

**A REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY
SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

—————
SPECIAL HEARING
OCTOBER 31, 2023—WASHINGTON, DC
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Appropriations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

PATTY MURRAY, Washington, *Chair*

RICHARD J. DURBIN, Illinois	SUSAN M. COLLINS, Maine, <i>Vice Chair</i>
JACK REED, Rhode Island	MITCH McCONNELL, Kentucky
JON TESTER, Montana	LISA MURKOWSKI, Alaska
JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire	LINDSEY GRAHAM, South Carolina
JEFF MERKLEY, Oregon	JERRY MORAN, Kansas
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, Delaware	JOHN HOEVEN, North Dakota
BRIAN SCHATZ, Hawaii	JOHN BOOZMAN, Arkansas
TAMMY BALDWIN, Wisconsin	SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, West Virginia
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut	JOHN KENNEDY, Louisiana
JOE MANCHIN, III, West Virginia	CINDY HYDE-SMITH, Mississippi
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Maryland	BILL HAGERTY, Tennessee
MARTIN HEINRICH, New Mexico	KATIE BRITT, Alabama
GARY PETERS, Michigan	MARCO RUBIO, Florida
KYRSTEN SINEMA, Arizona	DEB FISCHER, Nebraska

EVAN D. SCHATZ, *Staff Director*

ELIZABETH McDONNELL, *Minority Staff Director*

CONTENTS

	Page
Opening Statement of Chair Patty Murray	1
Statement of Vice Chair Susan M. Collins	4
Statement of Hon. Antony J. Blinken, Secretary, U.S. Department of State	6
Prepared Statement	10
Statement of Hon. Lloyd J. Austin III, Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense	11
Prepared Statement	13
Additional Committee Questions	76
Questions Submitted to Hon. Antony J. Blinken:	
Questions Submitted by:	
Senator Jeanne Shaheen	76
Senator Jeff Merkley	76
Senator Joe Manchin	77
Senator Gary Peters	78
Vice Chair Susan M. Collins	79
Senator Lisa Murkowski	79
Senator John Boozman	80
Senator Shelley Moore Capito	81
Senator Bill Hagerty	82
Questions Submitted to Hon. Lloyd J. Austin III:	
Questions Submitted by Senator Joe Manchin	83
Conclusion of Hearing	85

A REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met at 9:37 a.m. in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Patty Murray (chair) presiding.

Present: Senators Murray, Durbin, Reed, Tester, Shaheen, Merkley, Coons, Schatz, Baldwin, Murphy, Manchin, Van Hollen, Heinrich, Peters, Sinema, Collins, Murkowski, Graham, Moran, Hoeven, Boozman, Capito, Kennedy, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, Britt, Rubio, and Fischer.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIR PATTY MURRAY

Chair MURRAY. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee will please come to order. We are here today to discuss the national security components of the President's supplemental funding request.

We are glad to have Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken with us to talk about the challenges we are seeing around the world and the urgency of providing the necessary resources to meet these challenges, support our allies, and make the world and our country safer.

At our first full committee hearing earlier this year on outcompeting China, both Secretaries made a strong case for why passing our full-year appropriations bills with robust investments in America and avoiding perpetual CRs (continuing resolutions) and devastating cuts, is so crucial to keeping our Nation competitive on the world stage. As the two of you return to this committee, I think every member on this dais understands and takes to heart many of the messages you left with us at the last hearing.

These are unprecedented and difficult times, and American leadership and support will be critical as we face the many threats and challenges we will discuss today. That is why Congress must come together in a bipartisan fashion to act decisively and purposely. This is not a time to punt American leadership or punt on funding agencies critical to these efforts and to American families. If we let politics and division drive us away from this mission, I worry about where we will stand for years to come. So I hope this committee can continue to lead the way with thoughtful, swift, bipartisan action that keeps your message here today in mind. Thank you both for joining us again.

We are at a precarious moment across the globe. Ukraine is continuing its courageous resistance against Putin's bloody invasion, and Israel is reeling from a horrific terrorist attack by Hamas, a vicious attack that none of us will ever forget. Now, it is often the innocent that suffer most in war. So of course, there are also urgent humanitarian needs, including aid for the Ukrainian people and the countries caring for those displaced by Putin's war, and aid for Palestinian civilians in Gaza. It is also a humanitarian imperative that Hamas release the hostages it took during its violent attack.

And of course, Putin's invasion has also severely disrupted food supply chains around the world, leaving a serious crisis of global hunger in its wake. In the Indo-Pacific, our friends and partners face growing threats and aggression, particularly from the Chinese Government. In short, the world is on edge, and how the U.S. wields its leadership will be a critical factor in determining what happens next. Now is a time for serious, sober discussion, not partisanship or political show.

This hearing is a crucial opportunity for us to make sure we are taking a full view of this moment, meeting immediate requirements while planning for the long term, and providing the resources necessary to make the world safer for America and its allies. If we are going to get this right, we have to understand how these conflicts are developing today and what our strategy is for the future. We have to appreciate the nuances that differentiate each of these challenges, as well as the ways in which they are all interconnected. We have to see the big picture without losing sight of the human reality on the ground, the fact that in the middle of every conflict are civilians, residents displaced from their homes, hostages torn from their families, people facing obstacles getting basic medical services, and kids and families who desperately need food and water. And we have to be able to recognize the complexity of these issues while holding fast to the simple, actionable truths that can guide our work.

For me, that means America must stand strong by our allies. Dictators cannot be allowed to invade sovereign democracies, terrorism cannot be tolerated, and we cannot ignore the humanity and the cries for help from civilians who are caught in the middle of conflict and crossfire, who we must protect.

It is a tall order, but the Biden administration's national security supplemental request offers us a useful blueprint. And Vice Chair Collins and I are working, right now, to craft strong bipartisan legislation that meets the national security priorities that the President laid out. That means a package that provides support to the Ukrainians who are at a crucial point in their fight to protect their sovereignty and the end of the butchery of Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion, one that makes clear to other countries looking to copy Putin's aggression, that they will fail, and one that replenishes DOD's stockpiles as well and bolsters our domestic manufacturing that is crucial to ensure we have secure supply chains when it comes to our Nation's defense, and that after we send Ukraine weapons, we are replacing our stocks with modern American-made arms.

And let us be clear, huge super majorities in the House and Senate favor more support for Ukraine, so getting this funding across the finish line should not be controversial. Meeting this moment also means a package that ensures we stand with Israel as it works to protect its people in the wake of the horrific Hamas attack, and deter additional terrorist threats, and one that helps us prevent further escalation of violence in the region and address humanitarian needs.

It means a package that strengthens our presence and supports our allies in the Indo-Pacific, and helps us keep pace as the Chinese Government works aggressively to expand its footprint in the region. And of course, it also means a package that continues our long-standing and all-important tradition of the U.S. leading the global humanitarian response, and delivering vital humanitarian aid to save lives in places that are being torn apart by conflict, whether they are in Ukraine, or Israel, or Gaza, we cannot lose sight of the needs of civilians whose lives have been upended by war and violence around them. Making sure people have food, water, and medical care is not just the right and moral thing to do, it also promotes long-term stability and security, combating hopelessness that can spiral into new threats.

Let me also say this, as someone who voted against the Iraq War, I have been heartened to see the President urge our allies in Israel not to fall subject to so many of the same mistakes we saw following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is an important message for the President and our country to deliver as a friend of Israel, to stay clear-eyed and strategic in the pursuit of justice. Every country has an obligation to protect innocent life and abide by international law, especially during times of conflict.

I am glad that the Biden administration is sending that message, and I strongly support their robust efforts to ensure further access to humanitarian relief for the civilians of Gaza.

Finally, make no mistake, we need to address all of these priorities as part of one package because the reality is these issues are all connected, and they are all urgent. The Chinese Government is watching how we respond to Putin's aggression in Ukraine. Putin is hoping the Hamas attack will give him an opening and distract the world from aiding Ukraine against his brutal invasion, and all of our adversaries are watching closely to see whether we have the vision to recognize how these crises are related, and the resolve to come together and respond forcefully to them.

Our adversaries are cheering for dysfunction. So let us instead show them unity. Let us show them the strength of democracy by passing a robust, bipartisan national security package.

And before I turn it over to Vice Chair Collins, let me just say, while we are focused on the global challenges at this hearing, we should also address the needs here at home: the childcare crisis, relief for our communities who have been struck by disaster, the fentanyl crisis, the needs at our southern border, and more. I am continuing to discuss a separate hearing to address those issues with my colleagues. I know that it is critical to many of us here, and next week we will have an opportunity to discuss these issues with Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Becerra at a hearing in front of this committee on November 7th.

Bottom line, we face a number of urgent national security issues and challenges here at home. President Biden has submitted requests for much-needed supplemental funding to address these priorities. I urge my colleagues on both sides to work with me on all of these urgent issues. And if we can pass our domestic priorities right alongside our national security priorities, we absolutely should. After all, we are the United States of America. We can stand with our allies around the world and tackle the challenges facing our families here at home at the same time.

Now, I am glad we are holding this hearing today to discuss the vital national security request the President has submitted to Congress, and I look forward to a thoughtful discussion about what is needed to fight and deter aggression from authoritarian leaders, tackle terrorist threats, and protect civilians, and about what is at stake for America's own security and future if we fail to stand with our friends across the globe and lead.

Thank you. And with that, I will turn it over to Vice Chair Collins.

STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIR SUSAN M. COLLINS

Vice Chair COLLINS. Thank you, Chair Murray, for holding this important hearing. Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin for joining us today to discuss the President's national security supplemental funding request. I had hoped that Secretary Mayorkas also would be here, but he is testifying this morning before another Senate committee.

