? What is your estimate of the ratio of investments for emergency WASH responses vs. long-term development responses?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The actions the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken to prevent, respond, and recover from COVID-19 reflect a corporate approach, and include humanitarian, health, and development efforts. To date, USAID has invested supplemental and prior-year funding in water, sanitation, and health (WASH) during the pandemic in the following ways:

- \$4 million in bilateral assistance from the Emergency Reserve Fund for Infectious-Disease Outbreaks;
- \$115 million from the International Disaster Assistance account for emergency WASH activities in areas with existing humanitarian responses or where a health crisis has become a humanitarian crisis;
- Approximately \$2 million of supplemental funding from the USAID Global Health Programs Account for activities to prevent and control infections in health facilities and conduct other WASH activities in affected and at-risk countries; and
- \$3.6 million in supplemental funding from the Economic Support Fund for development-focused WASH activities in the Sahel and the Republic of Yemen.

Outside of existing humanitarian responses, USAID’s existing investments under the Water for the World Act in long-term sustainable WASH activities continue. We have not made many changes to this longer-term WASH programming because of COVID-19, since all USAID’s activities in sustainable, safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene contribute directly and indirectly to containing the pandemic by helping households and communities prevent the transmission of the virus, stabilizing basic WASH services, and building resilience against future shocks and crises.

Until a licensed vaccine is widely available, a reliable water supply to enable hand-washing with soap is among the most-effective tools, alongside physical distancing, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, without water, hand-washing is not possible. As such, USAID is doing the following:

- Helping to ensure that water stays on for everyone who currently has access, and assisting water-providers of all sizes extend their services where possible to reduce the number of households and communities that have to go without at this critical time;
- Responding to the dire financial situation many water-providers are facing by creating opportunities for them to gain access to new financing to remain solvent;
- Funding providers of water and sanitation to maintain access to essential supplies and commodities they need, such as spare parts, chlorine, and fuel for water pumps; and
- Working with water-providers in both urban and rural areas to adjust to their new realities, improve their planning, mitigate their risks, and adopt digital payments to prevent insolvency and maintain the safety of utility workers and customers.

Question:

“The Administration’s budget cuts Global Health Programs by 34 percent, but increases the budget for USAID’s Global Health Security, which works to improve health systems and address disease threats, by \$15 million. These proposed cuts, overall, would impact America’s ability to prevent and respond to future pandemics, having a direct impact both on the U.S. and countries around the world. Why won’t these overall cuts weaken our ability to respond to and prevent future pandemics? Won’t your cuts to global health programming further expose populations to the risks of future pandemics?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The President’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 enables the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to advance our strategic priorities, including winning the Great Power Competition and protecting U.S. economic and national-security interests. The Budget Request prioritizes supporting key U.S. partners and allies through strategic, selective investments that enable the United States to retain our position as a global leader, while relying on other nations to make greater contributions toward shared objectives, including in global health.

Question:

“The Administration’s budget proposes an 11 percent cut in funding for Tuberculosis, as well as a reduction in the US contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria, and TB. These complementary efforts have helped ensure US leadership in the fight against TB over the years. Further, COVID is causing a loss of field surveillance to detect TB. How do your proposed cuts NOT inevitably lead to backsliding in the TB successes we’ve seen in recent years and won’t we just be paying more later to address increases in TB?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Combating tuberculosis (TB) is one of the key priorities of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Two years ago at the United Nations General Assembly, former Administrator Mark Green launched the Global Accelerator to End TB, our new business model for fighting the world’s deadliest infectious disease. Alongside Heads of State from countries where TB is most prevalent and other partners, USAID committed to the ambitious goal of diagnosing and enrolling an additional 40 million people on TB treatment by 2022.

Over the past two years, the Accelerator has made impressive progress in building national commitment and capacity to respond to TB. Through the Accelerator, USAID has signed TB Partnership Statements for stronger collaboration and transparency with Ministries of Health in 18 countries; embedded technical advisors in 24 National TB Programs; and directly invested in 33 local organizations, including community and faith-based groups, to empower those most affected. In addition, USAID has increased our funding to support 31 grassroots organizations in 13 countries through grants under the Challenge Facility for Civil Society. Middle-income countries have higher burdens of TB and multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and a greater ability to pay for their programs than low-income countries. As the governments of these countries increasingly bear a larger share of the costs, USAID is working with them on programs to mobilize their own domestic resources.

In line with USAID’s work to advance the Journey to Self-Reliance in partner countries, the Accelerator’s approach prioritizes building strong and sustainable local institutions, which are on the ground and more readily available to help communities respond to TB. The Accelerator’s local partners have taken on increased importance in supporting the continuation of TB care during the pandemic of COVID-19, as many government health facilities have shut down.

As you have noted correctly, the pandemic of COVID-19 could potentially reverse years of investment, which could result in more undiagnosed and untreated TB cases and further the spread of the disease and the strain it puts on families, communities, and countries. USAID is monitoring the evolving situation in our TB priority countries closely, implementing mitigation efforts on identified issues, and coordinating closely with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria and other partners. Because of this threat, the Accelerator’s approach to build local solutions and develop more effective and efficient interventions is more important than ever.

The President’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2021 will enable the U.S. Government to remain the single largest donor to TB diagnosis, care, and treatment globally, through our Accelerator and our contribution to the Global Fund. These efforts complement each other to ensure the maximum effort to save countless lives and prevent the further spread of TB. As the

U.S. Government's lead Agency on efforts to eliminate TB around the globe, USAID will continue to build national capacity to recover from COVID-19's setbacks and end TB.

Question:

“The Committee has heard reports about a potential State Department move to take over global health security and pandemic preparedness from USAID. There has been no outreach from USAID or the Administration to the Hill on this proposed change, which would require Congressional approval. This approach seems counterproductive, as it would split off this work from other closely related global health efforts that are managed by your Agency. What would USAID’s view be on a move like this, particularly since it would negatively impact your broader global health work?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Preparing for, and responding to, a pandemic is a whole-of-Government effort, and there are many Federal Departments and Agencies involved in this work—each with unique strengths.

We look forward to working with all parties involved to ensure we are as effective and efficient as possible on behalf of the American people.

Question:

“What is being done to protect enduring/base WASH funding accounts for their original purpose as stated in the Water for the World Act, while ensuring that COVID response prioritizes WASH as a tool for economic development and COVID-19 recovery, as well as a priority investment for infectious disease control outside of healthcare settings? What steps have been taken by USAID to accelerate and facilitate USAID Missions’ to expand WASH programming, especially for activities supported under the Development Assistance and Economic Support Fund accounts? How much of the supplemental Global Health funding went to WASH activities?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The appropriated funding level for water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was \$435 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 and \$450 million in FY 2020, and USAID continues to meet all statutory spending requirements, including the directive on WASH. All USAID’s Operating Units and their funding levels have aligned with the Congressional directive on water and the Water for the World Act prior to and since the beginning of the pandemic of COVID-19. Within the scope of the Water for the World Act, USAID has prioritized WASH in our response to COVID-19 with investments across the spectrum of the Agency’s humanitarian, global health, and development objectives.

On April 23, 2020, the Agency’s Water Leadership Council—chaired by the Global Water Coordinator, a position mandated by the Water for the World Act, with senior representation from all our Pillar and Regional Bureaus—released [WASH: Strategic Approach to](#)

COVID-19 Response. This document outlines how USAID is prioritizing WASH programming within and outside of health-care facilities. However, all USAID’s investments in sustainable, safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene contribute, directly and indirectly, to the prevention of, response to, and recovery from COVID-19. We are enabling households and communities to prevent and control infections, stabilizing basic social services, and building resilience against future shocks and crises.

USAID’s Bureaus for Global Health (GH), Humanitarian Affairs, and Resilience and Food Security (RFS), and our overseas Missions, have begun WASH activities with emergency supplemental funds. GH has allocated funding to address WASH activities as a critical component of the prevention and control of infection in health facilities. An additional \$3.6 million in supplemental funding from the Economic Support Fund (ESF) has financed development-focused WASH activities explicitly in response to the pandemic of COVID-19 in the Sahel and the Republic of Yemen.

Question:

“Chairman Engel sent a letter³ in response to one you sent to the United Nations Secretary General, condemning the use of “sexual and reproductive health” in the UN’s global appeal for COVID. Your response did not address the underlying questions, but rather almost exclusively focused on the MISIP. Interagency coordination is essential to maximize the effectiveness of our work across the government. Regarding your inflammatory letter to UNSG Guterres, was Secretary Pompeo aware that you were sending your letter? Did any of USAID’s technical experts in humanitarian assistance, or sexual and reproductive health, clear the letter?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is expected to enforce the laws passed by Congress, such as the Biden, Helms, Kemp-Kasten, Tiahrt, Leahy, and Siljander Amendments, as well as to advance the Administration’s policies, including the Mexico City Policy and the expanded Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance Policy (PLGHA). My letter to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres reflects the Administration’s policies on protecting life in all settings.

³ “Engel to Barsa: Attack on Women’s Reproductive Health Has No Place in COVID Response”, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-releases/ContentRecord_id=0B081AD0-7FA2-43C4-83F3-A8DC0921BF9C

Question:

“In January 2017, the Administration reinstated and expanded the Mexico City Policy, also known as the global gag rule. Rather than restricting only family planning activities, the expanded Mexico City Policy now restricts the type of care that can be offered by all global health programs. Recent research from civil society groups indicates the global gag rule is disrupting health care services, weakening civil society, and halting national policy progress on health and human rights. How are you evaluating the impact of the global gag rule on service delivery? What process are you putting in place to regularly review service disruptions due to the policy and review any requests for exemptions? What criteria will you use to determine any potential exemptions? What effects, especially to women, has the policy had on access to care, particularly in remote areas where all health services are provided in one facility? What impact do you expect the further expansion of this policy, announced by Secretary of State Pompeo in March 2019, to have on access to health care in such areas?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) policy is designed to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds do not support foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning or provide financial support to any other foreign NGO that conducts such activities. The U.S. Departments of State, Defense (DoD), and Health and Human Services (HHS), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recently released a review of the implementation of the PLGHA Policy. As reported in the review, the majority of awards and sub-awards affected by an organization that declined to agree to the Policy’s terms did not experience disruptions of health care or significant delays in implementation. The review confirms that where the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) received reports of potential impact on the delivery of healthcare, the Agency and our partners took swift steps to identify other organizations capable of continuing similar programs while minimizing disruptions. Robust monitoring and evaluation of USAID’s health programming will continue.

USAID remains committed to funding health programs around the world, and has worked to transition activities to new partners as quickly as possible to prevent or resolve instances in which delays or gaps in care could occur. We are confident we can continue to meet our critical global health goals, including providing health care for women, while preventing foreign NGOs that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning abroad from receiving U.S. global health assistance.

Question:

“The budget request proposes to cut international family planning by more than 60 percent. This would mean that 14.8 million fewer women and couples would receive contraceptive services and supplies; 1.88 million more abortions would take place, the majority of which would be provided in unsafe conditions; and 8,880 more maternal deaths would occur. 214 million women in developing countries have an unmet need for modern contraception - do you believe that meeting that need is a worthy goal? What message does the administration’s proposed 61 percent cut to FY21 international family planning programs send to those women and the 24.3 million women and couples who currently receive contraceptive services and supplies? Can you explain how you plan to address the potential lives lost by these severe reductions in funding?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Trump Administration is a strong defender of, and the leading donor to, programs to improve the health, life, dignity, and well-being of women. The United States is the world’s largest bilateral donor for essential health care, including voluntary and informed family planning.

The Administration supports the empowerment of women and efforts to promote their access to health care across the lifespan, whether or not they are mothers. This includes investments in maternal health and promoting the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy through access to voluntary family planning. It also includes the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and their complications, including HIV; the prevention and treatment of fistula and female genital mutilation and cutting; and other interventions to address health-care needs specific to women and girls, excluding abortion as a method of family planning.

Preventing child and maternal deaths and improving women’s health are priorities for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and rely on investments and linkages to improve the health of women and children, including programs that focus on maternal and child health, nutrition, malaria, HIV/AIDS, other infectious diseases (including tuberculosis), and voluntary informed family planning. This effort relies on partnerships with national governments and other donors, and its continued success depends on their increased involvement. Self-reliance in voluntary family planning depends on a greater level of domestic resources in our partner countries.

Question:

“We know ensuring that women can utilize modern contraception would dramatically reduce maternal and newborn deaths. When women are able to space their pregnancies at least three years apart, they are more likely to survive pregnancy and childbirth, and their children are more than twice as likely to survive infancy. The proposed funding cuts, combined with the reinstatement of the global gag rule, would cut communities off from vital services. What impact will this have on U.S. development goals of preventing maternal and child deaths, controlling the AIDS epidemic, achieving gender equality, and empowering women and adolescent girls?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: As the world’s largest bilateral donor of assistance for voluntary family planning, the United States remains committed to helping women and their children thrive. Preventing child and maternal deaths remains a priority for this Administration. Access to voluntary family planning is a key intervention for achieving the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, preventing child and maternal deaths, and helping communities progress along the Journey to Self-Reliance.

Question:

“In the midst of this pandemic, USAID has hired several appointees with histories of Islamophobic and homophobic comments. This is especially concerning as we see the ripple effects of COVID-19 on human rights around the world. USAID’s Core Values are passion for mission, excellence, integrity, respect, empowerment, inclusion, and commitment to learning. Do you, as Acting USAID Administrator, stand by and affirm these values? Do you hold yourself and others within USAID to these values?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) always has held our employees, regardless of hiring category, to the highest legal, moral, and ethical standards, and the Agency will continue to do so under my leadership. Last year, USAID issued a policy statement on diversity and inclusion that said, in accordance with our core values, we remain fully committed to the fundamental principles that underpin a workplace in which all employees are proud of their work; are encouraged to collaborate, innovate, and learn; are respected for their uniqueness; and are valued for their different perspectives. To achieve our mission, one that promotes and demonstrates democratic values abroad and advances a free, peaceful, and prosperous world, we must draw from the strength of a workforce that represents these American values. As such, we strictly prohibit discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in all employment-related decisions, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, employee development, and retention. In work day in and day out with our staff to strengthen our core values as we remain mission-focused and committed to these principles.

Question:

“Other reports have indicated a history of anti-Muslim comments from another recent political appointee, Mark Kevin Lloyd, who has been brought on as a religious freedom advisor. What message does that send to your own Muslim employees and others of faith, including the people your agency is charged with helping overseas?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has always held our employees, regardless of hiring category, to the highest legal, moral, and ethical standards, and the Agency will continue to do so under my leadership. I am not aware of any allegations of discrimination by Mr. Lloyd or other actions that are less than professional since his arrival at USAID.

Question:

“For the newly launched Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the Administration proposes a four-fold funding increase, from \$180 million in FY20 to \$700 million in FY 2021. How is the Administration ensuring that the increase in funding to the DFC will not be at the expense of other programs?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: It is our understanding that the President’s request for an increase in the budget of the U.S. International Development Corporation (DFC) would allow it to take greater advantage of the authorities conferred upon it by the Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) Act, especially to make equity investments, in support of broader U.S. foreign-policy and development objectives. However, we would refer you to the DFC for greater details on its budget proposal and the justification for it.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supports the implementation of the DFC’s new tools and authorities, and we will continue to work closely with the DFC through the strong institutional linkages established pursuant to the BUILD Act. USAID applauds the establishment of the Mission Transaction Unit (MTU) within the DFC’s Office of Development Credit (ODC), composed mainly of staff from the former USAID Development Credit Authority. The MTU is dedicated exclusively to providing USAID’s Missions and Operating Units (OUs) with easy access to the DFC’s expanded set of development-finance tools. USAID’s Missions and OUs originate and help structure transactions through the MTU, often coupled with complementary technical assistance provided directly by USAID and our partners, which enhances the achievement of the goals of both the DFC and USAID.

Question:

“In addition to USAID, we now have two other agencies with a development mandate: MCC and the new Development Finance Corporation. How do you coordinate what each agency does and where? Despite USAID’s presence on the DFC board, there have been concerns about the lack of strategic direction of the DFC, relying on individual deals rather than fitting into the broader development agenda. How does this impact USAID’s strategic planning, and use of its limited resources?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The development mandates of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) are complementary to the mandate of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). We view both of our sister Agencies as critical partners that can strengthen our ability to achieve our development objectives. USAID coordinates closely with both the MCC and the DFC, in Washington and in the field, and at both the leadership and technical levels, to maximize the effectiveness of the U.S. taxpayer dollars provided to all of us.

The Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act that created the DFC provides USAID with a number of ways to contribute toward the Corporation’s strategic direction and development agenda. At the leadership level, the USAID Administrator plays an active role as the Vice Chair of the DFC Board of Directors. Beyond the quarterly meetings Board of Directors, DFC Chief Executive Officer Adam Boehler and Acting USAID Administrator John Barsa have initiated regular meetings between the leaders of various USAID Regional Bureaus and their counterparts in the DFC’s Office of Strategic Initiatives to discuss current deals, potential future opportunities, and region-specific economic and political trends and developments. Moreover, USAID also detailed a veteran USAID Senior Foreign Service Officer with development experience and deep knowledge of both USAID and the broader interagency process, Andrew Herscowitz, to serve as the DFC’s first Chief Development Officer (CDO). USAID also established a dedicated team at our headquarters to serve as the primary institutional interface between USAID and the DFC. This Private-Sector Engagement team is headed by a Deputy Assistant Administrator within the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment, soon to be the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation.