I very much appreciate that the Chair has scheduled an opportunity next week for Secretary Mayorkas to come before us and describe what is needed in the supplemental to provide effective border security to stem the flood of illegal migrants, and fentanyl crossing into the United States. Through the end of fiscal year, as of September 30th, there were a record 2.5 million encounters at our Southwest border. This real threat to our homeland must also be addressed.

The collective threats that the United States faces from an aggressive Iran and its proxies and imperialist Russia and a hegemonic China are also challenges that require our attention and cooperation from our allies. Adversaries in the Middle East are launching attacks not only against our ally, Israel, but also against American troops in Syria and Iraq. In Ukraine, the determined patriots, backed by the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia, and others continue to battle Putin's brutal and unprovoked invasion. In Asia, China's dangerous game of brinkmanship is targeting our aircraft flying in the region, rattling sabers at Taiwan, and physically challenging claims of the Philippines and Vietnam in the South China Sea.

Some have argued for decoupling funding to address these threats and focusing only on the Iranian-backed terrorists who massacred so many Israelis on October 7th. We must recognize that our national security interests are being aggressively challenged by all these authoritarian actors in an effort to dismantle the international order that we established following World War II.

Iran has been Russia's accomplice in Ukraine through the export of weapons and drones that terrorize Ukrainian civilians. Just last

week, Russia hosted Hamas and Iranian leadership where Hamas praised Russia's criticism of Israeli's actions to defend itself following the recent terrorist attacks. China refuses to condemn either Russia's second invasion of Ukraine or Hamas' attacks, despite both having committed war crimes targeting civilians and both having stolen children from their families.

If we fail to thwart these efforts, there will be dire consequences that will jeopardize our national security. The metric by which I will scrutinize the funding proposed by the administration's request is simple: Does it make America more secure or not?

Let me offer a few reflections. When I was in Israel with Senator Graham, Senator Cardin, and several other Senators last week, we met with families whose loved ones, including very young children, are being held hostage by Hamas.

During the October 7th terrorist attacks, parents were murdered in front of their children. The actions of Hamas are nothing less than evil. And we must stand by our friend, Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East.

Like Israel, Ukraine was the victim of an unprovoked attack by a repeat violent offender. The United States, albeit slower than many of us would have liked, stepped in with assistance for Ukraine to help repel Russian's battlefield advances. Let us review what has happened since we have helped Ukraine in its defense against Russia's second invasion. No U.S. soldiers have lost their fighting in Ukraine; our adversary, Russia, is weaker; NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is stronger than ever; Finland has joined the alliance; and I expect that Sweden will do the same soon. Each of these outcomes is in America's interest.

Finally, the supplemental request includes more than \$30 billion to replenish our military's weapons stockpiles and invest in and strengthen the U.S. defense industrial base in many States. The requested funding will refill the stockpiles and increase the production capacity of key munitions in greatest demand. None of this funding goes overseas or to another country. It makes America stronger by modernizing our arsenal of democracy, right here in our country, and improving the readiness of the U.S. military to deter any adversary seeking to harm the United States.

Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin, we look forward to hearing your specific justifications. Before we turn to your opening statements, let me reiterate that Chair Murray and I want to enact all 12 appropriations bills, including the State Foreign Ops bill and the Defense Appropriations. As former Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates, once told me: The most important action Congress can take to bolster our national security is to pass full-year appropriations bills to avoid the harm to military readiness that comes from short-term funding, patches, or sequestration. Secretary Austin, I hope that you will comment on that in your opening remarks.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you, Vice Chair Collins. And before I introduce our witnesses and move to testimony, I want to take a moment to welcome someone else today, our newest member of the committee. Senator Sinema is someone who truly knows how to work with Members on both sides of the aisle. I am sure she will be a strong voice for our constituents. Welcome to our committee.

Vice Chair COLLINS. Madam Chair, if I may echo your welcome to Senator Sinema. We have worked very closely on many bills, and I know she is going to be a great addition to our committee.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you. Now, back to the business at hand, I am very pleased to welcome Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, and Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin. Thank you both for taking the time today to be with us and to answer our questions.

We will now start with opening remarks. And Secretary Blinken, I will begin with you.

STATEMENT OF HON. ANTONY J. BLINKEN, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.

[Anti-war protest interruption.]

Chair MURRAY. I do recognize that people feel very passionately, but I ask that we have order in this hearing room, and respect our speakers. And we will move forward with the hearing, and allow the people here, and the American people to hear from their witnesses.

Senator (sic) Blinken.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Chair. Two-and-a-half years ago, our adversaries assessed that the United States was becoming permanently divided at home, alienated from our allies, partners around the world, working together, we have demonstrated that America's resilience, its strength and leadership in world remain unmatched. We have made historic investments in the source of America's strength at home, our democracy, our infrastructure, our economic and technologic competitors. We invested in the modernization of our Military, and we have invested in our greatest strategic asset abroad, our network of allies and partners, which is growing larger, stronger, more united, and more capable than ever.

We are standing up for our interests and values, not shrinking back. Not in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, not in the face of intensifying strategies competition in the Indo-Pacific and around the world.

[Anti-war protest interruption.]

Chair MURRAY. If the witness will suspend. And I ask that everyone, again, respect this hearing. We will suspend until the room is cleared.

[Pause.]

Chair MURRAY. Thank you, Senator (sic) Blinken, if you can continue, please.

Secretary BLINKEN. As I said we are standing up for our interests and values, not shrinking back, not in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, not in the face of intensifying competition in Indo-Pacific, and around the world, not in the face of terrorism and its state sponsors. And America does not stand alone. We have built extraordinary coalitions with friends, who carry their share of the burden, which I am happy to come back to.

Our adversaries and competitors alike, recognize that our strategies are working, and they continue to do everything they can to disrupt us. We now stand at a moment where many are, again,

making the bet that we are too divided; we are too distracted at home to stay the course. That is what is at stake with President Biden's National Security Supplemental Funding Request.

The President's request would secure the urgent resources that we need to continue to lead. Secretary Austin and I believed it important for us to be here, together, today because in this mission as in so much that we do to advance America's national security, our defense, our diplomacy, our development, must work hand-in-hand.

[Anti-war protest interruption.]

Chair MURRAY. The committee will suspend. And again, I appreciate that people feel passionately about these issues. I would ask that you respect our witnesses and our committee Members and allow the American people to hear their testimony. We will pause until the room is cleared.

Thank you, Secretary Blinken, if you can continue, please.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Chair. The President's funding request has four key elements. First, it provides for our enduring support to Israel and Ukraine, two democracies under brutal assault by actors determined to wipe their nations off the map. It will ensure that Israel can continue to defend its people by building on the diplomatic, security, and intelligence support that the United States has surged since Hamas' appalling slaughter. I know that several—

[Anti-war protest interruption.]

Chair MURRAY. The committee will suspend. And I again ask that those in the audience respect the people in the room and allow us to continue the hearing. The hearing will suspend until the disruption is removed.

Thank you, Secretary Blinken. If you can continue, please.

Secretary BLINKEN. So I was saying, I know that several committee members have traveled to Israel over the last 3 weeks. They have heard directly from Israeli officials, what they need to defend their people and prevent another attack like this one. And that is exactly what the supplemental provides, with \$3.7 billion for security needs, including to help Israel bolster its air and missile defense systems. The supplemental also requests additional authority to draw down DOD stocks and enhances the security of our Embassy.

As President Biden has made clear from the outset, while Israel has the right, indeed it has the obligation to defend itself, the way it does so matters. In our discussions with the Israeli government, the President and I have both stressed the need for Israel to operate by the rule of—

[Anti-war protest interruption.]

Chair MURRAY. The committee will suspend.

Secretary Blinken, you may continue.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you, Chair. So I was saying, the President and I both stressed in our conversations with the Israeli government the need for Israel to operate by the law of war and in accordance with international humanitarian law and to take all possible measures to avoid civilian casualties.

For Ukraine, President Biden is requesting \$16.3 billion to supply Ukraine's defense, without which Russia will move quickly to

try to seize and exploit any possible opening, and to ensure that Ukraine can sustain the economic base and recovery that its war effort depends on. This funding will not only rebuild Ukraine's economy and offset the damage wrought by Russia, but it will also help to reimagine it: Investing in new industries, infrastructure, and supply chains connected to Europe and to the world, secure and resilient clean energy, anti-corruption bodies, civil society, media, to be strong enough to deter and defend against aggressors beyond its borders, Ukraine needs a resilient economy and a vibrant democracy within its borders.

Since Russia launched this war, the robust funding supported by Congress has enabled the people of Ukraine in their courageous fight to defend their nation. It has helped make sure that Russia's invasion and strategic—

[Anti-war protest interruption.]

Chair MURRAY. The committee will suspend.

Thank you. And before I turn back over to you, Secretary Blinken, I just really want to thank the Capitol Police for their very calm and professional manner. We all appreciate it.

Secretary Blinken, can you please continue? Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. So to continue, since Russia launched this war, the robust funding provided by Congress has enabled the people of Ukraine in their courageous fight to defend their nation. It has helped make sure that Russia's invasion is a strategic debacle, making it weaker in nearly every way. And it has rallied the world in defense of Ukraine and of the principles at the heart of the United Nations Charter, sovereignty, territorial independence, integrity—excuse me—and independence. Our partners are making significant contributions to share the burden of assistance. Turning our backs on their efforts would have lasting implications for our own security and our own standing in the world.

The conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have clear links, as both the Chair and Vice Chair have noted. Since we cut off Russia's traditional means of supplying its military, it has turned more and more to Iran for assistance. In return, Moscow has supplied Iran with increasingly advanced military technology, which poses a threat to Israel's security. Allowing Russia to prevail, with Iran's support, will simply embolden both Moscow and Iran.