As with the DFC, the USAID Administrator plays an active role as a member of MCC’s Board of Directors. Moreover, USAID’s field teams work to align our technical assistance with MCC Compacts and Threshold Programs whenever possible. One example is the recently concluded successful MCC Compact with the Government of the Republic of Malawi. USAID effectively leveraged this \$350 million investment in energy by strategically deploying transaction advisors under the USAID-led Power Africa initiative to work closely with the MCC to design the next phase of the ongoing [Southern Africa Energy Program](#). This activity builds directly on MCC’s investments and ensures that energy-sector reform in Malawi continues, which contributes to the sustainability of both programs.

Another example of direct MCC-USAID collaboration include the now-completed MCC Compact with the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which focused on the water sector. MCC and the Jordanian Government designed the Compact with the active participation

and cooperation of staff from USAID's Mission in Amman, as a direct follow-up to a successful investment in water infrastructure funded by USAID.

Question:

"The Administration's proposed budget includes severe cuts to and elimination of environmental programming. Once again, the Administration request includes no funding for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and for the second year, requests no funding for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), which Congress funded at \$140 million in FY 2020. Do these cuts signal a shift away by USAID from acknowledging and addressing climate change impacts on development?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) acknowledges the risks and impact a changing climate has on our activities. USAID systematically assesses, addresses, and adaptively manages climate risk in new strategies, projects, and activities through a process called climate-risk management (CRM). CRM improves the effectiveness, resilience, and sustainability of USAID's efforts, which ensures U.S. taxpayer dollars are well-spent and more effectively support governments, civil society, communities, and the private sector in our partner countries on their Journeys to Self-Reliance. CRM helps improve our entire portfolio, from projects on HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Mozambique, to educational programs in the Republic of Uganda, to investments in water and sanitation in the Republic of Haiti.

Question:

"USAID has a successful track record of working with other agencies on international biodiversity conservation and combating wildlife trafficking. For example, the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment, or CARPE, has been addressing biodiversity loss, deforestation and combating wildlife trafficking by partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to strengthen protected area management and biodiversity protection in the Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo. I understand there have been delays in the congressionally mandated transfer of FY19 and FY20 funds from USAID to FWS for CARPE. What is the status of these congressionally mandated transfers to FWS, and how is that impacting the effectiveness of these conservation activities?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Thank you for your question about the long-standing partnership between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DoI) to conserve biodiversity through the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). When Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 funds become available, the Agency will obligate them to support critical programs, consistent with the law.

Information on the funding transfers from USAID to DoI/FWS for FY 2018 and FY 2019 for work in Central Africa appears below:

- USAID transferred \$12.3 million in funding appropriated for FY 2018 to DoI/FWS for CARPE via an Inter-Agency Agreement under Section 632(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended, on August 27, 2019.
- DoI/FWS obligated the FY 2018 funds into grants and cooperative agreements before the funds expired on September 30, 2019. However, of August 26, 2020, DoI/FWS had not transmitted award letters to the implementing partners, because of DOI's concerns that FWS does not have sufficient oversight and safeguards.
- We refer you to the Division of International Conservation within DoI/FWS for specific information on how delays in these award letters might have affected conservation efforts. USAID is aware that the non-governmental organizations that are awaiting awards from DoI/FWS are postponing or scaling back some planned activities
- Prior to the end of the Fiscal Year, USAID obligated the CARPE funds for FY 2019 into our Development Objective Agreements (DOAGs) with governments in Central Africa to ensure the funding would not lapse. USAID continues our conversations with DoI/FWS regarding the further programming of these funds.

Question:

“The Administration recently donated more than \$5 million worth of ventilators to the government of Russia. This gift is only part of the Administration’s plan to hand out ventilators worth more than \$200 million to various countries, some of which apparently don’t need or can’t use them. Given the very constrained resources to respond to COVID, specifically how is the administration deciding which countries receive ventilators and other assistance? Is it based on humanitarian need or are you balancing other interests? As the lead international development agency, does USAID inform those decisions? How? Has it supported the decisions on which countries to distribute ventilators to, based on its global health expertise?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Directorate for Resilience at the National Security Council selects the recipient countries, and sets the number of ventilators donated in coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Question:

“One such appointee, deputy White House liaison Merritt Corrigan has argued against the “false pretense of [women’s] equality with men.” And stated that “The false song of feminism [. . .] has [. . .] stolen from us the pursuit of our fundamental purpose, the fulfilment of our biological imperative to be mothers.” By contrast, USAID has an entire office devoted to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the administration has made women’s economic empowerment a cornerstone of its international development agenda. Your own Agency states that, “for societies to thrive, women and girls, men and boys must have equal access to education, healthcare, and technology. They must have equal control of resources, lands, and markets. And they must have equal rights and opportunities as peace-builders and leaders.” Do you agree with Ms. Corrigan’s belief that the role of women in society needs to be narrowed to the scope of child-bearing?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: As of August 3, 2020, Ms. Corrigan is no longer an employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Question:

“Ms. Corrigan directly contracts your Agency’s values, tweeting last year that “We have to speak out now about the transsexual agenda before it becomes normalized” and “Our homo-empire couldn’t tolerate even one commercial enterprise not in full submission to the tyrannical LGBT agenda.” Considering Ms. Corrigan’s outspoken vitriol for members of the LGBT community, can you explain to the Committee how she will be able to satisfy USAID’s goals and values of inclusion and equality? How can she represent American values to the world?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: As of August 3, 2020, Ms. Corrigan is no longer an employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Question:

“Does USAID employ individuals who fall into the groups marginalized and attacked by Ms. Corrigan’s remarks? Muslims? Supporters of liberal democracy? LGBTQ people? Immigrants? Females?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: As of August 3, 2020, Ms. Corrigan is no longer an employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID employs a diverse workforce without regard to race, sex, gender, religion, color, or sexual orientation. We take any claim of discrimination seriously, and we will investigate any complaints our employees raise about bias in the workplace.

Question:

“COVID-19 is the latest zoonotic disease to become a global pandemic. As human pressures on nature grow, the frequency of zoonotic diseases that jump from animals to humans have increased. Today, three out of every four new diseases are zoonotic, and most of these originate in wildlife. The risk of zoonotic spillover is higher than ever, given trade in high-risk species for human consumption, unregulated and unsanitary markets selling wildlife and wildlife products, and the destruction of forests and wildlife habitat for human development and agriculture. To protect against future spillover events, we must proactively address these root causes while at the same time ensuring the food security of rural communities that rely on wildlife for protein and nutrition. What actions is USAID taking to integrate its efforts to prevent these drivers of disease spillover – including forest loss, food insecurity, and the high-risk and illegal trade in wildlife – into the Agency’s global health and pandemic disease prevention approach? Please describe the specific strategies, focus countries, and programs where this integration is taking place, both within USAID and in coordination with other U.S. Government agencies such as the State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Drivers of spillover of zoonotic disease are complex and require a comprehensive, integrated approach among human, animal, and environmental health (referred to as a “One-Health” approach) to mitigate the risk of exposure to, and the spread of, potential zoonotic pathogens, including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecological systems, as well as agricultural intensification and extensification, have significantly increased the overall risk of outbreaks of zoonotic disease. The portfolio of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable landscapes, and global food-security support work to combat trafficking in wildlife, strengthen food security and the availability of alternative protein sources for vulnerable communities, and conserve and mitigate pressure on intact forest landscapes and other high-biodiversity areas.

Understanding high-risk contexts for viral spillover is critical for the immediate and long-term prevention of zoonotic disease. Through USAID’s Global Health Security (GHS) Program, surveillance of wildlife and human populations has provided insight on where, when, and how emerging zoonotic viruses spill over at specific animal-human interfaces, and helped to strengthen the capacities of governments, communities, and the private sector in partner countries to reduce the risk of disease spillover. Building on this knowledge base, USAID has designed a new project—Strategies to Prevent (STOP) Spillover (expected to be awarded in September 2020)—that will work to reduce the risk of viral transfer from wildlife to people and livestock, which could include high-risk areas such as live-animal markets and communities in contact with wildlife. USAID has also extended our Wildlife Trafficking, Response, Assessment, and Priority Setting (TRAPS) activity, implemented by TRAFFIC and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, to monitor the availability of wild meat in specific high-risk areas and to support behavior-change campaigns that reduce demand for wild meat. The USAID-led Feed the Future Initiative monitors the consumption of wild animal-source foods in its Zone of Influence Surveys to better understand the prevalence of the practice, to improve our understanding of the associated risks for transmission of zoonotic disease.

Cross-Bureau collaboration across USAID integrates robust approaches designed to reduce the risk of the future spillover of zoonotic diseases. Technical staff from multiple sectors have initiated an Agency-level One-Health Working Group to promote holistic development solutions that recognize the interdependence among the health of the environment, animals, and humans. USAID is collaborating with private-sector partners to support sustainable, market-based solutions across conservation, agriculture, and health through the Health, Ecosystems and Agriculture for Resilient, Thriving Societies (HEARTH) partnership in seven Missions. By sustainably addressing human well-being needs—including food security and economic prosperity—and predicated on ensuring the health of the environment, HEARTH is a key modality for the Agency’s efforts to advance One Health objectives. The HEARTH Addendum to USAID’s Global Development Alliance will be open until February 14, 2021.

Across the U.S. Government, USAID participates in the Federal Interagency One-Health Working Group on COVID-19 and recently has started to create a sub-group focused on international One-Health issues. USAID is an active member of the Interagency Task Force to Combat Wildlife Trafficking and works with the interagency to address the intersection of illegal wildlife trade and wild-caught meat in high-risk markets. USAID also collaborates closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), especially the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), as well as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) within the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency within the U.S. Department of Defense, and other Federal Departments and Agencies involved in this space.

Question:

“Both the FY19 and FY20 appropriations bills instructed the administration to spend \$177 million on adaptation foreign assistance and \$179 million on renewable energy foreign assistance. The FY19 language was contained in the bill’s accompanying report text; the FY20 language was both in the bill text and the report text. While the Department is still formulating its 653(a) submission to Congress for the FY20 spending legislation, there is considerable interest on the part of the Committee in ensuring that congressional intent is adequately recognized. Will USAID share with this committee its detailed spending plans to meet the letter of the law when it comes to this FY20 language on renewable energy and adaptation spending?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Yes, the Agency and the U.S. Department of State will submit the spending plan for the funds appropriated in the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020, as required by Section 653(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Question:

“In December 2019, the U.S. Government passed the bipartisan Global Fragility Act (GFA), which builds on lessons learned from previous U.S. Government operations. The GFA requires a shift from the *status quo* and requires a coordinated, preventative, multisectoral, locally driven, and evidence-based approach. The aim of this law is to enhance internal coordination and the capacity of the U.S. Government to address drivers of violence, conflict, and violent extremism to prevent it from metastasizing and ballooning into larger threats. What resources will you need sufficient staffing with the right skills and training to successfully implement the GFA?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is currently assessing our needs for technical and management capacity to support the implementation and monitoring of, and reporting on, the forthcoming interagency *Global Fragility Strategy* (GFS). Although the resources and costs of implementation ultimately depend on the final *Strategy*, USAID will apply any dedicated resources it receives connected to the GFA to support and implement the efforts described in the GFS. USAID looks forward to working with Congress on ensuring it can implement the GFA fully.

Question 44:

“How will you ensure that diplomacy complements USAID’s programs and development efforts so that the strategy does not only focus on development assistance?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working closely with the U.S. Department of State and other Federal Departments and Agencies to develop a collaborative *Global Fragility Strategy* (GFS). The GFS will marshal the full breadth of U.S. Government capabilities to address global fragility, including diplomacy, foreign assistance, defense support and security cooperation, and other tools.

USAID believes that development assistance is a powerful and essential tool to prevent violent conflict and strife, promote stability, and build peace and foster self-reliance—but that assistance, by itself, is often insufficient. We must complement our development efforts with diplomacy and other interventions under a clear, cohesive strategy. The 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review and the 2019 Strategic Prevention Project, which USAID undertook in collaboration with the Departments of State and Defense, both found that, given the deeply political nature of the challenges in fragile contexts, a multipronged, comprehensive approach is often necessary. The U.S. Government is carrying these findings into the GFS.

In the drafting of the forthcoming GFS, USAID has encouraged an integrated strategic approach that prioritizes targeted activities in prevention and stabilization in defined geographies, to help local authorities forestall or mitigate violence and instability, complemented by broader efforts to address systemic conflict risks and promote more peaceful societies. USAID supports infusing the principles of peacebuilding and resilience across all U.S. engagements, to promote more responsive, legitimate local and national systems that foster

social cohesion and can manage shocks and stresses better. Such efforts ought to include diplomatic engagement with host-country governments, the private sector, and civil-society partners to reinforce common interests and values, while coordinating with allies and other international partners around our shared objectives.

Question:

“Thank you for programming \$5 million in humanitarian assistance to help Palestinians fight COVID. This disease knows no boundaries, and as long as Palestinians are fighting COVID, so will our ally, Israel. The health system in Gaza was on the verge of collapse before the pandemic. With limited testing and a weak health system capacity, Gaza depends on severe movement restrictions to contain the virus; while infection rates are low, the already fragile economy is collapsing. What planned activities does USAID have for Gaza, which only has 45 ventilators for 2 million people?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The \$5 million in supplemental funding for COVID-19 supports immediate, life-saving needs for Palestinian hospitals and households in the West Bank. USAID is providing critical supplies, equipment, personal protective equipment, and training and technical assistance to prevent and control infections across 12 public and non-governmental association (NGO) health facilities in the West Bank, including those in Hebron, the current center of the outbreak. A targeted risk-communication and community-engagement initiative is under way, focused on thousands of individuals at high risk of exposure to the virus and infection. With respect to Gaza, we are closely monitoring the global response to the Interagency Response Plan led by the United Nations.

Question:

“The Administration has once again proposed to freeze all funding for stabilization programs in Syria, despite strong support from Congress. Why are we risking continued instability in Syria and throughout the region by cutting this assistance? Does the Administration think that stability initiatives are not vital to protecting U.S. interests abroad?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Government remains committed to using every tool at our disposal to support our policy initiatives for Syria: countering the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and a political solution in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254. The United States continues to work with our partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS to support immediate efforts aimed at stabilization and early recovery in areas liberated from terror and barbarism, including the restoration of essential social services and livelihoods, and building local capacity to support longer-term sustainability. The U.S. Government is the largest single donor for the provision of humanitarian assistance to persons in need across Syria, having provided more than \$11.3 billion since the start of the crisis. These funds assist many of the 11.1 million people in need inside Syria, as well as the

more than 5.5 million Syrians in the region who have fled the brutal civil war and repression of the Assad regime in their homeland.

Question:

“The Lebanese economy is on the brink of collapse, with no end in sight to Lebanon’s many challenges and little political will to resolve them. What can USAID do to assist the people of Lebanon to weather this storm? How can we use this as an opportunity to highlight that Hezbollah is not acting in the interest of the Lebanese people? What are the status of projects in Lebanon that seek to empower alternative Shia voices?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The United States expects the Government of Lebanon to commit to, and implement, the reforms necessary to respond to the Lebanese people’s demands for an end to endemic corruption, better governance, and economic opportunity.

In the meantime, the U.S. Government will continue to support the Lebanese people through programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), including those focused on creating jobs and delivering basic social services, which contribute to the political and economic stability of Lebanese citizens and refugees alike. These programs help mitigate the harmful impacts on Lebanese citizens and refugees of the ongoing economic crisis and the socio-economic effects of the pandemic of COVID-19. USAID’s regular bilateral budget for programs in Lebanon in Fiscal Year 2019 was \$117.5 million.

To support Lebanon in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, the United States is also providing \$41.6 million in supplemental resources for the pandemic. This funding helps private health facilities to triage, manage, and refer patients properly; ensures the continuity of essential health care; sponsors risk-communications and community-outreach activities; increases access to water, sanitation, and hygiene; and provides emergency food assistance to refugees and members of vulnerable Lebanese host communities who have lost their livelihoods or are unable to leave their homes. Beyond the response to COVID-19, the U.S. Government has provided approximately \$537 million in humanitarian aid to Lebanon since October 2018 to support vulnerable refugees and the communities that host them so generously.

As part of our ongoing programs to support Lebanese municipalities, on January 2, 2020, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) within the U.S. Department of Treasury granted a one-year license to USAID to implement local development projects in Shi’a-majority Lebanese areas where Hizbollah-affiliated members do not control the municipal councils. USAID’s assistance aims to provide an alternative to Hizbollah by demonstrating to Lebanon’s Shi’a populations that municipalities not dominated by Hizbollah can provide reliable, high-quality basic social services to their citizens.

To date, USAID-funded programs have assisted five municipalities to establish solar farms, including to power village wells in Ansar and Qsaibeh, establish back-up generation of electricity in Arzoun, equip an olive press and a facility to briquet olive-residue in Tebnine, and establish a rural tourism park in Abbasieh. These interventions, delayed because of the pandemic of COVID-19 and economic collapse, aim to benefit more than 29,000 people.

Question:

“USAID announced a “carve-out” for life-saving activities in Northern Yemen. In practice, the activities still being funded are only treatment of severe acute malnutrition and cholera, correct? Since the suspension was first conceived of, COVID-19 arrived in Yemen. Do you regard COVID-19 treatment and prevention as less “life-saving” as these activities?

If this “can’t be delivered” under appropriate conditions: According to an article in Just Security by an Oxfam aid worker, Oxfam has successfully negotiated to deliver water, sanitation, hygiene, and health awareness-raising programs in the North and other agencies are able to do this as well. Do you disagree?

If yes, these activities aren’t “life-saving.” You should be aware that in Yemen, testing capacities are limited. Hospitals and health facilities have been destroyed, in large part due to U.S.-supported Saudi bombing. More than three million people have been displaced, most of them living either in multi-family homes or in informal settlements where distancing is impossible. While inadequate testing and suppression of testing results skews this statistic, at the moment, one out of every four Yemenis who has tested positive for COVID-19 has died. How do you not regard prevention and treatment of this disease as “life-saving” under these conditions?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) regards the prevention of COVID-19 as a critical, life-saving line of effort, including in Northern Yemen. The partial suspension of our programs in Northern Yemen allows for carve-outs for life-saving activities that mitigate the risk of famine and communicable disease where USAID has concluded that our partners can carry out programs with minimal interference from the Houthis. USAID currently is continuing to fund 12 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) for either carve-out activities or operational costs that strategically allow these partners to retain a footprint in Northern Yemen and allow for the resumption of activities when conditions allow. Specifically, the carve-outs for our awards to INGOs fund life-saving activities that directly help prevent COVID-19, cholera, and other diseases via the provision of clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). These prevention efforts remain critical as cases of COVID-19 are expected to increase countrywide, exacerbated in the North of Yemen by Houthi misinformation campaigns that generate fear, increase stigma, and reduce health-seeking behavior. Additionally, Yemen currently faces the world’s largest recorded outbreak of cholera; the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded more than 2.4 million suspected cases of the disease between late April 2017 and June 2020.

The plan recently agreed to by the United Nations (UN) to fund six months of hazard pay for Yemeni frontline health workers is a long-awaited positive development, following months of advocacy by the U.S. Government (USG) and other donors. USAID is in negotiations with the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on this country-wide program, and we are poised to support it. USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) has provided nearly \$40 million in funding for health and WASH since Fiscal Year 2019 and is in the final stages of allocating additional assistance to partners in Yemen this year.

Our carve-out activities also address food-insecurity and malnutrition. Through the World Food Programme (WFP), USAID is funding emergency operations across the country that help to prevent famine. These emergency food and nutrition activities reach at least four million people in Southern Yemen and 4.5 to five million people in Northern Yemen each month. Additionally, USAID funds UNICEF to prevent, identify, and treat acute malnutrition in communities across Yemen, with a particular focus on children and pregnant and lactating women.

Even under the current suspensions, the USG is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Yemen this year, which demonstrates the importance we place on providing life-saving aid to the Yemeni people. USAID plans to announce additional funding for the humanitarian response in the coming weeks, which will support a variety of critical health and WASH activities by both UN and INGO partners.

Under our partial suspension in Northern Yemen, USAID also will continue to fund the operational costs of INGOs. This support ensures these partners can maintain the capacity to scale up their programming in Northern Yemen if humanitarian conditions deteriorate, as well as when the Houthis meet the minimum accountability conditions, which donors require to restore confidence that we can implement a full-scale humanitarian response in compliance with international standards for the impartial and independent delivery of aid. While USAID recognizes critical progress has occurred on some of these benchmarks, the Houthis have not met all the minimum conditions, and their ongoing constraints continue to hinder our efforts. Lastly, we recognize the progress OXFAM has achieved in its negotiations with the Houthis.

Question:

“The Trump Administration finally announced last week that it would move ahead with a portion of U.S. funding for the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) after a damaging three-month funding freeze. Unfortunately, despite inquiries from the Foreign Affairs Committee, we still have not been informed whether or not \$12 million in targeted funding for PAHO to address the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and surrounding countries has been unfrozen. When, if at all, will this funding to address the health crisis in Venezuela be made available by USAID to PAHO? How did the Administration’s decision to withhold funding from PAHO for three months affect the organization’s response to the health crisis in Venezuela and throughout the region?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The American people are responsible for the most generous contributions to global health, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) remains committed to providing life-saving assistance around the world. Guidance approved by Secretary Pompeo on June 1, 2020, allows the continuation of limited, health-related voluntary contributions to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in select places in the Western Hemisphere where other institutions cannot implement critical health activities adequately, or in a timely manner, particularly those connected to the Venezuela regional crisis.

Based on this guidance, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance is in discussions with PAHO regarding making a voluntary contribution for discrete activities to support critical health programs and vaccination assistance inside the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We aim to have these awards finalized this Fiscal Year.

This builds on previous USAID assistance to PAHO, including for a program that vaccinated nine million Venezuelan children against measles and paved the way to control the outbreak through a 91-percent decrease in cases. PAHO in Venezuela also assists non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the importation of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies.

During the Administration's global pause on funding to the World Health Organization (WHO), USAID continued working with other United Nations agencies and international NGOs in Venezuela and across the region to ensure that the flow of necessary aid continues. For example, in Venezuela USAID is providing \$9 million in COVID-19 supplemental funding from the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account to a UN agency and NGOs for life-saving aid to children and families, including essential health care and assistance to improve access to water and basic sanitation in hospitals and clinics. USAID's funding also is paying for the procurement and distribution of key hygiene items in accordance with guidelines to prevent and control infections in hospitals and primary health facilities; planning for the national response to COVID-19; and building capacity for detecting cases of the disease. Another example comes from the Republic of Colombia, where USAID is providing more than \$6.5 million in COVID-19 supplemental IDA funds to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support access to critical health care, water, sanitation, and hygiene, and ensure the provision of medical supplies and equipment to health facilities.

For information on the U.S. Government's assessed contributions to PAHO, we refer you to the U.S. Department of State.

Question:

"Recently, we've seen very small portions of COVID-related assistance going to the Northern Triangle countries, after the Trump Administration's wrong-headed and harmful cut-off of support to these countries over a year ago. Additional funding that President Trump froze over a year ago is reportedly also on the verge of being expended. When will ALL FY 2019 and FY 20 funds for the Northern Triangle be unfrozen? Does this depend on the Northern Triangle countries meeting certain "benchmarks" related to migration? If so, what are these benchmarks?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided \$21 million in supplemental funding in response to the pandemic of COVID-19 in Central America. We recently notified Congress that we will be investing an additional \$15 million in funding from the base International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account for emergency food assistance to help address the needs of the most food-insecure families in the Republic of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. USAID has submitted all required Congressional Notifications (CNs) for funding from Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and we are

preparing the CNs for FY 2020, as each of the Central American governments continues to show a strong commitment to decreasing and deterring illegal immigration to the United States. Furthermore, in response to Tropical Storm Amanda, USAID provided \$3.1 million in IDA resources to support storm-affected communities in El Salvador with emergency shelter, food, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Question:

“As we enter what could be a very dangerous hurricane season, many Caribbean nations which have struggled to adequately respond to natural disasters now may have to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and life-threatening storms at the same time. What measures has USAID taken to increase natural disaster resilience and potential response funding for our allies in the Caribbean who could be hit by devastating storms in the coming months?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) stands ready to respond to the 2020 hurricane season with a team of disaster experts and pre-positioned emergency relief supplies strategically located throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. USAID’s disaster-response experts continue to monitor storms as they develop and work with the relevant U.S. Embassies, the U.S. Government interagency, national-disaster officials in the region, and humanitarian partners to coordinate relief efforts if requested. In addition, understanding the threat of hurricanes and other shocks to the United States’ Caribbean partners, USAID has undertaken several new initiatives to support resilience and response to disasters in the Caribbean.

In December 2019, USAID completed a \$5.2 million flood-resilience and storm-water-management project with the Government of Barbados. USAID also committed \$12 million in December of that year to support disaster-resilience programming through the Caribbean Disaster-Risk-Reduction Program (DRR Program), announced by former Administrator Mark Green. The DRR Program includes \$2 million for the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology to improve weather forecasting by national authorities and strengthen infrastructure. The remaining \$10 million will help build the capacity in the Eastern Caribbean to prepare for, and recover from, natural disasters in the region. USAID and its partners have a three-pronged strategy: support community organizations to enhance local-level resilience to disasters (jointly funded with the Inter-American Foundation and announced on July 10, 2020); assist regional disaster-response entities; and promote policy reform and harmonization across the region, including the enhancement and enforcement of building codes.

The Caribbean Energy Initiative (CEI) also is a core element of USAID’s efforts under the United States - Caribbean Resilience Partnership. CEI aims to build resilience in energy sectors across the region, in recognition of the critical role that a steady, reliable energy supply plays in maintaining the economy of the region and supporting post-disaster recovery. USAID has invested \$10 million to date into CEI as part of a planned five-year, \$25 million initiative. CEI also contributes to the Growth in the Americas/*América Crece* initiative and is key to our efforts to counter malign influence in the subregion.

Additionally, through USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA, formerly the Offices of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace), USAID has provided more than \$43 million in humanitarian funding across the Caribbean region since Fiscal Year 2019. USAID/BHA funds disaster response at the regional, bilateral, and community levels.

At a regional level, USAID/BHA is working with the World Food Programme to enhance the operational capabilities of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the regional disaster agency established under the Caribbean Community. This assistance will improve CDEMA's ability to respond to disasters in all participating island nations.

At the bilateral level, USAID/BHA provides direct training and assistance to national disaster-management agencies that request assistance through the Regional Disaster-Assistance Program (RDAP), a five-year, \$35 million contract managed by Research Triangle Institute International. RDAP's seven full-time Specialists in Disaster-Risk Mitigation are located throughout the Caribbean region and work with host countries' national systems to improve disaster coordination. RDAP can also adapt to growing response needs, as it has more than 115 people available to support in a surge capacity.

USAID/BHA is also helping communities increase their ability to respond to disasters through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). This program supports national partners with community engagement, emergency communications, financial project-management, proposal-writing, the development of early-warning systems, contingency planning, the provision of equipment, and training sessions for community disaster-response teams. Under this program, USAID/BHA prioritizes countries with the greatest assessed vulnerabilities and susceptibility to natural disasters.

Question:

"The United States has continued to deport migrants at an alarming rate during the pandemic. There have already been several documented instances of ICE deporting COVID-positive migrants to a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. How do you, as USAID Administrator, view the administration's decision to continue deporting migrants who may be COVID positive? Doesn't the continuation of this policy hurt USAID's goal of curbing COVID-19 rather than actively aiding the spread of disease, particularly in countries like Haiti with little ability to respond?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has no role in the deportation of people from the United States, nor does the Agency comment on the operations of other Federal Departments and Agencies that do have this responsibility. I refer you to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for additional information.

As of July 23, 2020, the U.S. Government has committed nearly \$120 million in emergency health, humanitarian, economic, and development assistance to help fight the pandemic of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Question:

“USAID recently notified its intentions of establishing a presence in Greenland, a protectorate of Denmark with a population of about 56,000. In a year where the Administration’s budget request slashes the overall international affairs budget by 22 percent, support for sub-Saharan Africa by 39 percent compared to FY19, democracy and governance, and global health, you’ve chosen to send development funding and professionals to Greenland. What is the development case for sending these resources to Greenland? What were the criteria used to determine that, as a development agency, this was the best use of US taxpayer dollars?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Government (USG) considers Greenland strategically important—particularly as the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation become more engaged in the region. Malign influence from China in the Arctic extends to predatory lending and economic espionage, which, along with investments in critical infrastructure and extractive industries, threaten Western interests. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, has determined that establishing a limited presence in Nuuk, Greenland, will support the U.S. Government’s national-security and development interests. A strong and self-reliant Greenland can ensure economic and political stability in the Arctic, which is in the interest of the United States.

As one part of a whole-of-Government approach to deepen our engagement with the people of Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark, USAID has assigned one Senior Development Advisor (or SDA) to the U.S. Consulate in Nuuk to provide technical assistance in Greenland. In partnership with the Governments of Greenland and Denmark, the SDA will support a State Department-funded assessment of the potential for economic growth and community development in Greenland, with an emphasis on identifying opportunities for private-sector investment.

Greenland’s economy highly depends on exports of shrimp and fish and a substantial subsidy from the Danish Government. The private sector can help to grow and diversify Greenland’s economy through tourism, the development of exports, economic diversification, and community development. USAID’s assessment also will identify how all of Greenland’s population—including youth, women, and indigenous groups—can benefit from economic growth.

Question:

“Last month, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the end to an Ebola outbreak that began nearly two years earlier in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Accolades over ending the outbreak were muted somewhat by the detection of an 11th outbreak in the western part of the country during the same month, and by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has posed new health challenges in DRC and is severely affecting the country’s economy.

Given the increased frequency of Ebola outbreaks in the DRC, in what ways, if any, is USAID reconsidering its engagement with the country, particularly around integrating humanitarian, security, and health efforts? What are the budgetary implications of any such changes, particularly given that global health security is only one piece of the puzzle?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: While decades of U.S. and international investment in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for health security and health care have greatly improved the country’s systems for the detection and surveillance of infectious diseases, the frequency of declared outbreaks of Ebola also has increased. Following the outbreak of Ebola in Équateur Province, researchers on a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) found antibodies to Zaire Ebola virus in an individual with no reported history of disease or contact with infected individuals. This data point to possible sub-clinical or undiagnosed Ebola infections in Ebola-endemic areas, which signals the importance and challenges of accurate risk-communications to at-risk populations, and reminds us that science has not conclusively identified the animal vector(s) of Ebola. Experts continue to explore whether these outbreaks are increasing in number or merely being detected more often. Nonetheless, USAID faces a growing challenge in combating this deadly disease to avoid the human toll it exacts, and to mitigate the risk of its spread to the United States and neighboring countries by applying lessons learned during previous responses to Ebola.

Against this backdrop, USAID provided assistance in the DRC before these outbreaks began, and USAID’s commitment to the people of the DRC will continue after they end. USAID’s response to Ebola in the Eastern DRC did integrate humanitarian, security, and health efforts, as the Agency incorporated these considerations strategically in the challenging operating environment of North Kivu and Ituri Provinces. In funding human-protection services and immediate support for public-health interventions through trusted health and humanitarian partners, USAID has aligned our humanitarian and security programming to the extent possible. More broadly, USAID, on behalf of the U.S. Government, strongly advocated for the Government of the DRC and the United Nations to integrate Ebola-related public-health interventions better with humanitarian and security interventions to ensure a well-coordinated, holistic approach.

Following the end of the outbreak in the Eastern DRC, USAID has continued to fund enhanced surveillance to detect suspect cases and rapid-response capabilities to ensure the Government of the DRC and partners can contain and address any flare-ups or new outbreaks quickly. Rapid-response teams will complement our investments in health care, water infrastructure, and health security, and will continue to help the people of the DRC as they confront new challenges, including COVID-19 and the country’s current outbreak of Ebola in Équateur. As part of USAID’s response in Équateur, we continue our efforts to align our

relevant development programming, while adapting our approach to the unique context and circumstances of the current outbreak. In addition, the DRC will be part of a new award that aims to reduce the spillover of zoonotic viruses, such as Ebola, from animals to people and decrease the subsequent viral amplification and geographic spread in people in the event that spillover does happen.

The vast size of the DRC and the varied in-country operating environments make it difficult to apply a “one-size-fits-all” approach to our engagement. In settings more appropriate for long-term development assistance, such as health security and health care, USAID’s country-level strategy in the DRC already integrates programming across multiple technical areas. For example, the U.S. Government’s *Global Health Security Strategy* (GHSS), approved in June of 2019, outlines the Administration’s approach to strengthening global health security, including by accelerating the capability in targeted countries to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases. The *Strategy* pursues the interrelated goals of strengthening host-country health-security capacities, and increasing international support for global health security. The DRC is an Intensive-Support Country under the GHSS, prioritized for resources and technical assistance. USAID leverages cross-sector coordination in the design and implementation of the projects we fund, and also seeks opportunities for Mission-wide learning so that the challenges faced by one sector inform our programming in other sectors.

Question:

“Given the limited economic opportunities for the small island states in the Pacific Islands, what kind of programming is USAID prioritizing? How does this compare to the priorities of the island nations themselves, which seem to be infrastructure, addressing illegal and unregulated fishing and addressing impacts of climate change? What is the status of USAID expanding its in-person presence in the Pacific Islands (rather than administering programs from Manila)?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is increasing our presence and funding in Pacific Islands countries (PICs) to advance the U.S. vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region to foster economic growth, strengthen democratic systems, and improve the management of natural resources. To promote economic growth, USAID is designing regional and bilateral programs to promote the development and diversification of enterprises; improve the competitiveness of PIC countries in trade and investment; promote secure and open digital connectivity; and support food security and agricultural efficiency.

The threat of natural disasters is an existential issue for the island countries in the Pacific. In this connection, USAID is strengthening capacities in the PIC at the community, national, and regional levels to prevent, mitigate, and recover from natural disasters; manage terrestrial and marine resources, including by combating illegal and unregulated fishing; and gain access to sustainable energy and finance for climate adaptation. Foundational to our assistance in the Pacific are programs that promote transparent, accountable, citizen-responsive governance and develop human capital. This combination of programming supports the regional and national-development priorities outlined by the Boe Declaration of the Pacific Island Forum

(PIF), other PIF Leaders' Declarations, and the policies of the Council on Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP).

While many PICs have current travel restrictions because of COVID-19, USAID is still proceeding with both the recruitment and virtual onboarding of our in the Pacific staff. USAID Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), with the title of Senior Development Advisor and regional responsibilities, are scheduled to arrive in the Republic of Fiji and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in September and October 2020, respectively. A U.S. Personal Service Contractor (USPSC) Deputy Country Coordinator will be arriving in PNG in October 2020, travel permitting. USAID is also positioning USPSC Country Coordinators in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Solomon Islands in late 2020, again travel permitting. Finally, USAID will be recruiting for a second FSO in both Fiji and PNG, whom we expect to arrive in September 2021.

Question:

“Bangladesh continues to host roughly one million Rohingya refugees, many of whom live in overcrowded camps. Recently, we’re also seeing concerning news that the Bangladesh government has been keeping several hundred refugees on Bhasan Char, a silt island with questionable inhabitability. What measures are USAID considering to assist Bangladeshi host communities, who are largely bearing the economic and societal burdens of hosting the refugees? How has USAID responded to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Cox’s Bazar?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa:

Bhashan Char

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supports the position on Bhasan Char of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has not changed since 2018: any relocation of refugees to Bhasan Char must be fully voluntary and preceded by a full protection and technical assessment to determine the island’s suitability for habitation. We continue to urge the Government of Bangladesh to allow UNHCR to conduct a protection visit to Bhashan Char to assess the welfare of the 300 refugees who are currently on the island. The U.S. Government also continues to engage the governments of countries in the region bilaterally, including Malaysia, the Republic of Indonesia, and the Kingdom of Thailand, to remind them of their commitments under the Declaration adopted in March of 2016 at the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process, which calls on all parties to contribute to the restoration of stability and security in Southeast Asia, and provides a foundation for the coordinated regional action required to manage and protect refugees and migrants at sea.