Second, this funding will enable us to tackle grave humanitarian needs created by autocrats and terrorists, as well as by conflict and natural disasters in Ukraine, in Gaza, in Sudan, in Armenia, and other places around the world. Food, water, medicine, and other essential humanitarian assistance for civilians must be able to flow into Gaza. Civilians must be able to stay out of harm's way, a task that is made even more difficult as Hamas uses civilians as human shields, and humanitarian pauses must be considered.

Helping prevent a worsening humanitarian catastrophe aligns with our Nation's most deeply held principles, including our belief that every civilian life is equally valuable, equally worthy of protection. Without swift and sustained humanitarian relief, the conflict is much more likely to spread, suffering will grow, and Hamas and its sponsors will benefit by fashioning themselves as the saviors of the very desperation that they created.

Humanitarian assistance is also vital to Israel's security. Providing immediate aid and protection for Palestinian civilians in this conflict is a necessary foundation for finding partners in Gaza who have a different vision for the future than Hamas, and who are willing to help make it real.

Third, this funding is critical to out-competing our strategic rivals. This request will bolster deterrence. It will support our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific to address threats from an increasingly assertive PRC (People's Republic of China) and to meet emerging challenges. It will uphold our commitment to our allies, including under our trilateral security partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom, AUKUS. And it will help countries transition to the military and defense equipment that is made in America.

The President's request also includes resources for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide alternatives to China's coercive financing for our partners in the developing world. It will also help ease the impact of spillovers of Russia's war on food and energy security for the world's most vulnerable. The proposed \$2 billion appropriation and requested authorizations would generate almost \$50 billion in additional development funding capacity for the World Bank and the IMF, an enormous return on our investment, demonstrating U.S. leadership in meeting urgent global challenges.

Fourth and finally, the supplemental will make critical investments to protect the security of Americans here at home. That includes addressing the hemispheric challenge of irregular migration, strengthening our defense industrial base to ensure our military continues to be ready, capable, and the best-equipped fighting force in the world, and that we remain the arsenal for democracy. More than \$50 billion of the security systems funding will replenish U.S. military stocks, strengthen our defense industrial base, and will be spent through American businesses. Each of these investments work together to achieve our mission: a stronger, safer, brighter future where America can lead from a position of strength. Let us come together and demonstrate to one another and to the world that we can rise to this moment.

I also hear very much the passions expressed in this room and outside this room. All of us are committed to the protection of civilian life. All of us know the suffering that is taking place as we speak. All of us are determined to see it end. But all of us know the imperative of standing up with our allies and partners when their security, when their democracies are threatened. That is what is happening now. We stand resolutely with them even as we stand resolutely for the protection of innocent civilians.

Before I close, I would just like to thank Senators for their vote today to send the President's ambassadorial nominee, Jack Lew, to Israel at this critical time. And I encourage the Senate to do the same for the 26 other nominees waiting for their vote.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.
[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ANTONY J. BLINKEN

Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee: thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Two and a half years ago, our adversaries assessed the United States was becoming permanently divided at home, and alienated from our allies and partners abroad. Working together, we have demonstrated that America's resilience, strength, and leadership in the world remain unmatched.

We've made historic investments in the sources of America's strength at home: our democracy, infrastructure, and economic and technological competitiveness. We've invested in the modernization of our military. And we've invested in our greatest strategic asset abroad: our network of allies and partners, which is growing larger, stronger, more united, and more capable than ever.

We're standing up for our interests and values—not shrinking back. Not in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Not in the face of intensifying strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific and around the world. Not in the face of terrorism and its state sponsors. And America does not stand alone: we've built extraordinary coalitions with friends who carry their share of the burden.

Our adversaries and competitors recognize our strategies are working—and they continue to do everything they can to disrupt us. We now stand at a moment where many are again making the bet that the United States is too divided or distracted at home to stay the course. That is what is at stake with President Biden's national security supplemental funding request.

The President's request would secure the urgent resources America needs to continue to lead. Secretary Austin and I believed it is important for us to be here together, because, in this mission, as in so much we do to advance America's national security, our defense, diplomacy, and development must work hand-in-hand.

The President's funding request has four key elements:

First: it provides for our enduring support to Israel and Ukraine, two democracies under brutal assault by actors determined to wipe their nations off the map.

It will ensure Israel can continue to defend its people, by building on the diplomatic, security, and intelligence support the United States has surged since Hamas's appalling slaughter. I know several Committee members have traveled to Israel over the last three weeks—and heard directly from Israeli officials what they need to defend their people and prevent another attack like this. And that is what this supplemental provides, with \$3.7 billion for security needs including to help Israel bolster its air and missile defense systems. The supplemental also requests additional authority to drawdown DOD stocks, and enhances U.S. embassy security.

As President Biden has made clear from the outset, while Israel has the right—and indeed, the obligation—to defend itself, the way it does so matters. In our discussions with the Israeli Government, the President and I have both stressed the need for Israel to operate by the law of war and in accordance with international humanitarian law, and to take all possible measures to avoid civilian casualties.

For Ukraine, President Biden is requesting \$16.3 billion for State and USAID to ensure Ukraine can sustain the economic base and recovery its war effort depends on and to supply its defense—without which, Russia will move quickly to try to seize and exploit any possible opening.

This funding will not only rebuild Ukraine's economy and offset the damage wrought by Russia, but also reimagine it: investing in new industries, infrastructure, and supply chains connected to Europe and the world . . . secure and resilient clean energy . . . anti-corruption bodies, civil society, and media. To be strong enough to deter and defend against aggressors beyond its borders, Ukraine needs a resilient economy and vibrant democracy within its borders.

Since Russia launched its war, the robust funding supported by Congress has enabled the people of Ukraine in their courageous fight to defend their nation. It has helped make sure Russia's invasion is a strategic debacle, making it weaker in nearly every way. And it has rallied the world in defense of Ukraine and of the principles at the heart of the UN Charter—sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. Our partners are making significant contributions to share the burden of assistance—turning our backs on their efforts would have lasting implications for our security and standing in the world.

The conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have clear links. Since we cut off Russia's traditional means of supplying its military, it has turned more and more to Iran for assistance. In return, Moscow has supplied Iran with increasingly advanced military technology, which poses a threat to Israel's security. Allowing Russia to prevail with Iran's support will embolden both Moscow and Tehran.

Second, this funding will enable us to tackle grave humanitarian needs created by autocrats and terrorists, as well as by conflict and natural disasters in Ukraine,

Gaza, Sudan, Armenia, and other places around the world. Food, water, medicine, and other essential humanitarian assistance for civilians must be able to flow into Gaza. Civilians must be able to stay out of harm's way—a task made even more difficult as Hamas uses civilians as human shields. And humanitarian pauses must be considered.

Helping prevent a worsening humanitarian catastrophe aligns with our Nation's most deeply held principles, including our belief that every civilian life is equally valuable, and equally worthy of protection. Without swift and sustained humanitarian relief, the conflict is much more likely to spread, suffering will grow, and Hamas and its sponsors will benefit by fashioning themselves as the saviors of the very desperation they created.

Humanitarian assistance is also vital to Israel's security. Providing immediate aid and protection for Palestinian civilians in the conflict is a necessary foundation for finding partners in Gaza who have a different vision for the future than Hamas—and who are willing to help make it real.

Third, this funding is critical to outcompeting our strategic rivals. This request will bolster deterrence. It will support our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific to address threats from an increasingly assertive PRC and to meet emerging challenges. It will uphold our commitments to our allies, including under our trilateral security partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom, AUKUS. And it will help countries transition to military and defense equipment that's made in America.

The President's request also includes resources for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to provide alternatives to China's coercive financing for our partners in the developing world. It will also help ease the impact of spillovers of Russia's war on food and energy security for the world's most vulnerable. The proposed \$2 billion appropriation and requested authorizations would generate almost \$50 billion in additional development funding capacity for the World Bank and IMF—an enormous return on our investment that demonstrates U.S. leadership in meeting urgent global challenges.

And fourth, the supplemental will make critical investments to protect the security of Americans at home. That includes addressing the hemispheric challenge of irregular migration, and strengthening our defense industrial base to ensure our military continues to be the most ready, capable, and best equipped fighting force the world has ever seen, and that we remain the arsenal for democracy. More than \$50 billion of the security assistance funding will replenish U.S. military stocks, strengthen our domestic defense industrial base, and will be spent through American businesses.

Each of these investments work together to achieve our mission: a stronger, safer, brighter future, where America can lead from a position of strength. Let us come together and demonstrate to one another and to the world that we can rise to the moment.

Finally, before I close, I'd like to thank Senators for their vote today to send the President's ambassadorial nominee Jack Lew to Israel at this critical time. And I encourage the Senate to do the same for the 26 other nominees waiting for their vote.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you very much, Secretary Blinken.

Secretary Austin, if you want to begin your testimony, please. Actually, if you can suspend until we have the room cleared.

[Pause.]

Chair MURRAY. Thank you. Secretary Austin, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. LLOYD J. AUSTIN III, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Secretary AUSTIN. Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. Thanks for the opportunity to discuss our urgent need for supplemental funding to strengthen our national security.

On October 7th, Hamas terrorists murdered more than 1,400 Israelis, and at least 36 Americans, and took more than 200 hostages. It was the deadliest terrorist attack in Israel's history. It was cruel, hateful, and repugnant. And as former head of Central

Command, it reminded me powerfully of the crimes committed by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) in Iraq and Syria.

As President Biden has said, any democracy would respond decisively to such a vile terrorist assault. And I traveled to Israel just days after the attack to underscore America's ironclad commitment to Israel's security. Now, we fully understand that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people, and we mourn the loss of Palestinian civilians. And I have repeatedly made clear to Israel's leaders that protecting civilians in Gaza is both a moral responsibility and a strategic imperative. Democracies like ours are stronger and more secure when we uphold the law of war and protect civilians.

Now, tensions remain exceptionally high, so let me outline the Department's four key lines of effort.