USAID’s Assistance to Bangladeshi Host Communities

USAID has been providing funding for agriculture, the reduction of the risk of disasters, health, livelihoods, and shelter to host and other affected communities in the People's Republic of Bangladesh. In addition, USAID plans to direct \$23.5 million from the Development Assistance account for Fiscal Year 2020 in these communities to strengthen local governance, enhance livelihood opportunities, promote positive engagement with young people, improve water and sanitation, and provide other social assistance, all in keeping with Congressional directives.

COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, USAID and our partners are addressing the secondary impacts of the pandemic, such as lost wages, food-insecurity, and increased risks of domestic violence, through existing and new development and humanitarian programs in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban. These USAID-funded programs work with host-community leaders and youth to build awareness about COVID-19, disseminate messaging on social cohesion, and mitigate the increased risk of gender-based violence. USAID's programs have constructed hand-washing stations, installed safe drinking-water systems, and addressed the pandemic's impact on agricultural and other supply-chains and the production of food through existing activities in aquaculture, livestock, nutrition, and policy.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) has provided emergency food and cash support to 500,000 individuals in the host communities in Cox's Bazar through funding to the World Food Programme. In addition, USAID/BHA's partners are upgrading existing health and sanitation facilities in Cox's Bazar to isolate and treat patients with COVID-19, including Rohingya refugees and host-community members.

Question:

"We've seen a concerning deterioration in Sri Lanka's respect for rule of law and good governance in recent years. How will USAID programs work to support the diminishing civil society space? Is USAID thinking about navigating engagements with the Sri Lankan government, several senior officials of which are accused of rights abuses during the civil war? One initiative State and USAID are pushing in Sri Lanka is the South Asia Governance Fund initiative. Could you explain why the Administration is using The Asia Foundation to implement this initiative instead of USAID?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: We share your concerns regarding the credible allegations of corruption against senior members of the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The Government also has begun to centralize civilian functions, such as the regulation of civil-society organizations and local-government administration, under the Ministry of Defense. We are also concerned by the appointment of an Army Commander, Lt. General Shavendra Silva, whom the State Department has sanctioned for violations of human rights during the war.

To prevent further backsliding, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is intensifying our efforts to institutionalize democratic norms, transparency, and checks and balances to provide oversight across the different branches of government in Sri Lanka. Our efforts include the following:

- Working with Sri Lanka's Parliament to enhance its transparency and ability to oversee the executive branch;
- Expanding our efforts to bolster the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's judiciary to enforce the rule of law and establishing model courts that demonstrate greater efficiency and transparency;
- Increasing our support for civil-society organizations to play a stronger role in fighting corruption and hold the Government accountable for upholding human rights, including the protection of ethnic minorities and religious freedom, through direct support for leading Sri Lankan organizations that advocate for citizen-responsive governance reforms.

We have also expanded our support for increased social cohesion and reconciliation. This work has received positive coverage in the Sri Lankan press.

The South Asia Governance Fund is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State, administered by the Bureau of South Central Asian Affairs, which elected to award a grant to the Asia Foundation to implement it.

Question:

"For the past few years in the Appropriations Omnibus, funds have been made available to promote gender equality; however, it is unclear how much money has been spent on gender equality, or where or how it has been spent. As this is a critical element for achieving a more prosperous and stable world, understanding the amount the United States has spent on such an issue is of great importance, how has this funding been spent and have there been changes in the amounts being spent from what the President's Budget Request has included since the overall appropriations levels have been higher than the President's request?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The internal reporting system of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) tracks the funds dedicated to promoting equality between women and men on an annual basis, which, in turn, USAID reports to Congress. USAID's Operating Units (OUs) (Missions, and Pillar and Regional Bureaus) are required to report on our investments and programming in gender equality and women's empowerment at both the planning and implementation stages. In the planning state, all OUs must report their planned funding in each Fiscal Year (FY) through budget attributions to the gender Key Issues (Gender Equality/Women's Empowerment Primary [GEWE- Primary]; Gender Equality/Women's Empowerment Secondary [GEWE-Secondary]; Gender-Based Violence [GBV]; Child, Early, and Forced Marriage [GBV-CEFM]) and one independent Key Issue, Women, Peace, and

Security (WPS). Additionally, the GEWE-primary and GEWE secondary Key Issues require reporting on the data-only Sub-Key Issue on Women's Economic Empowerment.

In the reporting stage, USAID tracks gender-integration results through the gender Key Issues (noted above in the planning state) and gender indicators set by the Office of Foreign Assistance at the U.S. Department of State in the annual Performance Plan and Report, which is USAID's main reporting mechanism.

For FY 2019, the Department of State and USAID provided more than \$593 million for activities in gender equality and women's empowerment; nearly \$173 million to address gender-based violence; and more than \$115 million for women, peace, and security. The President's Budget Request for FY 2021 includes more than \$799 million for investments in gender equality and women's empowerment (including \$200 million for the USAID-managed Women's Global Development and Prosperity [W-GDP] Fund); more than \$75 million for addressing gender-based violence; and nearly \$46 million for women, peace, and security.

Question:

"The Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2019* mandates USAID to integrate gender equality and female empowerment throughout the Agency's program cycle including a detailed gender analysis. While these components are already part of the USAID policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, a USAID funded evaluation of the policy found that the policy was not fully implemented across the entire portfolio. Is this currently being fully practiced at USAID? How do you intend to put it in place to ensure that this work is done throughout the Agency's program cycle to meet the legislative requirements? How do you intend to do this additional work with less resources for gender, and without increased staff with the appropriate expertise?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Transformation at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) places the Hub for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the recently approved Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), which will become operational early in Fiscal Year 2021. The new Bureau is intended to break through our traditional silos to create efficiencies and ensure cross-Bureau and cross-Agency coordination of technical expertise and other key priorities. The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub will work across the Agency to address the distinct needs of women, girls, men, and boys in USAID's multi-sector work around the globe. The Hub will continue to coordinate with USAID's 142-person global network of gender advisors, Points of Contacts, and employees who work on gender embedded throughout our Washington headquarters and our field Missions with the shared goal of learning across borders to accelerate our worldwide work on equality between women and men.

The Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act mandates that USAID incorporate findings from a gender analysis in the design and implementation of our programs. USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy and internal guidance (Chapter 205 of our Automated Directives System) reflect the WEEE Act by requiring that our Operating Units (OUs) undertake a gender analysis at the strategy and project level of the design

process in our Program Cycle. A robust gender analysis, as defined in the WEEE Act, is essential to ensure that our plans and programs at every level have identified, and are addressing, the most relevant gender issues that could hinder achieving measurable development objectives. We have now expanded our existing requirement for gender analysis at the strategic and programmatic levels to include activity-level work. Collectively and for each individual investment, the gender analyses used by our Missions and other OUs will support the Agency in identifying, understanding, and integrating attention to gender gaps and the unique needs of both men and women.

Question:

“President Trump's FY21 budget states, “The Budget also supports the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery as an evidence-based solution for promoting lasting peace and stability through the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act.” We are grateful for this clear message that women have a critical role to play in peace and security issues. How will the administration push forward this prioritization on WPS? Will the prioritization take into account the various intersectional identities that sideline and further marginalize young women? How will age disaggregated data and youth inclusivity be prioritized to support the unique challenges facing younger women? How much is USAID spending on Youth Peace and Security YPS?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The Administration will continue to push forward the *Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Strategy* through the WPS Implementation Plan of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as submitted to Congress on June 11, 2020. The Implementation Plan will help advance the *WPS Strategy* through effective, coordinated actions across our development and humanitarian-assistance efforts and strengthen USAID’s efforts to advance women’s leadership in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism, and supporting post-conflict recovery. To that end, the Agency has prioritized the importance of applying tailored regional investments to the implementation of the *WPS Strategy*.

USAID is committed to supporting the unique challenges that face young women and men, particularly in areas that are experiencing conflict and crisis. For example, in the Republic of Guinea, USAID’s Cultural Cohesion for Peace and Prosperity activity, implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in coordination with local partners, provides support to young women who serve as Peace Ambassadors and as members of local Peace-Building Platforms. These young women work alongside their male colleagues to identify and facilitate the timely, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and also lead educational-outreach events for citizens on conflict-resolution. In the Arab Republic of Egypt, our WPS activities are addressing the various identities that further marginalize young women by engaging girls and young women from different demographic backgrounds, including Muslims and Christians, to participate in cross-community dialogue and develop a common vision of the empowerment of women and girls and economic growth. The collection of age-disaggregated data will be a critical tool for monitoring and evaluation to ensure the Agency is reaching the intended population.

As for the role of youth in the prevention and resolution of, and recovery from, conflict, studies show that violent extremist organizations disproportionately target children and youth between the ages of ten and 29 for recruitment. Youth are vulnerable to this recruitment because of a complex mix of mutually reinforcing factors, such as a sense of grievance rooted in human-rights abuses, discrimination, exclusion, trauma, and previous exposure to violence, among other factors alongside the complexities of adolescent/youth development. A tailored approach to those most at risk is necessary to interrupt specific recruitment methods. The vast majority of youth, however, are not at risk. Instead, they engage actively in their communities to prevent violence and promote peace. USAID and our partners have identified evidence that links the approach of positive youth development (PYD) to improved outcomes and resiliencies for youth. Building a sense of agency, resilience, and cohesion can increase the engagement of youth and reduce their susceptibility to violent extremism.

USAID sees engaging youth and emerging young leaders in efforts to promote peace and security not only as an important way to advance U.S. security, but also as a cost-effective approach to sustain local and international stability. USAID spent approximately \$5.6 million from Fiscal Year 2018 in programming related to youth, peace, and security (YPS). The Agency will work to advance the integration of age-disaggregated metrics, in addition to the current sex-disaggregated indicators, related to our programming in peace and security.

USAID is funding YPS and young peace-builders in a number of ways, including the following:

- Research on effective YPS programming and dissemination through our YPS Community of Practice on our www.YouthPower.org platform to more than 108,000 users;
- Networks of youth peace-builders through our www.YouthLead.org platform, which reaches more than 7,500 young change-makers, many of whom work on YPS issues; and
- Support for a joint U.S. Africa Command-USAID Youth Advisory Council made up of the top young peace-builders and specialists in preventing and countering violent extremism in sub-Saharan Africa.

Question:

“Congress has made clear that it strongly believes that U.S. Government investments in gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment are critical to achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives, strengthening our national security, and increasing economic opportunities both abroad and at home. Recently, USAID has authorized an update of its Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GE/FE) Policy, which has been a critical foundation for progress on the promotion of gender equality throughout development and humanitarian assistance efforts over the last seven years. How is USAID ensuring that the review and update process of the GE/FE Policy includes meaningful, substantive consultations with civil society organizations with proven expertise in global gender equality issues? How is USAID ensuring that any updates to the GE/FE Policy are rooted in and building upon the existing robust evidence base around addressing the socio-cultural foundations of gender inequalities and discrimination?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) USAID is committed to promoting equality between men and women and women’s empowerment in all of our programs. USAID has a long history of funding gender equality and women’s empowerment and recognizes the important role of women in leading powerful, transformational changes within societies.

The consultation process that led to the revised draft Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy has reflected that commitment. The external consultation process consisted of in-person dialogues with a range of civil-society organizations and coalitions that represented diverse perspectives on approaches to gender equality, including groups that had not engaged with USAID previously. We conducted these consultations early in the policy-drafting process, and complemented them with discussions with stakeholders during an formal external-review period that also solicited written comments from the public.

Question:

“How is USAID ensuring that any updates to the Gender Policy address the needs of women and girls and individuals with diverse gender identities comprehensively and holistically?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: In keeping with the demonstrated commitment of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to diversity and inclusion, one of the draft Operational Principles in the revised draft Gender Policy is “Pursue an Inclusive Approach.” The document makes clear that our corporate objectives and expectations related to equality between women and men and women’s empowerment work holistically to address the diverse needs of women and girls. In USAID’s *Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations Additional Help for [Automated Directives System Chapter] 201*, we have defined “inclusive approach” as “*The concept that every person, regardless of identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies and their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes.*”

Question:

“How is USAID balancing recent attention on women’s participation in conflict and economic contexts with longstanding gender-related barriers in political spheres, in education, as well as essential access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, and gender-based violence prevention and response?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes gender integration as crucial to our programming in all sectors, and will continue to ensure this cross-sectoral integration throughout our Program Cycle through capacity-building and technical assistance. All our programming relies on a gender analysis that ensures that activities address foundational, gender-related barriers in the appropriate country context. While women’s economic empowerment and women’s participation in conflict are crucial to closing gender gaps, so, too, are USAID’s long-standing cross-sectoral investments in education; health care; preventing and responding to gender-based violence; energy and environment; democracy and human rights; and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Questions for the Record from Representative Sires
The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
July 23, 2020

Question:

“On June 1st, the World Health Organization declared that Latin America is the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic. Brazil has the second highest number of cases in the world, and Mexico, Peru, and Chile are also among the top ten globally. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean forecasts that the pandemic will leave an additional 45 million people in poverty and an additional 28 million in extreme poverty in the region. In the face of the pandemic, I worry that our foreign assistance has not prioritized Latin America and the Caribbean. Less than 10% of our global funding has gone to the region. With Latin America accounting for half of the daily deaths around the world, do you believe the region is being adequately prioritized in our foreign assistance? Should we increase funding to the region? What assistance is USAID providing to address extreme poverty and food insecurity, particularly in Haiti and the Northern Triangle’s Dry Corridor, and what more should be done in the coming months?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The United States continues to lead the global response to COVID-19 and support communities in our neighboring countries as they grapple with the pandemic, including by providing nearly \$120 million in supplemental funding in Latin America and the Caribbean as of July 23, 2020.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is addressing the impact of the pandemic of COVID-19 in 30 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, including in nations where the Agency does not currently have Missions, such as the Republics of Bolivia and Uruguay. With both supplemental resources and ongoing programs, USAID is strengthening clinical care in the region, minimizing the risk of onward transmission, and helping to prevent and control infections in health-care facilities:

- As health workers diagnosed the first cases in the Republic of Guatemala, USAID helped to convert the Villa Nueva speciality hospital into the national emergency site for suspected, moderate, and severe cases of COVID-19. USAID’s experts provided technical support to the Guatemalan Ministry of Health to ensure this key hospital was ready to start caring for patients with COVID-19.
- In the Republic of Perú, USAID-funded partners are working in some of the most heavily affected regions of the Amazon and the Northern Coast to establish an accredited molecular-testing lab; administer 36,000 COVID-19 tests; expand capacity to deliver oxygen therapy; provide 450,000 telemedicine consultations through a medical call center; and conduct outreach by community health workers to 18,000 vulnerable households.
- In the Republic of Colombia, USAID has worked with the *Unidad para la Atención y la Reparación Integral a las Víctimas* (Victims’ Unit) to train women

who are former victims of decades-long civil conflict to produce more than 6,400 essential masks to deliver to vulnerable communities.

- In the Republic of Haiti, USAID supports 164 hospitals and health centers in all ten of the country's Departments, and is providing chlorine, hand-washing stations, and locally procured masks to help the country address the pandemic. USAID is also expanding our collaboration and coordination with existing programs, such as working with the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, to ensure they complement efforts to control COVID-19.

As USAID continues to address the immediate needs posed by COVID-19 in the Western Hemisphere, the Agency is also planning for the ongoing and future second- and third-order impacts of the pandemic. USAID has built excellent relationships with the governments of host countries, and the Agency is pivoting our long-term programs in the region and dedicating supplemental resources appropriated to the Economic Support Fund to mitigate the non-health impacts of COVID-19 across a variety of sectors and prevent development backsliding. USAID-funded programs work with governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to advance development at the community and national levels, which provides a better alternative to “predatory assistance” from the People's Republic of China and other malign actors.

Through ongoing programs in Haiti, USAID's agricultural strategy focuses on sustainably increasing farmers' incomes by introducing better inputs and improved technology, stabilizing the hillsides above productive plains, and improving access to domestic and international markets. USAID is also helping Haitian farmers process staple crops, like corn, rice, bean, and plantains, as well as cash crops such as cacao and mango, to increase their profits.

As of July 23, 2020, through ongoing emergency food-assistance programs in Haiti, USAID has provided food vouchers and cash-based transfers to help food-insecure individuals meet their immediate food and nutrition needs. These mechanisms work in tandem with complementary activities that strengthen livelihoods for longer-term food security. The programs work with communes to build and fortify household and community assets and livelihoods, while also promoting key health and nutrition messages. Finally, these activities also aim to improve the ability of vulnerable communities to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from natural disasters or sudden shocks. USAID also has ongoing programs in shelter, protection, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) to build the capacity of the Haitian Government and increase the resilience of the Haitian people to respond to natural disasters.

In the Northern Triangle countries of Central America, USAID's humanitarian-assistance programs are addressing the combined effects of COVID-19, drought, and recent Tropical Storm Amanda. Upon the resumption of programming in the Republics of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) has invested \$26.4 million from Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 across the three countries as of July 23, 2020. This funding is meeting emergency food needs and supporting programs in health, protection, and WASH to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and help communities recover from the effects of Tropical Storm Amanda. The Agency is planning additional funding before the end of FY 2020.