First, we will continue to protect American forces and citizens in the region. Our personnel have come under repeated attack in recent days by Iranian-backed militia groups, and these attacks must stop. At the President's direction, U.S. forces have conducted precision self-defense strikes on facilities in Eastern Syria used by Iran's IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) and its affiliates. If Iranian-backed groups continue to attack U.S. forces, we will not hesitate to take further necessary measures to protect our people. We have also raised force protection measures across the region, and I have deployed a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery, as well as additional Patriot batteries.

Second, we are flowing security assistance into Israel at the speed of war. We are providing air-defense capabilities, precision-guided munitions, small-diameter bombs, and other key equipment, including more interceptors for the life-saving Iron Dome system.

Third, we are coordinating closely with Israel to help secure the release of every man, woman, and child seized by Hamas, including American citizens. As President Biden told the families of the missing Americans, we have no higher priority than the safe return of their loved ones. And we immediately provided U.S. military advisors to offer best practices for integrating hostage recovery into Israel's operations.

And finally, we swiftly strengthened our force posture in the region to deter any state or non-state actor from escalating this crisis beyond Gaza. Two carrier strike groups are now in the region. Last week, an additional F-16 Squadron arrived in the region, complementing other fighter squadrons already in theater. And all this underscores the President's clear warning: no government or group that wishes Israel harm should try to widen this crisis. Yet even as we surge support into Israel, we remain focused on Ukraine.

Nearly 20 months into Putin's failed campaign of conquest, the Russian military has been badly weakened. Ukraine's brave forces have taken back more than half of the territory seized by Russian invaders since February 2022, and that was made possible by bipartisan and principled U.S. leadership, and our coalition of some 50 allies and partners.

In both Israel and Ukraine, democracies are fighting ruthless foes who are out to annihilate them. We will not let Hamas or Putin win. Today's battles against aggression and terrorism will define global security for years to come, and only firm American leadership can ensure that tyrants, and thugs, and terrorists

worldwide are not emboldened to commit more aggression and more atrocities. So our actions today will shape the world that our children and grandchildren inherit. And that is why we have submitted an urgent supplemental budget request to help fund America's national security needs, and to stand by our partners, and to invest in our defense industrial base. We are requesting \$10.6 billion to help Israel defend itself. The supplemental also requests \$44.4 billion to help Ukraine continue to defend itself against Russia's ongoing aggression. We are also requesting \$3.3 billion to meet the U.S. military requirements in our submarine industrial base and to fulfill our AUKUS requirements.

Now, this supplemental does not just help meet today's urgent challenges, it also invests in our defense industrial base. When we send our friends munitions from our stockpiles, the money to replenish our supplies strengthens our military readiness and we invest in American industry and American workers. That also holds true for funding for Israel or Ukraine to procure new equipment off the production line. Some \$50 billion of this supplemental request would flow through our defense industrial base, creating American jobs in more than 30 States, and these investments will also improve our production capacities far into the future, and help ensure that we are ready to tackle security challenges worldwide. And all that means greater prosperity at home and greater security around the globe.

And finally, let me thank all of you for your leadership. Your bipartisan support ensures that we can defend America, and stand by the allies and partners who magnify our strength. I am also deeply committed to working with all of you to enact a full-year appropriations bill to keep America secure.

As President Biden has said, American leadership is what holds the world together, and if we fail to lead, the costs and threats to the United States will only grow. We must not give our friends, our rivals, or our foes any reason to doubt America's resolve. So I look forward to continuing to work with you to keep America secure, prosperous, and strong.

Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LLOYD J. AUSTIN III

Good morning, Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to discuss our urgent need for supplemental funding to both strengthen our National security and support our allies and partners.

On October 7, Hamas terrorists murdered more than 1,400 Israelis—and at least 36 Americans—and took more than 200 hostages. It was the deadliest attack deliberately targeting civilians in Israel's history. It was cruel, hateful, and repugnant. And as a former head of Central Command, these Hamas atrocities remind me powerfully of the outrages committed by ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

As President Biden has told Prime Minister Netanyahu, any democracy would respond swiftly and decisively to such a despicable terrorist assault. I traveled to Israel earlier this month to express my deep condolences to the Israeli people—and to underscore America's ironclad commitment to Israel's security.

Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people, and we mourn the loss of Palestinian lives. I have repeatedly made clear to Israel's leaders that protecting civilians in Gaza is both a moral responsibility and a strategic imperative. Hamas militants intentionally mix with women and children, but democracies like ours are stronger and more secure because we uphold the law of war and protect civilians.

Tensions across the region remain exceptionally high. So let me briefly outline the Department's four key lines of effort:

First, we will continue to protect American forces and citizens in the region. Our personnel have come under repeated attack in recent days by Iranian-backed militia groups. These unacceptable Iranian-backed attacks against U.S. forces must stop. At the President's direction, U.S. forces have conducted precision self-defense strikes on facilities in eastern Syria used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its affiliates. If Iranian backed groups continue to attack U.S. forces, we will not hesitate to take further necessary measures in the region to protect our people.

We have also raised force-protection measures across the region. I have deployed a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery, as well as additional Patriot batteries, to further protect our people.

Second, we are flowing security assistance to Israel at the speed of war. We are providing air-defense capabilities, precision-guided munitions, small-diameter bombs, and other key equipment, including more interceptors for the lifesaving Iron Dome system.

Third, we're coordinating closely with Israel to help secure the release of every man, woman, and child seized by Hamas—including American citizens. As President Biden told the families of the missing Americans, we have no higher priority than the safe return of their loved ones. We immediately provided U.S. military advisers to offer best practices for integrating hostage recovery into Israel's operations.

And finally, we swiftly strengthened our force posture in the region to deter any state or non-state actor from escalating this crisis beyond Gaza. Two Carrier Strike Groups are now in the region. Last week, an additional F-16 Squadron arrived in the region, complementing other fighter squadrons already in the theater. All this underscores the President's clear warning: no government or group that wishes Israel harm should try to widen this crisis or shed more blood.

Now, Hamas attacked Israel at a moment of global challenge. Even as we surge support to Israel, we remain focused on Ukraine. And thanks to bipartisan support in Congress, the United States has stood with the Ukrainian people and helped them fight back against Russia's aggression.

Nearly 20 months into Putin's failed campaign of conquest, the Russian military has been badly weakened and Ukraine has inspired the world. Ukrainian forces have taken back more than half of the territory seized by Russian invaders since February 2022. That was made possible by bold and principled U.S. leadership—and the coalition of some 50 allies and partners standing with Ukraine. But Putin has not yet stopped his aggression. Ukraine is still under attack, and must still defend itself.

In both Israel and Ukraine, democracies are fighting ruthless foes bent on their annihilation. We will not let Hamas or Putin win. Today's battles against aggression and terrorism will define global security for years to come. Only firm American leadership can ensure that tyrants, thugs, and terrorists worldwide are not emboldened to commit more aggression and atrocities. So our actions today will shape the world that our children and grandchildren inherit.

That is why we have submitted an urgent supplemental budget request to help fund America's national security needs, stand by our partners, and invest in our defense industrial base.

So, we are requesting \$10.6 billion to sharpen Israel's ability to defend itself. This includes \$5.2 billion to help Israel increase the capacity of its Iron Dome and other air-defense systems; \$4.4 billion to replenish DOD stocks provided to Israel; and \$1 billion to boost our own capacity to produce critical munitions, especially 155-millimeter artillery.

The supplemental also requests \$44.4 billion to ensure that Ukraine can continue to defend itself against Russia's aggression. This includes \$12 billion for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative to directly fund acquisition of key weapons for Ukraine; \$18 billion to replace DOD stocks provided to Ukraine; \$10.7 billion for cybersecurity and intelligence support, as well as for the enhanced presence of U.S. personnel deployed in Europe; and \$3.7 billion to expand production capacity in our industrial base.

We're also requesting \$3.3 billion to meet U.S. military requirements in our submarine industrial base (SIB). The Administration's supplemental request ensures that we maintain our focus on strengthening deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region and supporting key allies and partners as part of our efforts to maintain peace and stability.

For the Department of Defense, the \$3.3 billion for the SIB will accelerate build and sustainment rates for attack submarines, one of our most effective capabilities for maintaining deterrence. While this funding is necessary to support U.S. national needs from our submarine industrial base, these investments will also support U.S.

commitments under AUKUS, of which the first major deliverable is to support Australia in acquiring contentiously-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

Now, this supplemental request does not just help meet today's urgent security challenges. It also makes key investments in our own defense industrial base.

When we send our friends munitions from our stockpiles, the money to replenish our supplies strengthens our military readiness—and we invest in American industry and American workers. That also holds true for funding for Israel or Ukraine to procure new equipment off the production line. Some \$50 billion of this supplemental request would flow through our defense industrial base, rushing aid to our partners while creating good American jobs in more than 30 States.

These investments will also significantly improve our production capacities far into the future—and help ensure that we are ready to tackle security challenges worldwide. And all that means greater prosperity at home and greater security worldwide.

Finally, let me thank you all for your leadership. Your bipartisan support ensures that we can defend America and stand by the allies and partners who magnify our strength.

I am also deeply committed to working with you all to enact a full-year appropriations bill to keep America secure.

As President Biden said, "American leadership is what holds the world together." If we fail to lead, the cost and the threats to the United States will only grow. We must not give our friends, our rivals, or our foes any reason to doubt America's resolve.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all to support Israel and Ukraine and to bolster our defense industrial base—and to keep America secure, prosperous, and strong. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you, Secretary Austin.

We will now begin a round of 5-minute questions of our witnesses, and I ask our colleagues to keep track of your clock and stay within those 5 minutes.

We have a lot of urgent challenges: Getting aid to Israel as soon as possible, continuing our support for Ukraine, and addressing urgent humanitarian needs globally. Some of my colleagues in the House and a few in the Senate are pushing to provide only the emergency military funding for Israel and not the rest of the President's request in this security supplemental.

Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin, I would like each of you to address this question: Why is it so important that we provide supplemental funding for Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, and humanitarian assistance, in addition to military aid to Israel?

And Secretary Blinken, I will begin with you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Chair.

I think it is very important to understand that the elements of this request work together as a package. As you know, the defense industrial base operates in a complex way, it is an interdependent unit, and making these investments together it allows us to do what is needed to strengthen the defense industrial base and to seize the benefits and efficiencies that come from making these investments together, rather than making them piecemeal.

We also know, as you have heard, that increasingly Russia and Iran are working together to challenge our leadership, to hem us in globally to pose a growing threat to our own security as well as to that of our allies and partners. They have been partners in a devastating war in Syria, and now we have Iranian proxies firing missiles from Syria in Northern Israel.

Russia could stop this, but it does not. Instead to the contrary, its government is hosting Hamas for talks in Moscow. Iran is sending UAVs to Russia to attack Ukrainian civilians. So we are seeing the profound connections here.

What happens in Ukraine, what happens in the Middle East also matters for the Indo-Pacific. Beyond Europe, we know that our allies, as well as our adversaries, as well as our competitors, are watching that conflict. They are watching our response, the global impacts of Russia's unprovoked War of Aggression against Ukraine, further stress, the importance of ensuring that the Indo-Pacific does not learn the wrong lessons from these conflicts.

So the funding requests that we have put before you is vital to securing a free and open Indo-Pacific in the face of mounting challenges in that region, to threaten and undermine the International Rules-Based Order, including things like freedom of navigation.

In other words, to put it succinctly, for our adversaries, be they States or non-state, this is all one fight and we have to respond in a way that recognizes that. If we start to peel off pieces of this package, they will see that, they will understand that we are playing whack-a-mole while they cooperate increasingly and pose an ever greater threat to our security as well as for that of our allies and partners.

And one final thing, I think when it comes to the humanitarian assistance, we can come back to this it is first and foremost vital because this is who we are. We know that when it comes down to it, in each and every one of these conflicts, people are suffering: men, women and children, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents. And I think it is profoundly who we are to want to do everything we can to assist them, to try to lift some of the horrific burden that they are bearing from being caught in the midst of conflict.

At the same time, it is vitally important, as a strategic proposition, that we provide the assistance that we can to help people in need. We have seen Hamas and other groups play the siren song of nihilism to try to attract people to their perverted cause. We want to make sure that we have a better response, that we have a better answer across the board. That is part of the strategic proposition as well as one that is profoundly humanitarian. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Secretary Austin.

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Chair Murray. I think it is important to remind ourselves that what happens in Ukraine and what happens in Israel matters not to just Ukraine and Israel, it matters to us. It affects our national security as well. We also have to remind ourselves that these countries are in a fight. They are fighting every day and there are people dying every day.

And the Ukraine, Putin continues to attack civilians and commit war crimes that are despicable. And so these countries need, urgently need the resources to ensure that they can continue to defend their sovereign territory. You know, in Ukraine, Putin has felt that he could wait us out, and that is part of his strategy, the main part of his strategy.

He feels that the West will get tired of supporting Ukraine, and he will soon have his way. If that is the case, if we do not support Ukraine, then Putin wins. But Putin will not stop in Ukraine. We know that. We all know that. And so I think it is important to do what is necessary to support Ukraine and Israel and to help them defend their sovereign territory.

But as the Secretary said—as Secretary Blinken said, this is also an investment in our defense industrial base. It helps us replenish our stockpiles and gives us additional depth and agility that helps us do what we have done over the years, over the centuries—over the decades, excuse me, around the world. And so I think this is very important that we provide the support, and it is important that we provide the support now to both—in both cases. Thank you, Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you. And if my committee members will indulge me, I just want to ask Secretary Blinken on the \$10 billion in humanitarian assistance. Some of my colleagues have raised concern that that could end up in the wrong hands, including Hamas. Can you just walk the committee through the reason why you requested it and how you are confident that if it is provided in places like Gaza will not end up in the hand of terrorists?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much. First, let us be clear that the needs are desperate. The needs for the most basic things—food, water, medicine, fuel—all of these are literally a matter of life and death just to focus in on Gaza and we know that they are running out. Hospitals do not have the fuel they need to operate. Men, women, and children displaced, well over a million people displaced in Gaza, about half of them under the care of UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) right now desperately need the most basic things in order to survive.

So from day one, we have been working with the Israeli government, with Egypt, with the UN (United Nations) agencies, as well as with other actors to try to make sure that assistance could get into people who need it in Gaza, but get in a way that does not go to the people who do not need it, and that is Hamas.

So we have set up a system where assistance is coming through Rafah, the gate between Egypt and Gaza. The assistance is checked by Israel at a site that has been established to do that, so that every truck that goes in is verified by Israel as well as by the Egyptian authorities. The trucks go in—these are UN trucks—they go in, they connect to other UN trucks on the other side of the line in Gaza. These trucks then go to distribution facilities that are run by UN agencies.

The supplies are then taken from those agencies to various points, to hospitals, to bakeries, because bread is critical and to other endpoints. Throughout this process, we have the ability, and others have an ability, to track where the assistance is going. We are then able to do monitoring on the other end by contacting the designated recipients to ensure that it has actually gotten to where it is supposed to go, and not been diverted.

To date, we do not have reports either from the UN or from Israel that this assistance has been diverted from its intended recipients, but it is something that we are going to track very closely.

Can I promise that you and this committee that there will be a 100-percent delivery to the designated recipients? No. There will inevitably some spillage. We have not seen it to date, but I think we have to anticipate that. But the overwhelming, overwhelming majority of the assistance, thus far, is getting to people who need it, and we need more. We have gotten up to over 50 trucks a day

before the conflict in Gaza, before Hamas' aggression against Israel, and its response.

The UN and other agencies and other organizations providing relief, we are sending in between 500 and 800 trucks a day. Right now we are up to almost 60. We are trying to get to 100 this week. That is the bare minimum of what is needed, but we have got to do it and we believe we have mechanisms in place to make sure that that assistance gets to people who need it, not to Hamas.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Vice Chair COLLINS.

Vice Chair COLLINS. Secretary Blinken, let me follow up on Chair Murray's question. Does Israel agree that there are sufficient safeguards to prevent humanitarian aid from being diverted to Hamas rather than reaching the innocent civilians whom we all want to assist?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes, Vice Chair. And this is something that we have worked closely with Israel as well as with other actors involved. And as I said, the assistance that is going in from Egypt in Gaza is first checked by the Israelis as well as by the Egyptians. And then as I mentioned, we have some methods to track it to make sure it gets to where it is supposed to go. To date, neither the Israelis nor the UN have said that the aid has been diverted, and we are in constant, almost daily contact with Israel to make sure that the process we have established is working and also to find ways to expand it.

One of the areas where we do need to do more and do need to do better is particularly with fuel because hospitals need fuel to run, desalination, plants need fuel to operate. This is an area where we are working to find a way forward that meets the needs, but also with the assurances that Hamas won't abscond with it.

Vice Chair COLLINS. Secretary Austin, as you indicated in your opening remarks, Iranian-backed terrorists proxy groups in the region have launched numerous drone and rocket attacks against our forces, U.S. forces in Syria and Iraq. According to press reports, there have been at least 20 such attacks and 19 U.S. service members have been wounded.

It is imperative that Iran and its proxy groups understand that they cannot attack American Forces with impunity. I know that last week President Biden ordered two U.S. strikes against facilities in Syria used by Iranian proxies to threaten our troops. But the New York Times has reported over the weekend that Iranian-backed terrorists continue to attack U.S. forces in the region even after these airstrikes.

Since these U.S. airstrikes apparently have not been sufficient to deter additional attacks on our troops by Iranian-backed proxies, what else is the Department doing to stop attacks against American troops?

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Vice Chair. First of all, let me emphasize that the protection, the safety of our troops and our civilians is of utmost important to me, and utmost important to the President as well. We have taken a number of steps to make sure that we increase our force protection posture. We have deployed a number of assets into the region as well. We have been clear, the President has been clear, and I have been clear, Vice Chair, that if this

does not stop, then we will respond. And so we maintain the right to respond. We have the capability to do that, and we will respond at a time and place of our choosing.

Vice Chair COLLINS. Secretary Blinken, Israel has every right to defend its citizens from Hamas, including seeking out the terrorists and Gaza and destroying them while also trying to minimize civilian casualties. There is a critical distinction here: Hamas targeted civilians; they kidnapped innocent children as well as people as old as 85 years old. Israel is not doing that. As Israel has begun to respond and Gaza to Hamas' indiscriminate and barbaric targeting of innocent Israeli citizens, some, and we have heard it today, have called for a ceasefire. A ceasefire would be a strategic victory for Hamas. It would simply allow Hamas to bide its time and prepare for future attacks, and pay no price for the greatest loss of Jewish lives in a single day since the Holocaust. Could you clarify the Administration's position on a ceasefire?

Secretary BLINKEN. First of all, Senator, I fully agree with you that no country, no country could tolerate what Israel suffered on October 7th. And it is extraordinary, the extent to which that day has receded in memory for so many. I was in Israel shortly after the attack. I have been going to Israel professionally for 30 years, and longer than that in my own life, and I have never seen what we have all seen, and what Israel experienced on that day, in terms of the impact that it has on that society, almost to man, woman, and child.