To address long-term needs, Feed the Future supports small-scale farmers in the Northern Triangle's Dry Corridor to improve their agricultural yields, so as to enable them to produce

nutritious food for home consumption and grow cash crops like coffee and vegetables that they can sell in local or international markets.

In South America, USAID has provided humanitarian assistance in response to the pandemic of COVID-19 in the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Republics of Ecuador, Colombia, and Perú through food, health, WASH, and protection. The assistance addresses the immediate needs of host populations affected by COVID-19 while also supporting host governments that have been struggling with influxes of Venezuelan migrants who have fled the ongoing crisis created by the illegitimate Maduro regime. USAID remains concerned about humanitarian conditions in the region, and we are monitoring trends closely and communicating with host governments, U.S. Embassies, and our Missions to discuss their ongoing needs.

Additional humanitarian support might be needed in the coming months to address the continuing direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 in the region, and USAID is planning appropriate responses for the new Fiscal Year.

Question:

“After President Trump’s misguided 2019 decision to cut assistance to Northern Triangle countries, several USAID activities had to end early or close down without being replaced. Many implementing partners had to fire staff or leave altogether. Despite new funding beginning to flow, it will presumably take time for implementing organizations to scale back up. Do you agree that last year’s assistance cuts undermined our ability to respond to the coronavirus pandemic in the Northern Triangle? What challenges is USAID facing in providing assistance to Northern Triangle countries given decreased personnel and partners as a result of the Trump cuts?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The pandemic of COVID-19 affects the economic prosperity of the Western Hemisphere, including Central America. With funding from Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is ramping up our assistance to address the underlying challenges that face the Governments and people of the Republics of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. USAID will provide funding to partners that are already operating in these countries, and will develop additional programs, as appropriate, to address new circumstances.

As of July 23, 2020, the U.S. Department of State and USAID have provided \$21 million in additional supplemental assistance for COVID-19 in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras for projects that range from building laboratory capacity in Honduras to establishing teams in the Western Highlands of Guatemala to work with the owners of small businesses affected by the pandemic. USAID funds programs in water, sanitation, and hygiene across all countries in the region to prevent new infections. In addition, USAID’s existing programming in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras addresses life-saving humanitarian needs; economic, governance, and security challenges that drive corruption and weak institutions; and outward migration, all of which the pandemic is compounding.

In FY 2019, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) provided \$8 million in humanitarian assistance in Guatemala. In terms of food-insecurity, poor households, especially in the Dry Corridor, are recovering from one of the worst droughts in 35 years, and USAID was not able to respond to all the attendant needs as planned. The impact of measures imposed by governments to control COVID-19, specifically restrictions on movement and informal labor, has exacerbated emergency humanitarian needs. While USAID/BHA has been able to continue our programming in Central America in FY 2020, some populations could take longer to recover.

Question:

"Since the onset of the pandemic, at least 100 people deported from the U.S. to Guatemala tested positive for COVID-19 and several migrants deported to Haiti also tested positive. In the case of Haiti, it was already the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and was enduring an economic and political crisis before the pandemic. Haiti's healthcare system was already weak and had become weaker as large-scale protests and unrest had made it difficult to keep hospitals stocked with medicine and other necessary supplies, forcing some hospitals to shut down. Do you agree that deporting COVID-positive individuals undermines the goals of USAID's public health and medical assistance programming and the hard-fought gains we have helped Haiti make in these areas over many years?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has no role in the deportation of people from the United States, nor does the Agency comment on the operations of other Federal Departments and Agencies that do have that responsibility. I refer you to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for additional information.

As of July 23, 2020, the U.S. Government had committed nearly \$120 million in emergency health, humanitarian, economic, and development assistance to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, including \$13.2 million in health and humanitarian assistance in the Republic of Haiti, which will support risk-communication efforts, improve water and sanitation, prevent infections in health facilities, manage cases of COVID-19, strengthen laboratories, and more.

**Questions for the Record from Representative Cicilline
The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
July 23, 2020**

Question:

“The Houthis have imposed unacceptable constraints and conditions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in areas under their control. But so have the authorities in the South – the government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council. I appreciate that the level of interference in northern Yemen is greater and more severe – but it’s not across the board. Some programs in northern Yemen can be delivered under acceptable conditions while some in southern Yemen can’t. Given the situation, why haven’t you suspended assistance in northern Yemen only?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: USAID continues to program humanitarian and development assistance in the Republic of Yemen (RoYG)-controlled areas in southern Yemen, given our ability to provide necessary oversight of programs. USAID’s partial suspension of assistance awards in the Houthi-controlled areas in northern Yemen allows exceptions for lifesaving assistance where possible to program without undue interference, including efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, cholera, and other communicable diseases via the provision of clean water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH) services, as well as continued support for malnutrition treatment countrywide. Much of the international community’s attention has focused on the enabling environment in the north, but tensions between the RoYG and the Southern Transition Council (STC) led to disjointed policies in the south, particularly in June and July 2020. Even with difficulties in the south, USAID partners do not face the same barriers to implementation in the south as in the north, particularly related to monitoring of activities, frequency of directives attempting to direct assistance, and conducting critical needs assessments. In recent weeks, there have been improvements in flight rotations that enable humanitarian personnel to enter the country to support programs, efficient offloading of commodities at the Port of Aden—including U.S.-supported food commodities—and improved flow of critical supplies to combat COVID-19. However, new RoYG visa requirements have delayed and encumbered travel to Yemen for humanitarian staff, including USAID partners.

USAID monitors bureaucratic impediments closely and holds both de facto Houthi authorities in the north and the RoYG in the south to the same global requirements: that U.S. humanitarian aid will be delivered by USAID’s UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to the people who need it most, as assessed by independent humanitarian experts on the ground, without interference or delay. In the north, the Houthis are aware of this requirement and intentionally do not abide by these globally accepted principles. In the south, USAID partners are able to provide effective monitoring and oversight of activities to ensure that U.S. taxpayer-funded aid reaches those in need for whom it is intended. USAID will continue holding authorities accountable to ensure unhindered humanitarian access.

Question:

“USAID announced a “carve-out” for life-saving activities in Northern Yemen.

- In practice, are the activities still being funded only treatment of severe acute malnutrition and cholera?
- Since the suspension was first conceived of, COVID-19 arrived in Yemen. Do you regard COVID-19 treatment and prevention as less “life-saving” as these activities?
- You should be aware that in Yemen, testing capacities are limited. Hospitals and health facilities have been destroyed, in large part due to U.S.-supported Saudi bombing. More than three million people have been displaced, most of them living either in multi-family homes or in informal settlements where distancing is impossible. While inadequate testing and suppression of testing results skews this statistic, at the moment, one out of every four Yemenis who has tested positive for COVID-19 has died. How do you not regard prevention and treatment of this disease as “life-saving” under these conditions?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) regards the prevention of COVID-19 as a critical, life-saving line of effort, including in Northern Yemen. As such, we have provided funding for logistical operations managed by the World Food Program (WFP) to ensure the continued flow of personal protective equipment to humanitarian partners. We have also financed the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations (UN) Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to provide clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health care. We continue to fund activities in WASH that help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 directly.

USAID’s partial suspension of our awards in Northern Yemen allow for carve-outs for life-saving activities that are mitigating the risk of famine and communicable disease for 143,000 beneficiaries, where partners are able to deliver U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance without undue interference by the Houthis and with the oversight required to ensure aid reaches the people for whom it is intended. Specifically, carve-outs for awards to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) support life-saving activities that help prevent COVID-19, cholera, and other communicable diseases via the provision of WASH. These prevention efforts remain critical, as COVID-19 cases are expected to increase countrywide, exacerbated in the North by Houthi misinformation campaigns that generate fear, increase stigma, and reduce health-seeking behavior. Additionally, Yemen currently faces the world’s largest recorded outbreak of cholera: the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded more than 2.4 million suspected cases of the disease in the country between late April 2017 and June 2020. The UN recently agreed to fund six-months of hazard pay for frontline health workers across Northern and Southern Yemen, a long-awaited positive development following months of advocacy from the U.S. Government (USG) and other donors. USAID is poised to support this plan.

Even under the current award suspensions, the USG remains the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Yemen this year. Since Fiscal Year 2019, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) has provided nearly \$39 million for health care and \$33 million for WASH in Yemen. Additionally, USAID plans to announce a large tranche of

additional funding for the humanitarian response in Yemen imminently, which will include financing for ongoing, life-saving activities in the North.

Under the partial suspension of our awards in the North, USAID will continue to fund the operational costs of our partners. This ensures our INGO partners can maintain their capacity to scale up assistance in Northern Yemen if humanitarian conditions deteriorate, as well as when and if the Houthis meet minimum accountability conditions that we and other donors require to restore confidence that we can mount a full-scale humanitarian response in compliance with international standards for the impartial and independent delivery of aid.

Question:

“In March, you announced that the USAID suspension of assistance to Northern Yemen would interrupt \$73 million in aid programs. How much in assistance has been suspended as of today?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: As of July 23, 2020, the partial suspension of awards in Northern Yemen by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has affected approximately \$73 million in aid, which comprises \$50 million of the \$1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance provided by the U.S. Government to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) since Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, as well as approximately \$23 million in development funding from USAID.

The United States remains the leading humanitarian donor in Yemen this year, despite having to suspend some awards because of Houthi interference. The United States is committed to providing robust humanitarian aid for the people of Yemen when and where our partners can operate without undue interference. USAID is finalizing additional funding from FY 2020 now. We continue to encourage other donors to contribute additional funding, and to fulfill their existing pledges without delay.

Question:

“How much funding has USAID provided in assistance for Yemen in Calendar Year 2020? How much had USAID provided at the same point in Calendar Year 2019?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, funding from the U.S. Government (USG) for the humanitarian response in the Republic of Yemen totaled \$736.9 million, including \$687.1 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As of July 23, 2020, the USG has provided more than \$408 million in funding from FY 2020 for humanitarian assistance in Yemen, including nearly \$386.9 million from USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. USAID is working on final funding allocations from FY 2020 for programs managed by both United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGO).

From the beginning of FY 2020 through August 30, 2020, USAID also has obligated \$40.3 million in development funding for programs in Yemen, compared to \$49.3 million during the same period in FY 2019. Despite the partial suspension of our awards in the North of the country, the USG remains the largest donor to the humanitarian response in Yemen this year.

Question:

“Both the FY19 and FY20 appropriations bills instructed the Administration to spend \$177 million on adaptation foreign assistance and \$179 million in renewable energy foreign assistance. The FY19 language was contained in the bill’s accompanying report text; the FY20 language was both in the bill text and the report text.

While the Department is still formulating its 653(a) submission to Congress for the FY20 spending legislation, there is considerable interest on the part of the committee in ensuring that congressional intent is adequately recognized, and that these directives are not met by double-counting existing program spending in other areas. Simply citing existing program spend and asserting that such programs have imputed and indirect climate co-benefits is insufficient.

Will USAID share with this committee its detailed spending plans to meet the letter of the law when it comes to this FY20 language on renewable energy and adaptation spending?

Congress has been clear across both FY19 and FY20 spending legislation that we expect USAID and the State Department to ensure that sufficient sums of overseas aid are mobilized specifically for renewable energy and climate resilience activities. Numerous existing programs and funds exist to meet these congressional directives, from the Climate & Clean Air Coalition¹ (co-created by the U.S.) to the Low Emissions Development Strategy² (LEDS) program to the U.S. Africa Clean Energy Finance (US-ACEF) Initiative (at U.S. TDA).

It should also be noted that this spending directive from Congress is broadly consistent with the Administration’s stated foreign policy goals and assessments. Just last year³, USAID noted that U.S. environmental foreign aid is valuable because such programs, “demonstrate American leadership and values abroad not only because they promote self-reliance, but also because their results are critical to global safety and security.”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Yes. The Agency will submit the spend plan in accordance with the provisions of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020.

¹ Climate & Clean Air Coalition, <https://ccacoalition.org/en>

² LEDS Global Partnership, https://ledsgp.org/?loclang=en_gb

³ Environmental and Natural Resource Management Framework, USAID, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USAID_ENRM_FRAMEWORK.pdf

Question:

“In December 2019, the Congress passed the bipartisan Global Fragility Act (GFA), which builds on lessons learned and failures from previous U.S. Government operations. The GFA requires a shift from the *status quo* and requires a coordinated, preventative, multisectoral, locally driven, and evidence-based approach. The aim of this law is to enhance internal coordination and the capacity of the U.S. government to address drivers of violence, conflict, and violent extremism to prevent it from metastasizing and ballooning into larger threats.

- How does USAID plan to implement the GFA in the coming year? Staffing and resources will determine success. Past research on coordination in stability and peacebuilding emphasizes that both failures and successes of coordination often come down to issues of having sufficient staffing levels with specific training and skills. Does USAID have sufficient staffing with the right skills and training to successfully implement the GFA and, if not, what do you need? What resources will you need?
- Diplomatic and programmatic efforts must be linked. Could you elaborate on how you plan to work with the State Department to ensure coordination to address and prevent violent conflict and fragility? How will you ensure that diplomacy complements USAID’s programs and development efforts so that the strategy does not only focus on development assistance?
- How are the US Department of State and USAID leveraging partnerships, including public private partnerships and partnerships with other governments, to finance emergency support?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) currently is assessing our technical and management-support needs to implement, monitor, and report on, the *Global Fragility Strategy* (GFS), once finalized. Although the resources and costs of implementation ultimately depend on the scope of the final *Strategy*, USAID will support the lines of effort described in the GFS.

To match U.S. national-security interests, USAID is working closely with the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, and the Treasury, and other Federal Departments and Agencies, to develop the GFS collaboratively. The *Strategy* will seek to marshal the full breadth of the U.S. Government’s capabilities to address global fragility, including diplomacy, foreign assistance, defense support and security cooperation, and other tools.

The Stabilization Assistance Review (2018) and the Strategic Prevention Project (2019), which USAID undertook in collaboration with the Departments of State and Defense, both found that, given the deeply political nature of the challenges in fragile contexts, a multi-pronged, comprehensive approach is often necessary. These findings will be the foundation of the GFS.

Donor and private-sector partnerships are powerful tools to enhance the impact of U.S. assistance. At present, for example, USAID participates in more than 50 single- and multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) administered by the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, including ones that focus on preventing conflict, promoting peace-building, supporting political transitions, and improving infrastructure and essential social services in fragile contexts. In

November 2019, USAID signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) Group, which established a basis for ongoing systematic cooperation, coordination, knowledge-sharing, and technical consultations in our respective actions to prevent and manage conflict in FCV situations.

Question:

"COVID-19 is exacerbating conflict dynamics and existing patterns of inequality, interrupting peace processes, and increasing the risks of violence in communities. Gender-based violence is increasing, and victims have trouble finding help as support programs are unable to reach out or conduct in-person programs. Local peacebuilding organizations have shown their ability to adapt and deliver conflict-sensitive aid to vulnerable populations without exacerbating existing root causes for violence. However, some governments are exploiting stay-at-home measures to further restrict civil society space and increase authoritarian measures. Local peacebuilders fear that it will be difficult to reclaim this space after the crisis.

The current COVID-19 USAID/State Department Strategy prioritizes four pillars, which include: protecting American interests, bolstering health systems, and addressing complex humanitarian crises. The fourth pillar calls for: preparing for, mitigating, and addressing second-order economic, civilian security, stabilization, and governance. This strategy treats stability and prevention as a second-order priority that will be worked on after the real development issues (in this case the pandemic response) are addressed. This linear and siloed approach is the antithesis of the principles in the GFA. Prevention and stability programming cannot be an afterthought.

- Will you advocate to revise the strategy to ensure an integrated approach is taken so that a peacebuilding and conflict prevention approach is integrated throughout all the other pillars including sectors listed in the fourth pillar such as economy and security? How will USAID ensure that all of its COVID-19 aid response is conflict-sensitive and takes a peacebuilding and trauma-informed approach to reduce the risks of further violence and advance effective recovery for the long-term?
- How will USAID ensure that COVID-19 support is reaching the most vulnerable populations, including women, children, marginalized groups, and the poor?
- How does USAID plan to address governments using COVID-19 as an opportune time to tighten an authoritarian grip and infringe on human rights by closing civic space?
- How is USAID supporting local civil-society actors on the frontlines of COVID-19 and conflict response, including local peacebuilders who are often the most trusted messengers to help bring health information and promote positive relationships within divided communities?
- COVID-19 economic downturn will be with us for a long time, how do the administration and USAID plan to support developing countries to weather the COVID-19 storm? Are there long-term economic investment plans that would help these countries, and how does the current budget support that?"

Answer:**Mr. Barsa:****Holistic Approach to Planning for a World Altered by COVID-19**

While the COVID-19 Task Force has been the central body within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to coordinate and execute our response to the pandemic now, we have been working to prepare to address the mid- to long-term effects of COVID-19 through the Over-the-Horizon (OTH) Strategic Review. OTH will examine the Agency's programs, policies, budget, and operations and determine the actions leadership will need to take to best position USAID to respond to the second- and third-order effects of COVID-19. Led by career staff and guided by senior leaders within the Agency, OTH has conducted a landscape analysis and scenario-planning exercise that has informed the development of recommendations for Acting Deputy Administrator John Barsa to consider that could allow USAID to pivot more nimbly to address the myriad impacts the pandemic is having around the world.

The landscape analysis provided the OTH teams with five key themes: an unprecedented health crisis; a new national-security imperative; severe shocks to mobility and the economy; rising pressures on governance, democracy, and stability; and devastating impacts on households. Under these five themes, the OTH teams conducted a scenario-planning exercise that considers myriad challenges, including conflict and fragility; ensuring continuous support to women, children, and vulnerable populations; countering malign and authoritarian influences; supporting efforts to grow economies and secure global supply-chains; strengthening public and private health networks; and continuing our efforts to support existing partnerships with local organizations while seeking new ones. Guided by this evidence and analysis, USAID is working proactively to position itself for the downstream impacts of COVID-19 before they hit.