And as we know, it was not just the attack itself and the vulnerability that it revealed, it was the nature of the attack with young people chased down and gunned down at a dance party with, as you said, children executed in front of their parents, parents executed in front of their children, families in a final embrace, burned alive, people beheaded. I could go on. You have seen the pictures; you have seen the video. I have heard from many eyewitnesses to these atrocities, including, and if you will forgive me because, again, these stories recede so quickly, a family at its breakfast table at one of the kibbutzes. And by the way, the profound irony of attacks on kibbutzes, the very people who most ardently believe and want a future of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, a future of two States. A family of four, a young boy and girl, 6 and 8 years old, and their parents around the breakfast table: the father, his eye gouged out in front of his kids; the mother's breast cut off; the girl's foot amputated; the boy's fingers cut off before they were executed. And then their executioner sat down and had a meal. That is what this society is dealing with. And no nation could tolerate that.

And as we have said repeatedly, as President Biden has repeatedly made clear, Israel has not only the right but the obligation to defend itself and to try to take every possible step to make sure this does not happen again. We have been equally clear that it is vitally important how Israel does this. And the imperative of doing everything possible to protect civilians as well as to care for those who are endangered by the conflict is something that we feel strongly.

You are, of course, right that this is a special burden on Israel, because Hamas, cynically and monstrously, puts, intentionally, ci-

vilians in harm's way by hiding behind them, by using them as human shields, by placing its people, by placing its equipment, by placing its ammunition, its weapons, its command posts underneath hospitals, underneath schools in residential complexes. But for each of us, and particularly for democracies like Israel and the United States, we have to bear the burden of doing everything we possibly can to ensure that civilians are not harmed and to care for those who need our help.

When it comes to a ceasefire in this moment, you are exactly right, that would simply consolidate what Hamas has been able to do and allow it to remain where it is and potentially repeat what it did another day. And that is not tolerable. No nation would tolerate it. We do believe that we have to consider things like humanitarian pauses to make sure that assistance can get to those who need it and that people can be protected and get out of harm's way.

But we cannot have a situation where there is a reversion to the status quo, where when this is over, it goes back to Hamas being responsible for the governance and so-called security of Gaza because that is simply an invitation to repeat what happened. And again, no nation would tolerate that.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Six weeks ago, the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, gathered with President Zelenskyy in the Old Senate Chamber. It was an historic and memorable moment. Many things were said about the courage of the Ukrainian people, which were well deserved. But I recall one particular statement made by President Zelenskyy, which I would like to ask you about this morning.

He was asked about the course of the war and said: The heroism of his people has been demonstrated over and over again. But he said, "Without the continued financial support of the United States and NATO, we will lose this war." He was unequivocal; he repeated it: "Without the financial support of the United States and NATO, we will lose this war."

Secretary Austin, was he exaggerating?

Secretary AUSTIN. He was not, Senator. As you know, we have provided significant amounts of security assistance to the Ukraine. And not only that, based upon our leadership, our example, some 50 other countries have come in and worked with us in a coalition to also provide assistance. And so they have provided some \$35 billion of their own to this overall effort. And I think our leadership in this effort really, really matters.

Senator DURBIN. Secretary Blinken, we know why we are asking these questions. The proposals coming from the new Speaker of the House suggests that he would fund the support for Israel requested by the administration, but not fund the support for Ukraine. In the starkest terms, what would that mean if we were to step back and not fund support for the people of Ukraine to repel Putin at this moment?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I think it would do both terrible harm to our values, but also to our core interests. Values because I think all of us are united in wanting to respond to aggressors, to

bullies who try to lord it over their neighbors. And in the midst of doing that, inflicting credible suffering on people that—

Senator DURBIN. What impact would that have on NATO?

Secretary BLINKEN. I am sorry?

Senator DURBIN. What impact would it have on NATO if the United States does not fund—

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, I would say two things. First, what we have seen is a remarkable coming together of our NATO alliance; an alliance that has actually grown stronger and larger as a result of Putin's aggression; an alliance that has also stepped up in a major way. Its individual members in terms of burden sharing, we often and rightly, have concerns in different conflicts in the past about inadequate burden sharing.

This is an instance where we have seen very significant burden sharing that would almost certainly go away if we go away. If you look at it, total assistance to Ukraine, going back to February of 2022, the United States has provided about \$75 billion; our allies in partners, \$90 billion. If you look at budget support, the United States has provided about \$22 billion during that period; allies and partners, \$49 billion during that period. Military support, we provided about \$43 billion; allies and partners, \$33 billion. Humanitarian assistance, the United States, \$2.3 billion; allies and partners, \$4.5 billion, plus another \$18 to \$20 billion in caring for the many refugees who went to Europe and outside of Ukraine.

So I think what the message it would send, first of all, to each and every one of these countries is: The United States is abandoning ship, well, we may as well do too. And second, our alliance itself is founded on the proposition that we are all in this together. I think they would see this as a retreat from our own responsibilities.

Finally, and this is very important, and you heard the Secretary of Defense say this: There is no doubt in my mind that if Putin is allowed to continue to act with impunity, that not only would he not stop at Ukraine and potentially go to a NATO country next, which would invoke our Article V obligations to our allies and partners, it would send a message to would-be aggressors everywhere in the world, that he can get away with it, so can we.

And then we are likely to have a world full of conflict, and that is a world that is not good for the United States. We are much better sustaining our effort now, seeing this to success than having to pay a much higher price later when we have to deal with a world full of aggression.

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Secretary, it cannot be a coincidence that Putin would invite the head of the Hamas terrorist organization to Moscow just days after the October 7th attack, the terrible massacre, which you described in some detail, and I have heard so many depictions. So do you believe there is an allied effort between Putin's cause and cause of the Hamas terrorists?

Secretary BLINKEN. Putin is very much trying to take advantage of the Hamas attack on Israel in the hopes that it will distract us, that it will divert our focus away from Ukraine, and away from his aggression in Ukraine, and that it will result in the United States pulling back, pulling back its resources, pulling back its support. And at the same time he has allied with the exact elements that

are trying to wreak havoc in Israel. So we see these things as being very much joined, which is one of the reasons our request is a joint request.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. Secretary Blinken, thank you very much for helping us, the 10 of us who went over to Israel and Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Just to kind of tighten things up a little bit. From an Israeli point-of-view, there will be no ceasefire until Hamas ceases to be a threat to the State of Israel. Do you agree with that statement?

Secretary BLINKEN. I do.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So no ceasefire until Hamas ceases to be a threat makes perfect sense to me. Do you believe it is the goal of Hamas to destroy Israel, not to have a two-state solution?

Secretary BLINKEN. You do not have to take my word for it. Take Hamas' word for it, it is in their—

Senator GRAHAM. I could not agree with—do you agree with that, General Austin?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do. They have said so.

Senator GRAHAM. All right. So we are fighting somebody who is not trying to help the Palestinians. They are trying to kill all the Jews. Would it be fair to say that Hamas is a modern day version of religious Nazis?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think there are different ways to qualify it. I would simply say that—

Senator GRAHAM. Well is that a good characterization?

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. One of the most recent—I think the best recent analogy, Senator, is ISIS.

Senator GRAHAM. Is that okay with you for me to call them religious Nazis?

Secretary AUSTIN. I agree with Secretary Blinken. There is a direct parallel to ISIS, as a matter of fact, I think they are—

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, well, that is right, ISIS, Nazis, is all bad. We all agree with that. Do you agree without Iran's help, Hamas could not do this?

Secretary BLINKEN. In short, yes. There is no doubt that Hamas would not be Hamas without—

Senator GRAHAM. As a matter of fact, General Austin, some estimates are that 93 percent of all the money Hamas receives comes from Iran. Is that correct?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do not know the exact percentage, but I would say the vast majority does come from—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, all the reports I have seen from the administration it is 90 percent. So Hamas, ISIS, Nazis, whatever you want to call them, they want to kill all the Jews. So if I were Jewish, I would want to stop them. They are being supported by Iran. Our troops in Syria and Iraq, they are there to protect against the rise of ISIS. Is that true, General Austin?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is right. They are going—

Senator GRAHAM. I mean, they are just not hanging out with no other place to go. They are there because it is in our national security interest that ISIS not come back. Do you agree with that?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is correct, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Is it a red line for Iran to orchestrate an attack on our forces that kills an American in Syria or Iraq? Is that a red line? Can we tell the Iranians today in case they are watching, if an American is killed by your proxies in Syria and Iraq, we are coming for you. Can you say that?

Secretary AUSTIN. I think Iran should be held accountable for the activities of these Iranian-backed—

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Does that mean that we would consider going to the source of the problem? The great Satan is Iran, not Israel. It is not the United States. Can we say publicly to the families who have service members over in Iraq and Syria that we will hit Iran if they try to kill an American through their proxies? Can we say that?

Secretary AUSTIN. What we have said, and what we will continue to say, Senator, is that we are going to hold—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I wish you would be more clear because I will tell you this, if one of these soldiers is killed, I am going to say it, and I hope other people will join me. If there is an attack by Hezbollah in the North, General Austin, that would put the State of Israel at threat. Would that be an escalation of the war?

Secretary AUSTIN. It would be an escalation, and Israel would be forced to fight on two fronts?

Senator GRAHAM. I agree with that. And they have over 100,000 precision-guided rockets and missiles pointed to Israel; is that correct?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is correct.

Senator GRAHAM. Is it also correct that Iran is the biggest benefactor of Hezbollah?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is absolutely correct.

Senator GRAHAM. Can we say to Iran, the Ayatollah, who is a religious Nazi, that if you escalate the second front, if you activate Hezbollah against the State of Israel to create a second front, we will come after you. Can we say that? Is that a red line?

Secretary AUSTIN. Whether or not we attack Iran because of a decision on a part of a Lebanese Hezbollah, of course that is a fundamental decision, and also would require congressional support.

Senator GRAHAM. I am running out of time. I am going to say it if it happens. I hope it does not. Finally, do you agree with me, Secretary Blinken, that one of the main reasons this attack occurred is Iran wants to stop the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Israel?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes. Those who are opposed to normalization are Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran.