Peace-Building and Conflict-Sensitivity

USAID is working to ensure that all of our investments to respond to COVID-19 takes an integrated, field-driven approach to peace-building, and that our programs are conflict-sensitive. This approach will allow our programs to promote resilience and advance effective recovery for the long-term.

Specifically, USAID issued guidance that allows our Missions and other Operating Units (OUs) to adjust the work plans of existing development programs, including those focused on peace-building, to address the effects of COVID-19. For example, a program with youth activists in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shifted its work plan to address divisive and misinformation narratives about the spread of COVID-19.

USAID has also used COVID-19 supplemental funding on efforts at various Missions to promote peace and security efforts. In our West Africa Regional Mission, for example, supplemental funding enabled community-level information campaigns to counter efforts by malign actors to erode social cohesion, sow inter-ethnic/religious tensions, and limit social liberties as the pandemic began to strain health care, close civic space, and undermine democratic accountability in some countries in the region.

In addition, USAID has issued specific guidance to help our Missions apply best practices in conflict-sensitivity to the current context. "Conflict-sensitivity" is about making sure

development and humanitarian organizations are attentive to the environments in which they operate, while doing no harm and maximizing opportunities for a positive impact. This conflict-sensitive guidance helps ensure our Missions design and carry out new or pivoting programs in a manner that anticipates and prevents unintended negative consequences and capitalizes on opportunities for collaboration and peace-building despite the pandemic.

Reaching Vulnerable and Marginalized Populations

The pandemic, and government's response to it, is likely to have a disproportionate effect on vulnerable and marginalized populations—including refugees, migrant workers, internally displaced persons, children, the elderly, the poor, persons with disabilities, the homeless, women and girls, and other groups traditionally discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, race, and gender. USAID is dealing proactively with the challenges the pandemic poses to these groups, by leveraging well-established and long-standing Agency practices to meet their needs during the pandemic.

For example, USAID's requirement to conduct gender analyses, codified in the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018, helps ensure that our programming is responsive to the unique opportunities and vulnerabilities that women and girls, and men and boys, face. USAID's guidance for programming to respond to COVID-19 maintains this standard for our Missions and other OUs. We encourage our Missions to augment existing gender analyses quickly with additional rapid desk research and stakeholder interviews (*e.g.*, via phone, video-conferencing, and instant messaging) that target information gaps or new concerns that might have arisen because of the pandemic. These methodologies allow for real-time information-gathering about newly emerging vulnerabilities that face women, children, and other vulnerable groups during the ongoing pandemic, including the risk of gender-based violence (GBV). USAID's Missions also may carry out additional research, such as an Inclusive Development Analysis, to understand to what extent, and in what ways, the pandemic is affecting vulnerable groups, and how our programming might suit their needs best.

Also, as part of our programming against COVID-19, we require our development and humanitarian partners to collect sex-disaggregated data so we and they can understand who is most vulnerable and develop strategies to respond to different needs. In addition to standard required indicators, the Agency has developed COVID-19-specific metrics that will allow for more detailed data-gathering about specific vulnerabilities and the impact of the Agency's COVID-19 programming.

The COVID-19 crisis is exacerbating underlying social and economic challenges and trends that increase certain populations' susceptibility to violence. The pandemic is also limiting the access by the victims of GBV to critical support systems. Therefore, USAID is taking GBV into account across all aspects of our response. For example, in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, USAID addressed increased demand for psychosocial and legal counseling for victims of GBV during COVID-19 by expanding the capacity of a 24-hour hotline that connects callers to legal information and referrals to emergency services such as food and safe shelters.

Countering Authoritarian Regimes and Closing Civic Space

The Administration is committed to the protection of democracy, citizen-responsive governance, and human rights in the global response to the pandemic of COVID-19. Our competitors are already taking advantage of the deep needs and vulnerabilities exposed by the crisis. This is playing out in a number of ways, including activities to discredit local governments and international organizations, offering highly symbolic (but ineffective) humanitarian assistance without regard for local systems, extensive disinformation campaigns, and an influx of unsustainable financing and infrastructure loans.

USAID's investments support responses to COVID-19 in ways that reduce vulnerability to malign actors' influence and model U.S. values of free enterprise and open government. USAID's activities and engagement improve debt-management and fiscal responsibility, strengthen the management and diversification of value-chains, reinforce global health solutions, bolster rights-based public-health monitoring, and manage electoral disruptions. These approaches and values help demonstrate the value of democratic solutions to shared challenges, like global pandemics.

In addition to making sure authoritarian regimes do not use COVID-19 as an opportunity to tighten their grip, government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic also must not use the disease as a pretext for repression of persons or ideas. Preserving civic space is as important as ever. Many of USAID's existing civil-society and media programs were already operating before the pandemic in politically restrictive environments, alongside related activities to promote democracy, citizen-responsive governance, and human rights. Since March of this year, some activities have pivoted to respond to increasing autocratic or authoritarian trends and to continue to support civil society, including the following:

- Funding anti-corruption activities by civil-society groups and media entities to monitor and promote accountability on government responses and the use of public funds to combat COVID-19, particularly in politically restrictive environments;
- Enhancing citizens' participation in making and implementing decisions to respond to the crisis and supporting advocacy to ensure politicians enact citizen-centered governance measures;
- Supporting civil society to ensure online engagement takes into account barriers that certain groups face in gain accessing to information or participating online;
- Bolstering existing efforts to monitor infringements on civic space and alert the human-rights community to these abuses, initiating dialogue on ways to address closing space, engaging with the international community, and continuing interventions to support and defend civic actors globally;
- Providing rapid cybersecurity support for civil society and media actors as cyberattacks increase amid the COVID-19 crisis; and
- Supporting civil society and independent media to address concerns and risks related to digital authoritarianism and combat dis- and misinformation.

Question:

“The World Bank, UN, and others have prioritized efforts to better work at the nexus of humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP Nexus) to address conflict prevention and fragility throughout all phases of crises and programming.

- The establishment of USAID's Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Stabilization has elevated prevention as a priority for the agency. Yet the primary funding accounts that this Bureau currently utilizes are primarily focused on stabilization/transition, response to conflict, and a small pool of funds for unanticipated crises. How does the President's budget ensure that CPS can fulfil the prevention component of its mandate in a robust way?
- Under your leadership, how will the new CPS Bureau prioritize and ensure conflict prevention is integrated across the entire agency to reflect the HDP nexus in its day to day operations, rather than the siloed lines of effort we often see today?
- Would you please share your plan for how the Bureau will elevate prevention as a priority throughout the agency and be responsible for the Global Fragility Act?
- Are the current funding streams for this Bureau sufficiently flexible to allow for prevention-focused work or are there barriers to the funding that Congress should consider for the future to better support that mandate?
- How does USAID intend to support the stabilization and conflict prevention of fragile contexts, such as in Burundi and South Sudan?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The President’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and the flexible funding accounts provided by Congress will enable the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to play its designated role as the technical lead and implementer for programs to prevent conflict in high-priority countries. The recent standing-up of the CPS Bureau, and specifically the new Center for the Prevention of Conflict and Violence (CVP), strengthens USAID’s capacity and commitment to resolve conflict and prevent violence in support of U.S. national-security priorities.

CPS, as USAID’s lead on the prevention of conflict, is creating deeper integration with all parts of the Agency in Washington, D.C., and our field Missions. CPS’ regional teams, through CVP and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), ensure seamless engagement to address regional and national challenges. CPS also brings dedicated senior leadership within USAID to discussions with the U.S. Government interagency around best practices in peace-building, preventing conflict and violence, and implementing programs to support political transition and stabilization. CPS further contributes leadership in civilian-military coordination to support U.S. foreign- and national-security policy in high-priority countries. This ensures the implementation of the GFA will benefit from essential civilian coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Flexible funding is the essential component that allows CPS to manage its programming effectively in a responsive, timely manner and support U.S. foreign-policy and national-security priorities. CPS appreciates the consistent, bipartisanship support from Congress on the flexible funding accounts.

USAID's Transformation, which places CPS within the Relief, Resilience, and Response (R3) family of Bureaus, helps elevate and integrate within the Agency conflict-prevention and other issues outlined in the Global Fragility Act (GFA). The R3 structure will ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing conflict across humanitarian, development, and stabilization programs. R3 builds on USAID's experience with efforts and expertise across the Agency to build resilience in areas of recurrent crisis. The new organizational structure is designed to overcome the challenge of siloed lines of effort. By uniting humanitarian, development, and stabilization efforts with longer-term investments in prevention, resilience, and food and water security, R3 creates a unified intervention and programmatic pathway for assisting communities to move out of crises. This closer strategic alignment of capabilities and collaboration among our investments advances U.S. foreign-assistance and national-security goals, and supports our global counterparts on their Journeys to Self-Reliance.

The following are two examples of USAID's programs in conflict-prevention in action:

In the Republic of Burundi, USAID is supporting conflict-prevention in a number of ways. For example, the Agency is working to strengthen the resilience and cohesion of youth affected by violence to help equip them to manage trauma, engage with local authorities, improve their socio-economic conditions, and peacefully manage conflicts. USAID also is engaging Burundian youth in peace-building activities and to enhance their access to finance and economic opportunities.

In the Republic of South Sudan, USAID is empowering citizens to mitigate communal violence and operate effectively in restricted political space by promoting dialogue, increasing awareness of trauma, and facilitating access to information. USAID's programming in South Sudan will serve as a tool for flexible, strategic approaches to promote peace, civic engagement, and media opportunities across a wide range of local and national contexts. Programs like this nest within broader conflict-sensitive efforts, such as South Sudan's new scenario-based strategic framework, as well as the cross-donor Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR), which aims to strengthen resilience with a strong focus on iterative conflict analysis and social cohesion.

USAID recognizes that long-term change and resolution of conflict in South Sudan will depend, in large part, on actors at the sub-national level. USAID seeks to improve prospects for peace in South Sudan by strengthening communities through programming that supports civil society and credible actors to enable processes to advance peace and reconciliation. Activities at the project level incorporate a people-to-people approach and empower citizen actors across a wide range of communities and populations to advance peace, stability, and dialogue through local solutions, civic participation, and increased access to information.

Question:

"President Trump's FY21 budget states, 'The Budget also supports the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery as an evidence-based solution for promoting lasting peace and stability through the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act.' I am glad to hear this clear message that women have a critical role to play in peace and security issues.

- How will the administration push forward this prioritization on WPS? Will the prioritization take into account the various intersectional identities that sideline and further marginalize young women? How will age disaggregated data and youth inclusivity be prioritized to support the unique challenges facing younger women?
- Will it similarly prioritize the role of youth in conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery, recognizing that youth are the majority population in many conflict-affected countries and have a unique role to play in long-term peace and stability? Global attention to the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) movement is increasing exponentially. With the recent passage of UNSCR 2535 and more visibility and attention to USAID's Youth Policy, it is clear we cannot just pay lip service to youth by saying they are important stakeholders without putting money behind or support for them as they risk their lives to prevent violence. How much is USAID spending on YPS? Do you have a clear picture on how USAID is supporting young peacebuilders?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will continue to push forward the intent of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act and the Administration's *WPS Strategy* through USAID's WPS Implementation Plan, as submitted to Congress on June 11, 2020. The Implementation Plan will help advance the *WPS Strategy* through effective, coordinated action to advance women's leadership in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism, and supporting post-conflict recovery.

USAID is committed to supporting the unique challenges that face young women and men, particularly in areas that are experiencing conflict and crisis:

- For example, in the Republic of Guinea, USAID's Cultural Cohesion for Peace and Prosperity activity, implemented by Catholic Relief Services with the *Organization Catholique pour la Promotion Humaine* and the West African Network for Peace-Building, provides support to young women who serve as Peace Ambassadors and members of local Peace-Building Platforms. These young women work alongside their male colleagues to identify and facilitate the timely, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and also lead educational outreach events for citizens on conflict-resolution.
- In the Arab Republic of Egypt, our WPS activities are addressing the various identities that marginalize young women by engaging girls and young women from different demographic backgrounds, including Muslims and Christians, to participate in cross-community dialogue and develop a common vision of empowerment and economic growth. The collection of age-disaggregated data from this activity will be a critical tool for monitoring and evaluation to ensure we are reaching the intended populations.

As for the role of youth in the prevention and resolution of, and recovery from, conflict, studies show that violent extremist organizations disproportionately target children and young people ages ten to 29 for recruitment. Young people are vulnerable to recruitment because of a

complex mix of mutually reinforcing factors, such as a sense of grievance from human-rights abuses, discrimination, exclusion, trauma, and previous exposure to violence. A tailored approach to those most at risk is necessary to interrupt specific recruitment methods.

The vast majority of young people, however, are not at risk. Instead, they engage actively in their communities to prevent violence and promote peace. USAID and our partners have identified evidence that links approaches that promote positive youth development (PYD) to improved outcomes for youth. Building a sense of agency, resilience, and cohesion can increase the engagement of youth and reduce their susceptibility to violent extremism.

USAID sees engaging young people and emerging young leaders in peace and security not only as an important way to advance U.S. security, but also as a cost-effective approach to sustain local and international peace and stability. USAID spent approximately \$5.6 million of funding from Fiscal Year 2018 on activities related to youth, peace, and security (YPS). The Agency will work to advance the integration of age-disaggregated metrics related to peace and security, in addition to the current sex-disaggregated indicators, in our programming moving forward.

USAID is supporting YPS and young peace-builders in a number of ways, including the following:

- Disseminating research on effective YPS programming to over 108,000 users through our www.YouthPower.org platform;
- Creating networks of youth peace-builders through our www.YouthLead.org platform, which has reached over 7,500 young change-makers, many of whom work on YPS; and
- Supporting a joint U.S. Africa Command/USAID Youth Advisory Council made up of the top young peace-builders and specialists in preventing and countering violent extremism in the Africa region.

Question:

“I appreciate the budget's emphasis on protecting the “fundamental right of living according to one’s own principles,” particularly freedom of religion. Yet this freedom is intricately linked with and oftentimes reliant on other fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, rule of law, freedom of association and assembly, and more.

How will USAID invest more into protecting all fundamental human rights to fully enable its work around freedom of religion?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: When governments suppress freedom of religion or belief, they cordon off a segment of their societies from making meaningful contributions to their countries, and cause social and economic harm. On the other hand, when governments are effective in promoting and protecting religious freedom, their nations realize their aspirations for better economies, greater political stability, and increased peace. Thus, upholding freedom of religion or belief and

preventing or responding to persecution, repression, and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief advances a core human right and the development mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID): promoting the prosperity of humanity while preserving individual dignity and freedom.

Executive Order (E.O.) 13926 on Advancing International Religious Freedom recognizes religious freedom as a shared value that strengthens bilateral relationships with the governments and civil society in the countries in which these communities live. The E.O. is an essential part of the global efforts of the U.S. Government and the American people to advance the human right of freedom of religion or belief and foster self-reliant and inclusive societies.

Therefore, the response by USAID to E.O. 13926 will build on our recovery work with persecuted communities in Northern Iraq, the Rohingya crisis, Northeast Nigeria, and other pockets of vulnerability. We will refine our assistance tools to work closely with local faith and community leaders and to deliver aid rapidly to persecuted communities, families, and individuals most in need of help.

The Agency's Transformation also will provide our field Missions with enhanced capabilities to advance all inalienable human rights. For instance, the new Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI) will offer USAID's Missions the tools they need to integrate our increased emphasis on religious freedom with broader human-rights programs and investments in other key development sectors. Additionally, consistent with E.O. 13926 and the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (H.R. 1150), USAID has developed and introduced a new required course on religious freedom for all our Foreign Service Officers. The training provides an overview of the principles of, and threats to, religious freedom and details the various ways USAID's staff can and should support this fundamental right in our international development work.

Question:

"How does cutting short our de-mining program in Nagorno Karabakh – at Azerbaijan's urging – save lives or advance the cause of peace?"

The logic of those attacking the Nagorno Karabakh humanitarian de-mining program seems to be that keeping landmines in the ground will lead to more Armenian deaths and dismemberments, somehow advancing the cause of peace. How do more landmine fatalities help prepare either side for peace?

The Administration's attack on the Nagorno Karabakh landmine removal program politicized de-mining by selectively picking and choosing which civilians "deserve" to be protected from landmine deaths and injuries. Why are we playing games with humanitarian de-mining?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: In 2018, the HALO Trust reported it had cleared nearly 98 percent of all landmines in the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous *Oblast*. The rate of mine-contamination in the former Autonomous *Oblast* is consistent with that achieved by other demining programs for which the U.S. Government has discontinued funding. Although three demining technicians died tragically in March 2018, no civilian deaths from mines have been reported in the former

Autonomous *Oblast* since 2015. After nearly two decades of work and over \$18 million in spending, with the vast majority of mines cleared, more forward-looking programs provide the most-effective use of U.S. taxpayer dollars and the best hope for prosperity in the region.

Question:

“Last year, Secretary Pompeo told this committee the administration was reaching out to governments that host UNRWA facilities with offers to assist them in taking over that UN agency’s mandate to provide for Palestinian refugees. Despite the United States’ large assistance, Jordan’s King Abdullah emphatically rejected the administration peace plan, unilateral annexation and sponsored an emergency donor conference to support UNRWA.

What, if any, progress have you made with the Lebanese and Syrian governments to take over UNRWA operations?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: We defer to the U.S. Department of State on questions related to funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as the U.S. Agency for International Development does not fund UNRWA.

Questions for the Record from Representative Phillips
“The Trump Administration’s FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request”
July 23, 2020

Question:

“In December 2019, the U.S. government passed the bipartisan Global Fragility Act (GFA), which builds on lessons learned and failures from previous U.S. government operations. The GFA requires a shift from the status quo and requires a coordinated, preventative, multisectoral, locally driven, and evidence-based approach. The aim of this law is to enhance internal coordination and the capacity of the U.S. government to address drivers of violence, conflict, and violent extremism to prevent it from metastasizing and ballooning into larger threats.