Senator GRAHAM. I just want to end it with this. I will do everything I can as a Republican to help the Biden administration to achieve reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Israel with the understanding we are going to help the Palestinian people post-Hamas. That is the only way this ends. So I congratulate you. I urge you to continue to drive toward peace between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Do not let Iran win by getting us off track.

And General Austin, I admire you very much, but we need to be clear, crystal clear as to what happens if Iran kills an American

soldier or if they open up a second front, and I hope you will let them know what our red lines are. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you, Madam Chairman. The first point I would like to raise is with respect to our colleagues in the House, their proposal, the Republican leadership, not only do they not fund Ukraine, which I think your testimonies indicate as a vital imperative to the United States, they also want to offset the funding by taking money from the IRS.

Obviously, I do not think they read The Wall Street Journal because just a few days ago, The Wall Street Journal reported that in 2021, the Americans failed to pay \$688 billion in taxes. So if we do not invest in the IRS, we are giving up billions and billions of dollars. And I think that point has to be recognized as we go forward and negotiate with the House.

But let me turn now to the issue at hand. We are talking about, Secretary Austin, sending resources to Ukraine. You are now the Civilian Secretary of Defense, but you were a distinguished Army Officer and Commander of CENTCOM (United States Central Command). If we do not send the resources, does that increase the probability that someday we will have to send young Americans into the European Theater?

Secretary AUSTIN. Absolutely. Senator Reed, I think as we said earlier, if Putin is successful, he will not stop at Ukraine, and if you are a Baltic state, you are thinking, I am next. And there is no question in my mind that sooner or later it will be, he will challenge NATO, and we will find ourselves in a shooting match.

Senator REED. And so in one sense, this comes down to a choice between lending them the tools to do the job or seeing young Americans facing combat?

Secretary AUSTIN. I agree, Senator.

Senator REED. Thank you. Again, Secretary Austin, you pointed out with respect to the efforts in Gaza that humanitarian assistance is not just a good thing to do, it is a strategic necessity for the operations of Israeli Forces. Is that correct?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is absolutely correct.

Senator REED. Now, it would seem to me that they could and should move into position in areas they control hospitals, shelter, and food, and make it available to the Palestinian people and do all they can to assist those people to reach those areas. Is that appropriate?

Secretary AUSTIN. Absolutely, Senator. And just so you know, I talked to my counterpart, Minister of Defense Gallant, nearly every day, and every day I talk to him I remind him of the necessity of getting humanitarian assistance into Gaza. We just had such a conversation yesterday, and this is really, really important for a number of reasons, but you know, I am delighted to see that the flow has increased, but to the Secretary's point, we need to increase it much, much more.

Senator REED. I think not only do we need to increase it, but also in terms of the strategy, of the perception of the world with respect to Israel, is that they have to make it clear that their foe is Hamas, not the Palestinian people, and that they will go, indeed, out of their way to try to protect the Palestinian people. I think that is

essential. And it is not just a humanitarian impulse; it is very practical, strategic, operational technique.

Secretary AUSTIN. I agree, Senator.

Senator REED. We tried to make this point also, Mr. Secretary, Secretary Blinken, in our trips and we suggested that, to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, that he can put resources into humanitarian relief, and I would urge you and your colleagues to try to get all of the Nations in that area to provide the resources. The Israelis control the ground, they can control the operations, but the money for aid to Palestinian people should come from the international community.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yeah, Senator, I very much agree with that. The United States as it stands is, by far, the leading donor to the Palestinians. We provide \$1.6 billion in assistance through various agencies to the Palestinians over the pendency of this administration. And we would like to see other partners, other allies step up and do the same thing. That is something that we have been very clear about in our own conversations. And I really applaud the members of this committee and others who have been to the region recently and have been pushing that as well.

Senator REED. Just a final point, my time is expiring. We have also a necessity to get many American citizens out of Gaza, and can you assure us that you are doing all you can to achieve that objective?

Secretary BLINKEN. We are, Senator. We are working on this every single day. We have about 400 American citizens and their family members, so it is roughly a thousand people who are stuck in Gaza and want to get out. I am focused on this intensely. My entire Department is as well, both in the region and here, we are working with various parties to try to facilitate their departure from Gaza.

The impediment is simple, it is Hamas. And we have not yet found a way to get them out by whatever—through whatever place, and by whatever means, that Hamas is not blocking. But we are working that with intermediaries, we are working that for them. There are also another, roughly, 5,000 third country nationals from other countries seeking to get out.

So this is something that we are intensely focused on. We have been in close communication, as best we can, with Americans who are stuck in Gaza. We have had about 5,500 communications that we have initiated, phone calls, emails, WhatsApp, to be in touch with them to try to guide them as best we can and to work for their ability to leave.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Moran.

Senator MORAN. Chairwoman, thank you very much. Upon the Congressional receipt of the President's request for this emergency supplemental, my first request was of our own committee leadership that we have this hearing, and I thank both of you for honoring that request. Congress has a constitutional responsibility to deal with the dollars that will be spent, and I want this committee as we should do, to treat that in a significant and serious manner.

I think a markup would be important, but I would certainly indicate that changes in input from this committee and from Congress

are required: One, to make the package better, and two, to make it more amenable toward passage by both the House and the Senate. I was originally, and continued to be disappointed that Secretary Mayorkas is not with us, but I am pleased to know that that is occurring next week. I want the committee, and our witnesses and representation of the administration to know that there are many of us who believe our borders are a national security issue as well. That emergency supplemental financial aid should be included.

But I also want you to know that we need the administration to work with us on policy changes, the laws and policies at the border, financial support for changes at the border, for additional personnel are insufficient, but we need a different approach toward the push and pull of those people around the world who are seeking entry into the United States. I am interested in seeing a package pass the Congress and be signed into law, but I want to make certain the administration knows that there are many members of Congress who are serious about the issues of national security at our own borders.

I want to ask a couple of questions and I will submit more in writing, but I would like an insurance, and maybe this comes from you, Secretary Austin, of a commitment; I want to make certain that as we assist Ukraine, we are assisting Ukraine in a way that allows them to succeed. I do not want this to be just a stalemate. I do not want Ukraine to have the dollars necessary not to lose. I want Ukraine, with our help and others, to have the opportunity with their capabilities, their own personnel, to win. What would be your response, Secretary Austin?

Secretary AUSTIN. My response would be—my response is, Senator, that is exactly what we are doing. If you go back to the beginning of this effort here, all of us were saying, or many of us were saying that Ukraine would not survive Russia's onslaught for more than 2 days. So here we are a year later and not only have they defeated Russia in a number of battles, but they have gained—re-gained 50 percent of the territory that Russia initially occupied.

And Putin is a strategic failure right now. He has not achieved any strategic objective that he set out to achieve. He never conquered Kyiv. He has been stuck, essentially, in the same place in terms of his frontline trace on the battlefield for a long time now. I think that based upon where they started and where we are now, and what they continue to do, I would say that Ukrainians have made remarkable progress.

And our goal is to make sure that they can continue to do that. So we are talking to them every week. I am talking to my counterpart every week to ascertain what his requirements are, and we are moving with urgency to make sure that we can fill those requirements where possible.

Senator MORAN. Secretary Austin, tell me, if you would, tell us, how does a failure to fund Ukraine embolden China, embolden Iran, embolden Hamas, embolden Russia? We have had circumstances in our history, including recent history, at least in my view, in which we sent a message to the world that we are not a faithful ally, and to our enemies, to our adversaries that we are not a threat. Would the failure to fund Ukraine in this circumstance

meet that criteria in which we fail to demonstrate our capabilities, our willingness, our statuitis, and what would be the consequences of that message being sent?

As you know, there are those who say that we should be focused on someplace else besides Ukraine. But doesn't our failure to focus on Ukraine create huge and significant problems elsewhere in the world with our adversaries, and diminish the support of our allies?

Secretary AUSTIN. I think it sends a horrible message to our adversaries, Senator. I think, you know, our adversaries would like to build a narrative that we are not a trustworthy ally or partner, and we see some of that beginning to play out in the media space right now. They are seeking to take advantage of every opportunity, and they would like to prove that the United States is something else other than it is. And we are the world's most reliable ally or partner, and I think it is necessary to demonstrate that we are going to stick by our partners.

Senator MORAN. Is it more than coincidence that we have so many challenges in this world all occurring now at the same time?

Secretary AUSTIN. I think a number of things have come together to cause what we are seeing happen, but certainly a failure, on our part, to follow through in support of our allies or partners exacerbates some of the things that we are seeing right now.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, sir.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator TESTER.

Senator TESTER. I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member. I want to thank both of you, Secretaries, for being here today. I appreciate the work you do. I appreciate the difficulty of the work you do. I want to touch quickly on why we are here, and that is a supplemental to help Israel and help Ukraine with humanitarian aid and infrastructure money for subs in particular.

I want to start by saying the attack on October 7th by Hamas on Israel was horrific, and it is critical that we provide our ally with the necessary tools to defeat Hamas. And I want to thank you two for working in that way because we cannot allow terror and enemies of democracy to win. And that is why it is critical that this committee shows the leadership so Congress can deliver a package that supports Israel and counters Vladimir Putin.

I happen to believe that America is the greatest country that is ever existed on the face of the earth, and we need to support Israel. We need to make sure we are standing up to Russia. And I think we are able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

I want to be very clear today as Chairman of the Defense subcommittee that sets the Defense Department's budget, I will be working with Republicans and Democrats and colleagues to deliver a package that replenishes America's weapon stock, supports our democratic allies, and sends a clear message to the enemies of freedom and democracy that they will not prevail.

My question is this, and this for you Secretary Austin: Can you talk about of the supplemental requests for Ukraine: how much of that is staying here to resupply our industrial base in this country, is being spent in this country for our security to replenish that industrial base?