- a. How does USAID plan to implement the GFA in the coming year? Staffing and resources will determine success. Past research on coordination in stability and peacebuilding emphasizes that both failures and successes of coordination often come down to issues of having sufficient staffing levels with specific training and skills. Does USAID have sufficient staffing with the right skills and training to successfully implement the GFA and, if not, what do you need? What resources will you need?
- b. Diplomatic and programmatic efforts must be linked. Could you elaborate on how you plan to work with the State Department to ensure coordination to address and prevent violent conflict and fragility? How will you ensure that diplomacy complements USAID’s programs and development efforts so that the strategy does not only focus on development assistance?
- c. How are the US Department of State and USAID leveraging partnerships, including public private partnerships and partnerships with other governments, to finance emergency support?
- d. According to the GFA, stabilization plans must be submitted to Congress by September 15th. What do you plan to produce by September 15th and how do you plan to consult with outside organizations before then?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) currently is assessing our technical and management-support needs to implement, monitor, and report on, the *Global Fragility Strategy* (GFS), once finalized. Although the resources and costs of implementation ultimately depend on the scope of the final *Strategy*, USAID will support the lines of effort described in the GFS.

To match U.S. national-security interests, USAID is working closely with the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, and the Treasury, and other Federal Departments and Agencies, to develop the GFS collaboratively. The *Strategy* will seek to marshal the full breadth of the U.S. Government’s capabilities to address global fragility, including diplomacy, foreign assistance, defense support and security cooperation, and other tools.

The [Stabilization Assistance Review](#) (2018) and the [Strategic Prevention Project](#) (2019), which USAID undertook in collaboration with the Departments of State and Defense, both found that, given the deeply political nature of the challenges in fragile contexts, a multi-pronged, comprehensive approach is often necessary. These findings will be the foundation of the GFS.

Donor and private-sector partnerships are powerful tools to enhance the impact of U.S. assistance. At present, for example, USAID participates in more than 50 single- and multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) administered by the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, including ones that focus on preventing conflict, promoting peace-building, supporting political transitions, and improving infrastructure and essential social services in fragile contexts. In November 2019, USAID signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) Group, which established a basis for ongoing systematic cooperation, coordination, knowledge-sharing, and technical consultations in our respective actions to prevent and manage conflict in FCV situations.

USAID, alongside the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, and the Treasury, and other U.S. Government partners, is implementing the Global Fragility Act (GFA) actively and providing inputs to the *GFS*, including the selection of priority countries and/or regions, as required by statute. USAID and interagency counterparts are taking a three-phased methodological and consultative approach for prioritizing countries and regions for the *GFS*, based on the criteria laid out in Section 505 of the GFA. These criteria are the following:

1. Assessed levels and risks of fragility and violent conflict;
2. Assessment of partners' commitment and potential for impact; and,
3. U.S. national-security interests

This approach builds on the analysis of data and prioritization exercises from prior, related initiatives, and captures the recent impact the pandemic of COVID-19 is having on fragility. As a result, the process for selecting priority countries and regions in which to implement the *GFS* will give special consideration to those identified through the [Stabilization Assistance Review](#), the [Strategic Prevention Project](#), and the [Atrocities Early-Warning Task Force](#). Following internal review and consultation with Congress, the Administration will finalize the list of priority countries and regions this Fall. However, judging by the progress so far, the Administration will not meet the deadline to finalize the *Strategy* by September 15, 2020.

Question:

“The World Bank, UN, and others have prioritized efforts to better work at the nexus of humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP Nexus) to address conflict prevention and fragility throughout all phases of crises and programming.

- a. The establishment of USAID's Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Stabilization has elevated prevention as a priority for the agency. Yet the primary funding accounts that this Bureau currently utilizes are primarily focused on stabilization/transition, response to conflict, and a small pool of funds for unanticipated crises. How does the President's budget ensure that CPS can fulfil the prevention component of its mandate in a robust way?
- b. Under your leadership, how will the new CPS Bureau prioritize and ensure conflict prevention is integrated across the entire agency to reflect the HDP nexus in its day to day operations, rather than the siloed lines of effort we often see today?

- c. Would you please share your plan for how the bureau will elevate prevention as a priority throughout the agency and be responsible for the Global Fragility Act?
- d. Are the current funding streams for this bureau sufficiently flexible to allow for prevention-focused work or are there barriers to the funding that Congress should consider for the future to better support that mandate?
- e. How does USAID intend to support the stabilization and conflict prevention of fragile contexts, such as in Burundi and South Sudan?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and the flexible funding accounts provided by Congress will enable the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to play its designated role as the technical lead and implementer for programs to prevent conflict in high-priority countries. The recent standing-up of the CPS Bureau, and specifically the new Center for the Prevention of Conflict and Violence (CVP), strengthens USAID's capacity and commitment to resolve conflict and prevent violence in support of U.S. national-security priorities.

CPS, as USAID's lead on the prevention of conflict, is creating deeper integration with all parts of the Agency in Washington, D.C., and our field Missions. CPS' regional teams, through CVP and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), ensure seamless engagement to address regional and national challenges. CPS also brings dedicated senior leadership within USAID to discussions with the U.S. Government interagency around best practices in peace-building, preventing conflict and violence, and implementing programs to support political transition and stabilization. CPS further contributes leadership in civilian-military coordination to support U.S. foreign- and national-security policy in high-priority countries. This ensures the implementation of the GFA will benefit from essential civilian coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Flexible funding is the essential component that allows CPS to manage its programming effectively in a responsive, timely manner and support U.S. foreign-policy and national-security priorities. CPS appreciates the consistent, bipartisanship support from Congress on the flexible funding accounts.

USAID's Transformation, which places CPS within the Relief, Resilience, and Response (R3) family of Bureaus, helps elevate and integrate within the Agency conflict-prevention and other issues outlined in the Global Fragility Act (GFA). The R3 structure will ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing conflict across humanitarian, development, and stabilization programs. R3 builds on USAID's experience with efforts and expertise across the Agency to build resilience in areas of recurrent crisis. The new organizational structure is designed to overcome the challenge of siloed lines of effort. By uniting humanitarian, development, and stabilization efforts with longer-term investments in prevention, resilience, and food and water security, R3 creates a unified intervention and programmatic pathway for assisting communities to move out of crises. This closer strategic alignment of capabilities and collaboration among our investments advances U.S. foreign-assistance and national-security goals, and supports our global counterparts on their Journeys to Self-Reliance.

The following are two examples of USAID's programs in conflict-prevention in action:

In the Republic of Burundi, USAID is supporting conflict-prevention in a number of ways. For example, the Agency is working to strengthen the resilience and cohesion of youth affected by violence to help equip them to manage trauma, engage with local authorities, improve their socio-economic conditions, and peacefully manage conflicts. USAID also is engaging Burundian youth in peace-building activities and to enhance their access to finance and economic opportunities.

In the Republic of South Sudan, USAID is empowering citizens to mitigate communal violence and operate effectively in restricted political space by promoting dialogue, increasing awareness of trauma, and facilitating access to information. USAID's programming in South Sudan will serve as a tool for flexible, strategic approaches to promote peace, civic engagement, and media opportunities across a wide range of local and national contexts. Programs like this nest within broader conflict-sensitive efforts, such as South Sudan's new scenario-based strategic framework, as well as the cross-donor [Partnership for Recovery and Resilience](#) (PfRR), which aims to strengthen resilience with a strong focus on iterative conflict analysis and social cohesion.

USAID recognizes that long-term change and resolution of conflict in South Sudan will depend, in large part, on actors at the sub-national level. USAID seeks to improve prospects for peace in South Sudan by strengthening communities through programming that supports civil society and credible actors to enable processes to advance peace and reconciliation. Activities at the project level incorporate a people-to-people approach and empower citizen actors across a wide range of communities and populations to advance peace, stability, and dialogue through local solutions, civic participation, and increased access to information.

Questions for the Record from Representative Omar
The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
July 23, 2020

Question:

“We saw reporting that Pompeo has directed all of our foreign service to refer to the report of Secretary Pompeo’s Unalienable Rights Commission, which myself and many of my colleagues have worried represents an attack on women’s rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, and a broad attack on the entire infrastructure of international human rights.

- Do you understand that to include USAID?
- How has USAID’s programming changed as a result of the Commission’s report? How do you anticipate it will change as a result of the Commission’s report?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: It is our understanding that the Commission’s draft *Report* has gone through a public review-and-comment period. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has not received a request to respond to any of the findings of the Commission. Our programming has not changed as a result of the release of the draft *Report*, and it is difficult to anticipate how it might change, if at all, after its release.

Question:

“You wrote a letter to the UN in May asking them to completely remove references to reproductive and sexual rights in their global humanitarian response to the COVID-19 crisis.

- How do you expect countries in the Global South to recover from COVID-19, or to develop more generally, if women in those countries don’t have access to reproductive rights and family planning?
- How do you expect to achieve women’s economic empowerment without their having access to reproductive rights and family planning?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The United States is proud to continue to lead the way for women’s empowerment. The Washington Bureaus and Operating Units of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) work in close partnership with our international field Missions in more than 80 countries to provide strategic leadership, training, and technical assistance. Through our investments in women’s empowerment, USAID continues to shape, institutionalize, and implement policies that empower women and girls.

As the world’s largest bilateral donor of global health assistance, which includes funding for voluntary family planning and reproductive health, the U.S. Government remains committed

to helping women and children thrive, particularly in countries where the need is greatest. In the past ten years alone, USAID has helped save the lives of more than 9.3 million children and 340,000 women.

Now, as the world grapples with the pandemic of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to recognize the importance of healthcare for women and children. The implementation of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) Policy is a key element of USAID's work that demonstrates the Administration's respect for, and commitment to, human life. Implementing the policy has not changed USAID's global health assistance funding levels by even one dollar.

USAID funds health programs and assistance for girls and women throughout their lifespans. Our experience has shown that health programs that address barriers to equality between women and men improve development outcomes overall. When women are educated and can earn and control their income, infant mortality declines, child health and nutrition improve, population growth slows, economies expand, and cycles of poverty are broken. USAID's support for women around the world includes the following:

- Providing information, products, and services for voluntary family planning to support the ability of women and couples to make, and act on, informed decisions about the timing and spacing of their pregnancies;
- Improving maternal and child health through key interventions such as iron supplementation, access to a skilled birth attendant and health facility, and the prevention and treatment of obstetric and newborn complications;
- Ensuring programs to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS focus on women's unique vulnerabilities to infection; and
- Funding critical health programs that address women's needs, including reproductive health, nutrition, malaria, and health security.

Question:

"There have been nearly 400 landmine and UXO casualties in Nagorno-Karabakh since 1995. There are nearly 1400 acres of contaminated land left in the region.

- Why has USAID cut off funding for demining activities there, given the ongoing risk to civilian populations, so close to the job being finished?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: In 2018, the HALO Trust reported it had cleared nearly 98 percent of all landmines in the former Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) Autonomous *Oblast*. The remaining percentage of mine-contamination in the former NK Autonomous *Oblast* is consistent with that achieved by other demining programs for which the United States has discontinued funding. Although three demining technicians died tragically in March 2018, no civilian deaths from mines have been reported in the former NK Autonomous *Oblast* since 2015. After nearly two decades of work

and more than \$18 million in spending, with the vast majority of mines cleared, more forward-looking programs provide the most effective use of U.S. taxpayer dollars and the best hope for long-term prosperity in the region.

**Questions for the Record from Representative Spanberger
The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
July 23, 2020**

Question:

“What is the status of extending PREDICT and/or setting up a successor program?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Because of the natural Program Cycle at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), PREDICT-2 was scheduled to end after ten years, on September 30, 2019. The Agency extended the award for an initial six months to allow the consortium to complete global analyses, and for another six months following the outbreak of COVID-19.

PREDICT-2 was in a unique position to assist USAID and the global community to understand the factors that led to viral spillover in the case of SARS-CoV-2, the pathogen that causes COVID-19, including the animals that carry the novel coronavirus and the factors that lead to animal-to-human transmission. This information is critical to identifying measures to reduce risk during the current pandemic of COVID-19, and to preventing future outbreaks.

USAID has used information and data gathered by PREDICT-2 — and its predecessor project, PREDICT-1 — as well as extensive internal and external consultations that included the U.S. Government interagency (such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Defense Threat-Reduction and Advanced Research Projects Agencies within the U.S. Department of Defense) to design a new program, STOP Spillover, that will focus more heavily on reducing the risk of viral spillover from animals to humans. The design included a co-creation process that provided us feedback from numerous academic, private-sector and non-governmental organizations that are working in this area.

USAID released a call for proposals for STOP Spillover on May 1, 2020, which closed on June 1, 2020. USAID expects to award STOP Spillover in the near future. All data from the two PREDICT projects will adhere to USAID's Open-Data Policy and, upon completion of the project, will remain publicly available through USAID's Development Data Library. We will encourage the winner of the competition for STOP Spillover to use these critical data to inform its work.

Question:

“Will you ensure there is no lapse in USAID’s capabilities to identify and prevent diseases and outbreaks, and that any follow-on program will sustain and expand the reach of this monitoring around the world?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Yes. The PREDICT-2 project is only one component of the investments the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) makes in global health security. A combination of ongoing and new projects will ensure there is no lapse in the capabilities of USAID’s partners to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging disease threats.

Since 2009, USAID has invested more than \$1.1 billion to ensure the necessary systems, networks, and capabilities are in place to address such threats throughout the world. For example, since 2018, USAID has assisted governments in our partner countries to develop national preparedness and response plans; strengthened the capacity of dozens of laboratories to test for prioritized zoonotic diseases; trained thousands of public-health professionals to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of zoonotic and antimicrobial-resistant pathogens; and funded responses to a broad range of outbreaks. These efforts are crucial to saving lives and building resilient partners and allies.

USAID expects to award our new STOP Spillover project by the end of September 2020, when the PREDICT-2 project is scheduled to end. We have used information gathered by PREDICT-2 — and its predecessor project, PREDICT-1 — on high-risk animal species, animal-human interfaces, human populations, and geographic locations to design STOP Spillover.

STOP Spillover will contribute directly to the prevention of outbreaks from known emerging zoonotic viruses by working to achieve three objectives:

- Objective 1: Strengthening national capacity to monitor, analyze, and characterize the risk that priority emerging zoonotic viruses could spill over from animals to people;
- Objective 2: Strengthening national capacity to develop, test, and implement interventions to reduce the risk that priority emerging zoonotic viruses could spill over from animals to people; and
- Objective 3: Strengthening national capacity to mitigate the amplification and spread of priority zoonotic diseases in human populations.

USAID is confident that our comprehensive array of health-security programs, including STOP Spillover, will make major contributions to addressing the threat of epidemic infectious and emerging zoonotic diseases.

Question:

“Can you please lay out the complete timeline for the plan to transition from the PREDICT program to the Spillover program?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has used information and data gathered by PREDICT-2 — and its predecessor project, PREDICT-1 — as well as extensive internal and external consultations that included the U.S. Government interagency (such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Defense Threat-Reduction and Advanced Research Projects Agencies of the U.S. Departments of Defense) to design a new program, STOP Spillover, that will focus more heavily on reducing the risk of the spillover of viruses from animals to humans. The design also involved a co-creation process that provided us feedback from numerous academic, private-sector, and non-governmental organizations that are working in this area.

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Question:

“How is USAID coordinating with international partners and international organizations to strengthen disease surveillance programs?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) closely coordinates with international partners to strengthen surveillance for infectious diseases around the world.

For tuberculosis, USAID has been investing in country- and global-level routine surveillance and periodic surveys for more than 20 years. We collaborate with government, local, and international partners to improve the quality and sustainability of early-warning systems for the disease.

As part of our investments under the Global Health Security Agenda, USAID works with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and other international institutions through routine policy and technical discussions. USAID has funded national and community-based surveillance for zoonotic diseases, including influenza, coronaviruses, and Ebola, through multiple international organizations, research centers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). USAID also provides technical support to these organizations through past and present projects, such as PREDICT-1, PREDICT-2, and RESPOND — an investment that improved national capacity in

high-risk countries to respond to outbreaks of emergent zoonotic diseases that threaten human health. A new USAID-funded project, STOP Spillover, also will coordinate closely with these international organizations.

USAID works with the CORE Group Polio Project (a consortium of international and local NGOs) to conduct community-based surveillance for polio, vaccine-preventable diseases, COVID-19, zoonotic diseases, and Ebola in selected countries. The community-based efforts of NGOs complement the laboratory, facility-based, and environmental surveillance funded by USAID and other donors. Data generated by the polio-surveillance system confirm where the virus is circulating, guide the response to outbreaks, help plan vaccination campaigns, and provide the evidence of eradication used for certification. USAID's financial support from the top to the bottom of the surveillance system ensures coordination and collaboration; information-sharing; and the rapid identification of, and response to, cases.

Since 1997, USAID has provided funding to support the work of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an international partnership established in 1996 to achieve universal access to prevention, treatment, care, and support for HIV. UNAIDS is also the leader in global surveillance for HIV surveillance at the global, country, and community levels, in close partnership with USAID through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Lastly, USAID, through the President's Malaria Initiative, works closely with country-level National Malaria Control Programs and other key stakeholders to invest in the surveillance and control of malaria.

Question:

"COVID-19 is the latest zoonotic disease to become a global pandemic. As human pressures on nature grow, the frequency of zoonotic diseases that jump from animals to humans have increased. Today, three out of every four new diseases are zoonotic, and most of these originate in wildlife. To protect against future spillover events, we must proactively address these root causes while at the same time ensuring the food security of rural communities that rely on wildlife for protein and nutrition.

- What actions is USAID taking to integrate its efforts to prevent these drivers of disease spillover – including forest loss, food insecurity, and the illegal wildlife trade – into the Agency's global health and pandemic prevention strategies?
- Please describe the specific strategies, focus countries, and programs where this work is taking place, both within USAID and in coordination with other U.S. Government agencies such as the State Department, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Under the *U.S. Global Health Security Strategy*, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) plays a key role in coordinating the U.S. Government's contributions to

the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), an international initiative to advance health-security priorities multilaterally, bilaterally, and domestically. The GHSA brings together governments, international and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to work toward common goals to keep the world safe. USAID makes its contributions to the GHSA in close collaboration with the U.S. Departments of State, Defense (DoD), Health and Human Services (HHS, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]), and Agriculture, among others. USAID's focus countries under the GHSA currently include the People's Republic of Bangladesh; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Republics of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Sénégal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda; the Federal Republic of Nigeria; the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; the United Republic of Tanzania; and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The investments of USAID under the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) deploy a "One-Health" approach that seeks to integrate multiple disciplines locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health, grounded in the recognition of the interconnectedness of people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. This approach is particularly critical as USAID works to prevent avoidable outbreaks, detect public-health threats early, and respond rapidly and effectively when outbreaks occur.

USAID incorporates the One-Health approach across our entire GHSA portfolio:

1. The One-Health Workforce Next-Generation project, implemented by a consortium headed by the University of California, Davis, is empowering 95 universities in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia to build the human resources and workforce necessary for more effective surveillance and control of diseases. The project develops and delivers sustainable training and programs that build the capacity of national ministries and the private sector to prevent and respond quickly to disease threats by using a One-Health approach across human, animal, and environmental sectors.
2. USAID's upcoming STOP Spillover project will transition our work from *understanding* to *mitigating* the risks of viral spillover from animals to humans. One component of this new project will be strengthening national capacity to assess the risk of spillover. This includes a focus on both the viruses and their animal hosts, as well as the drivers of spillover, including environmental and land-use changes; food-production and animal-trade policies; income inequalities and food-insecurity; and human behaviors, including the consumption of bush meat and sales of high-risk species in wet markets.
3. Another upcoming project — the Private-Sector Partnership Addressing Emerging Zoonoses and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) — will take a similar approach to assessing and reducing risk by engaging private-sector partners to address zoonotic diseases and AMR in the production and marketing of livestock.

The loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecological systems, as well as agricultural intensification and extensification, have increased the overall risk of zoonotic-disease outbreak significantly. USAID's portfolios in the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable landscapes, and global food security address many of the root drivers of the emergence of zoonotic diseases and contribute to a holistic, One-Health response to reduce the risk of outbreaks. Specifically, these investments combat trafficking in wildlife, strengthen food security and alternative protein sources for vulnerable communities, and conserve and mitigate pressure on intact forest landscapes and other high-biodiversity areas. In December 2019, USAID launched an ambitious

new partnership program called Health, Ecosystems and Agriculture for Resilient, Thriving Societies (HEARTH). HEARTH's partners engage with the private sector to co-invest (at one-to-one leverage or greater) in landscape-scale cross-sectoral programs that conserve biodiverse areas and advance the well-being and prosperity of the local people who live in and around them. HEARTH has attracted more than \$100 million in proposed private-sector funds to co-invest with USAID, and the Agency currently is co-designing partnerships with private actors in a dozen landscapes across eight countries; more landscapes are expected in 2021.

Finally, to improve cross-sectoral coordination, USAID has established a One-Health Working Group (OHWG), which brings together the Bureaus for Global Health (GH); Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment (E3, soon to be the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation); Resilience and Food Security (RFS); and Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). In addition, the STOP Spillover and Private Sector Zoonotic Disease and AMR projects had procurement panels that included representatives from GH and E3, as well as from other U.S. Government Departments and Agencies (such as HHS/CDC and the Defense Threat-Reduction Advanced Research Projects Agencies within DoD), and both of these new projects will coordinate closely with related work funded by other U.S. Government Departments and Agencies in the target countries.

Question:

“USAID has previously highlighted the importance of countering Russia’s malign influence throughout Europe and Eurasia, especially given its threat to U.S. interests and NATO. Yet, the President’s budget request reduces funding for capacity building and anti-corruption programs that are critical for achieving this goal.

- How is USAID countering Russia’s malign influence, and how will this programming be impacted if the proposed reductions are enacted?
- If the funding levels laid out in the President’s budget request were enacted, would the cuts be felt across USAID country Missions, or would certain countries be particularly affected? If the latter is the case, which countries would see the greatest cuts?
- Given recent escalating aggression from Russia, from attacking democratic practices to the GRU reportedly putting bounties on the lives of American troops in Afghanistan, is USAID looking to adjust or expand any of its efforts to build resilience against Russia’s tactics?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Malign Kremlin influence is a region-wide concern. In frontline states like Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova, Kremlin-sponsored meddling is part of daily life. Elsewhere, the Russian Government and its proxies are undermining democratic developments in Belarus and Armenia, and expanding their pernicious hold in Serbia, along with the People’s Republic of China. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is countering the Kremlin’s malign influence by focusing our development assistance on critical areas outlined in the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). These activities include the following:

- Funding independent media that can produce fact-based reporting as a bulwark to propaganda;
- Focusing on cybersecurity for critical infrastructure;
- Promoting energy diversification and security;
- Supporting more-participatory democracy and civil society, and strengthening the rule of law;
- Renewing efforts to combat corruption; and
- Reducing economic vulnerabilities by supporting the diversification of trade, market-integration, and a more level playing field for investment opportunities.

As part of a region-wide approach to countering the Kremlin, USAID will continue to make data-driven and evidence-based decisions to prioritize our funding in the most vulnerable countries and sectors.

USAID began devising our Development Framework for Countering Malign Kremlin Influence (CMKI) in 2017, as developments highlighted the need for a more formal and focused approach to interference and misinformation by the Russian Government in Europe and Eurasia. Launched publicly in July 2019, the CMKI Development Framework helps USAID tailor our assistance across the region to respond to the most-urgent threats posed by the Kremlin and its proxies.

The CMKI Development Framework has four pillars. *First*, where the Kremlin acts to destabilize, weaken, and undermine democratic processes and institutions, USAID fosters more democratic, effective, transparent, service-oriented governing institutions, grounded in more durable connections to citizens. *Second*, while the Kremlin wages disinformation warfare, USAID bolsters objective, fact-based media outlets in the region, which produce credible, factual news and information. *Third*, as the Kremlin seeks to leverage its energy dominance for its political advantage, USAID works to expand energy independence. *Fourth*, while the Kremlin uses economic bullying tactics and sows doubt in the value of transparent, rule-based market economies, USAID helps governments and the private sector in our partner countries open up new markets, create viable companies, foster competitiveness, and adopt new practices favorable to doing business and attracting investment. While the Kremlin exports corruption across all of these sectors for its own benefit, USAID works to build transparency, accountability, and respect for the rule of law.

Over the course of the first year of operation of our CMKI Development Framework, USAID has built social, political, and economic resilience against the Kremlin's self-serving interventions. In the coming months, USAID will issue a report on the progress we have made in implementing the Framework, including how we are adjusting our current programming to respond to the Kremlin's goals and tactics in the region. USAID also will launch a new energy initiative soon to bolster the energy security of the region.

USAID will continue using our available resources to address the most-urgent needs in our partner countries, and the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 will enable us to continue implementing the CMKI Development Framework. USAID will prioritize programming in areas where we and our partners have a comparative advantage, to ensure U.S. foreign-assistance funding does not duplicate the efforts of multilateral institutions, or those of

other donors and U.S. Government Departments and Agencies. USAID uses development approaches like private-sector engagement and funding local organizations to achieve high-impact results. For example, USAID's Mission in Georgia is designing a new activity to incubate and scale-up innovative approaches to improve the integrity of information, and to build societal resistance to disinformation. In addition, USAID will continue to cooperate with other like-minded donors to leverage their funding and engage key stakeholders in addressing the Kremlin's malign influence. For example, USAID is working with the European Commission to bolster civil society and independent media in the frontline states and the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

Question 7:

"I am also concerned because while the Administration is suggesting the U.S. government cut its resources to counter Putin's malign influence, the Administration is also donating scarce resources to Russia while Americans and other communities around the world are in great need. The Administration recently donated more than \$5 million worth of ventilators to the Government of Russia. This gift is only part of the Administration's plan to hand out ventilators worth more than \$200 million to various countries, some of which apparently don't need them or can't use them. Many would prefer more appropriate and cost-effective assistance.

What assessments and review processes were undertaken before sending ventilators to Russia?

Given the very constrained resources to respond to COVID, how is the administration deciding which countries receive ventilators and other assistance?

Is it based on humanitarian need or are there other factors influencing these decisions?"

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The National Security Council (NSC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have ensured that the provision of ventilators and essential medical supplies will in no way affect the availability of this critical equipment for the American people and are carefully balancing our domestic needs with those of the world.

When President Trump called President Putin on May 7, 2020, to offer assistance, Russia was experiencing a true humanitarian crisis. The country had the most confirmed COVID-19 cases in Europe, and the second-highest case count in the world. The humanitarian mission to deliver 200 ventilators to Russia was intended to save the lives of Russian citizens.

The decision process for sending 200 ventilators to Russia adhered to the same protocol used to fulfill other requests for ventilators from other governments across the world. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provides ventilators according to the NSC's direction, based on coordination between the NSC and Heads of State and Ministries of Health.

In addition to the provision of ventilators, USAID has aligned our supplemental appropriations for COVID-19 and other resources with identified public-health and development needs. USAID conducted real-time analysis as the epidemic unfolded, by using evolving case-load data to allocate funds through multiple tranches as the pandemic was evolving. Since

Europe became an epicenter shortly after Asia, USAID directed COVID-19 resources to 18 countries in the region.

We have prioritized the following interventions in developing countries affected by, and at-risk of COVID-19: screening at points of entry and exit; the purchase of key health commodities and equipment; the prevention and control of infections in critical health facilities; the rapid identification, diagnosis, management, and treatment of cases; the identification and follow-up of contacts; awareness-raising in populations through risk-communications and community-engagement; the implementation of health measures for travelers; the management of logistics and supply-chain; global and regional coordination; and country-level readiness and response. In addition, USAID is coordinating with national and global implementing partners to provide science-based subject-matter expertise in the clinical management of patients with COVID-19. These interventions are best practices in public health that can help slow the spread of COVID-19, care for those affected by the disease, and equip local communities with the tools needed to fight it.

**Questions for the Record from Representative Malinowski
The Trump Administration's FY2021 Foreign Assistance Budget Request
July 23, 2020**

Question:

“Have any already-appropriated USAID funds been redirected toward multilateral efforts to prepare for production and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine to low-income countries (through *e.g.*, GAVI or the Global Fund [to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria])?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: No. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has not redirected any funding to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), or the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to prepare for the production and distribution of a vaccine against COVID-19 in lower-income countries. In 2020, President Trump announced a commitment of \$1.16 billion over Fiscal Years 2020–2023 to Gavi, subject to Congressional appropriations. Through our representation on the Gavi Board, USAID has helped to shape Gavi’s strategy for the pandemic, and we are positioned to manage any future funds appropriated to support the Alliance’s roll-out of vaccines against COVID-19.

Question:

“Of supplemental funding that has been sent to USAID since March, has any of that funding been directed toward planning and manufacturing for production or distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for low-income countries?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: No. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has not redirected any funding to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), or the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to prepare for the production and distribution of a vaccine against COVID-19 in lower-income countries. In 2020, President Trump announced a commitment of \$1.16 billion over Fiscal Years 2020–2023 to Gavi, subject to Congressional appropriations. Through our representation on the Gavi Board, USAID has helped to shape Gavi’s strategy for the pandemic, and we are positioned to manage any future funds appropriated to support the Alliance’s roll-out of vaccines against COVID-19.

Question 3:

“USAID has a “carve-out” for life-saving activities in Northern Yemen. Are you considering adding COVID-19 treatment and prevention as a category of activity qualifying for the “life-saving” carve-out?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) regards the prevention of COVID-19 as a critical, life-saving line of effort, including in the Northern Governorates of the Republic of Yemen.

USAID’s partial suspensions of our awards in Northern Yemen include carve-outs for activities that are mitigating the risk of famine and communicable disease. Specifically, at the time of the suspensions, USAID provided carve-outs and continued operational costs for awards to 12 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). These awards—which total roughly \$13.3 million—fund life-saving activities that directly address malnutrition and provide water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). These prevention efforts remain critical as cases of COVID-19 are expected to increase countrywide, exacerbated in the North by Houthis misinformation campaigns that generate fear, increase stigma, and reduce health-seeking behavior. Additionally, Yemen currently faces the world’s largest recorded outbreak of cholera: the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded more than 2.4 million suspected cases of the disease between late April 2017 and June 2020.

The recent decision by the United Nations to support six months of hazard pay for frontline health workers in Northern and Southern Yemen is a long-awaited, positive development, following months of advocacy by the U.S. Government (USG) and other donors. USAID is poised to support this plan. USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has provided nearly \$40 million in dedicated funding for health and WASH in Yemen since Fiscal Year 2019, and is in the final stages of allocating additional financing to partners in the Northern and Southern parts of the country this year.

Even under the current suspensions, the USG is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Yemen this Fiscal Year, which underscores the importance the Administration places on providing life-saving aid to the Yemeni people. USAID plans to announce additional funding for the humanitarian response in the coming weeks, which will support a variety of critical health and WASH activities implemented by both UN and INGO partners.

Under the partial suspensions of our awards in Northern Yemen, USAID also will continue to fund the operational costs of our INGO partners. This generosity ensures our partners can maintain their capacities and keep paying their staff to scale up programming in Northern Yemen if humanitarian conditions deteriorate, as well as if the Houthis meet the minimum accountability conditions we and other donors require. The Houthis have not these minimum accountability standards to restore confidence that a full-scale humanitarian response is possible in compliance with international standards for the impartial and independent delivery of aid, and their ongoing constraints continue to hinder our efforts.

Question:

“How much funding has USAID provided to date in assistance for Yemen in calendar year 2020? How much had USAID provided at the same point in calendar year 2019? (If possible, please break down by North and South Yemen.)”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the funding from the U.S. Government (USG) for the humanitarian response in the Republic of Yemen totaled \$736.9 million, including \$687.1 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As of July 23, 2020, the USG has provided more than \$408 million in funding for humanitarian assistance in Yemen during FY 2020, including nearly \$386.9 million from USAID’s new Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA). Despite the partial suspension of our awards in Northern Yemen, the USG remains the largest donor to the humanitarian response this Fiscal Year.

From the beginning of FY 2020 through August 30, 2020, USAID also has obligated \$40.3 million in development funding for programs in Yemen through both United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations, compared to \$49.3 million during that same period in FY 2019. USAID is working on our final funding allocations in Yemen for FY 2020.

Question:

“Last December, the Global Fragility Act passed with broad bipartisan support and was signed into law by the President. Section 504 [of the Act] requires the President, in coordination with SECSTATE and SECDEF and the USAID Administrator, to present the first Global Fragility Strategy to Congress by September 15, 2020. Will the Administration meet this deadline? What role is USAID playing in the strategy drafting process?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), alongside the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, and the Treasury, and other U.S. Government partners, is implementing the Global Fragility Act (GFA) actively and providing inputs to the *Global Fragility Strategy*, including the selection of priority countries and/or regions, as required by statute. The *Strategy*, which supports U.S. national-security priorities, is currently under development through a collaborative, consultative, evidence-based, interagency process. Judging by the progress so far, the Administration will not meet the deadline to finalize the *Strategy* by September 15, 2020.

Question:

“The [Global Fragility] Act mandates that the *Global Fragility Strategy*, due to Congress on September 15, include no fewer than five priority countries or regions. Section 505(b) [of the Act] requires representatives from USAID and the other Agencies to consult with this Committee prior to finalization of the selection of the priority countries. Do you plan to consult with this Committee on country selection -- with adequate time for committee deliberation -- prior to the release of the *Global Fragility Strategy* on September 15?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Departments of State, Defense (DoD), and the Treasury are taking a three-phased methodological and consultative approach for prioritizing countries and regions for the *Global Fragility Strategy*, based on the criteria laid out in Section 505 of the Global Fragility Act. These criteria are the following:

1. Assessed levels and risks of fragility and violent conflict;
2. Assessment of partners’ commitment and potential for impact; and,
3. U.S. national-security interests

This approach builds on the analysis of data and prioritization exercises from prior, related initiatives, and captures the recent impact the pandemic of COVID-19 is having on fragility. As a result, the process for selecting priority countries and regions in which to implement the *Global Fragility Strategy* will give special consideration to those identified through the Stabilization Assistance Review, the Strategic Prevention Project, and the Atrocities Early-Warning Task Force. Following internal review and consultation with Congress, the Administration will finalize the list of priority countries and regions this Fall.

Question:

“Section 504(c) of the Act requires each Agency head, including the USAID Administrator, to identify the official, with a rank not lower than Assistant Administrator, who will be responsible for leading and overseeing the [Global Fragility] Strategy. Have you already designated a senior official within USAID with the responsibility for overseeing implementation of the Global Fragility Act? Are you prepared to do so in order that the person can be designated in the *Global Fragility Strategy* by September 15, as required by law?”

Answer:

Mr. Barsa: Within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Assistant to the Administrator for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) will be responsible for leading our efforts related to the *Global Fragility Strategy* (GFS). The Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) works closely with the new CPS Bureau to help lead USAID’s engagement on, and planning for, the implementation of the GFS, in close coordination with other Functional and Geographic Bureaus through a cross-Agency Working Group on the Global Fragility Act.