Secretary AUSTIN. For Ukraine?

Senator TESTER. Yes.

Secretary AUSTIN. Okay. So thanks, Senator. We are asking for \$44.4 billion in support of Ukraine. Some \$18 billion of that amount goes to—enable us to replenish our stocks, and so we would buy—we would purchase American weapons and munitions from American companies to do that. \$12 billion of that amount goes to support the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. And so this is buying new products, new weapons, new munitions from American companies. \$5 billion of that supports our troops who are currently deployed overseas. We surged a number of brigades to Europe as this began, and we have to sustain them. And then \$2.7 billion of that amount goes to expansion of facilities to increase capacity and accelerate production of critical munitions. And then finally, \$1 billion for the acquisition of critical defense articles, which includes munitions as well. So this money is going right back into the coffers of America, and it is going to create jobs, it is going to sustain jobs, and it is going to provide opportunities for Americans.

I think you know, Senator, that the first four supplementals that we asked you for, and we received bipartisan support on, over \$27 billion of that money that we received was invested in some—over 30 States here in the United States. And I think that is real money going in the pockets of Americans.

Senator TESTER. And in the end, the supplemental will make the United States stronger, correct?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is correct, Senator.

Senator TESTER. We have heard a lot about whether Ukraine really needs some money or not. I listened to a talk show this weekend, and they said there is not the urgency like there is in Israel. I think there is urgency on both, by the way. Could you talk to me about, if we do not pass supplemental that includes Ukraine, how long Ukraine has before Putin becomes successful?

Secretary AUSTIN. It is hard to put an exact timeline on how long it would take, Senator, but I can guarantee you that without our support, Putin will be successful. And while the Ukrainians have done amazing work with our help in terms of the things that we provided them, if we pull the rug out from under them now, Putin will only get stronger, and he will be successful in doing what he wants to do in acquiring his neighbor's sovereign territory.

Senator TESTER. I would just hope that this committee shows the leadership that I know we have, sitting on both sides of the dais, to do the right thing here, and get a supplemental out that works for our national security. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Hoeven.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. We need to support Israel. There is no question about it. They are fighting for their very existence. We see that, and we need to—clearly, we need to help them and support them, not just in this package, but beyond that. I believe we also need to support Ukraine.

When you look at history, we understand very clearly that tyrants, like Putin, do not stop. They have to be stopped. So we need to do those things, but we also need to secure the homeland, and that means securing our border. And there is about \$14 billion, \$13.6 billion in this package requested relative to the border and immigration.

Secretary Blinken, last month, 270,000 illegal encounters, of people trying to cross illegally at the southern border. That is a record, 2½ million last year, and 169 individuals trying to cross that are on the terrorist watch list. Border security is national security, and I am trying to understand how \$14 billion to house, transport, and provide other services to individuals coming here illegally, won't just encourage more to come?

So my question to you is how is it that you are going to assure us here today, and will ask Secretary Mayorkas in a week, that you are going to secure the southern border? Because I think for a lot of folks, when we are talking about national security, they want to see how that is going to happen. And we are going to want to be assured of that. How are you going to assure us that this is going to actually happen? That it is not \$14 billion for more people to come here illegally?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. First, I think it is important to put this in very brief perspective which is we are facing a migration challenge around the world of historic proportions. We have got more people on the move, displaced from their homes around the world than ever before. Ever since we have been actually keeping the numbers on this, more than 100 million people in our own hemisphere, it is somewhere between 20 and 25 million people. And it used to be that we would have one crisis at a time. It might be Cuba. It might be Haiti. Now we have got Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, Columbia, and so on down the list, Nicaragua. And then people coming to our hemisphere from outside the hemisphere trying to get into the United States.

My piece of this—our piece of this at the State Department is the work that we are doing with countries throughout our hemisphere, for them to step up and take shared responsibility for this problem. And that means among many other things, making sure that they themselves have asylum assistance that works for the people of the—

Senator HOEVEN. With all due respect, Secretary, we understand that. How are you going to assure us that you are going to stop the flow of illegal crossings at our southern border? Will you give us that assurance, and will you quantify it?

Secretary BLINKEN. We are working comprehensively—

Senator HOEVEN. Not just talking about the problem. Will you give us the assurance, and will you quantify it?

Secretary BLINKEN. I would certainly defer to my colleagues at DHS and others who are working on the border itself. The piece that I am focused on is working with other countries in the region reduce the flow—

Senator HOEVEN. Is it your opinion we should enforce third safe—I am sorry, sir.

Secretary BLINKEN. I am sorry. Go ahead. Go ahead, Senator.

Senator HOEVEN. Yeah. My time is limited here. Should we enforce third safe country and remain in Mexico protocols?

Secretary BLINKEN. We should work with other countries and enforce every reasonable measure to make sure that the migratory flow is safe, orderly, and humane. That is what we are working on.

Senator HOEVEN. Secretary Austin, we have had more than 25 attacks in the Middle East on our troops just since October 7th. Why are we not striking back more forcefully? Why are we not delivering a resounding message to stop those strikes on our bases and on our troops?

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks Senator. As I said, the protection of our troops, the safety of our troops is very, very important to me and the President. And we maintain the right to respond at a place and time of our choosing. And we have said that, and we are serious about that.

Senator HOEVEN. So we are to understand that we will strike back sufficiently, forcefully to stop these attacks?

Secretary AUSTIN. We will do what is necessary to protect our troops and deter this kind of behavior.

Senator HOEVEN. One follow-up question. Senator Moran asked about a strategy with Ukraine that brings this war to a successful conclusion. What is that strategy?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, from our standpoint, want to make sure that Ukraine, at the end of the day, is a democratic, independent, sovereign country that can defend its territory and deter aggression. We also want to make sure that we keep NATO together, and I think the team has done an incredible job in making sure that we bring our allies and partners along.

In terms of specific goals and objectives, you know, I would defer to the Ukrainian leadership to define that. But again, our goal is to make sure that we are providing the support to Ukraine to do what it needs to defend its territory.

Senator HOEVEN. We need to know that we have a strategy as part of this funding. I think it is very important in terms of building support for the funding for Ukraine. Thank you to you both. I appreciate it.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you Madam Chair, and Vice Chair for this hearing. And thank you to Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin for being here at this really critical time throughout the world. Senator Graham and Senator Moran to some extent, both made the case for Hamas—for Iran funding Hamas, and Iran's malign activities across the Middle East, but can you also talk about why funding Ukraine aid is important to degrade Iran's activities as well?

Secretary Austin or Blinken?

Secretary AUSTIN. As you know Senator, we have seen Iran provide munitions and drones to Russia, and Russia has used those capabilities to attack the Ukrainian infrastructure, attack civilians, and towns, and villages across the land. And so I think, you know, making sure that we are dialing back some of the capability—they are connected, so I think it will have an impact on what Iran is doing for Russia as well.

Secretary BLINKEN. And Senator, I would only add that it is a two-way street. It is both the assistance that Iran is providing to Russia for use in Ukraine to further its aggression, but it is also increasingly technology that Russia is providing to Iran to make its own inventory more sophisticated that could and will almost certainly be used either against Israel or for that matter, potentially

against us, against our forces, against our personnel, either directly or via Iranian proxies that are in the region.

So this relationship, this two-way relationship is one of increasing concern to us, and one that we have to be acting against resolutely in both theaters, because they are closely linked.

Senator SHAHEEN. I agree. I think it is very important for us to remind people that degrading Iran and their capabilities means not just supporting Israel, but it means supporting Ukraine as well.

Last week I chaired a hearing of the European subcommittee on the Black Sea security. I think one of the things we have learned from this war in Ukraine is how important the Black Sea region is to so much of the world, and the fact that Ukraine actually literally—Ukraine's grain exports literally feed the world. So can you speak to the interconnectedness between the world's food security and Russia's war against Ukraine, and why that is very important? And what is going to happen if we are not able to continue to open up those grain corridors and provide the food that so many desperate nations and peoples need?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, one of the many terrible consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine is the impact that it has had, far and wide, well beyond Ukraine, well beyond Europe, on people around the world, no more so than when it comes to food security. We all know that Ukraine has been the, or certainly one of the breadbaskets of the world. Its export of wheat, of grain, of other food products is essential to people in Africa, many other continents, both in terms of the supply of food and also the price of food.

And in interrupting, in stopping the export of foods, and food products from Ukraine, particularly through the Black Sea, Russia has had a devastating impact on food security for people around the world. This never should have been necessary in the first place, the Black Sea Grain Initiative, because Russia never should have invaded Ukraine. And then once it did, it never should have blockaded Ukraine's ports and prevented it from exporting.

But an arrangement was made, as you know very well led by the United Nations and Turkey to get an arrangement by which these products could be exported. And while that agreement was in force, while the Russians were respecting it, allowing it to go forward, some 30 million metric tons of wheat and grain were exported the equivalent of 18 billion loaves of bread. That is what was at stake. That is what has been now stopped by Russia refusing to allow that initiative to go forward.

So we have been working with the Ukrainians, Europeans have been working with the Ukrainians to find other ways of getting these products out of Ukraine and to world markets, but nothing fully substitutes for the Black Sea. It is why you are so right to focus on it. And by the way, last thing I will say is we have, as a result of a lot of good work that has been done, and very good input from you and from others, a refined Black Sea strategy that we are also sharing with our allies and partners. I think this will be an important subject at the next NATO Summit that we will be hosting here in Washington.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. And I am almost out of time. But I do want to ask you about the suggestion that is being floated that

humanitarian aid is going to go through the UN, and the UN is going to take some funding off of that in ways that support the UN, and do not support the end goal of that aid. So can you just point out why that is not correct?

Secretary BLINKEN. First of all, that is just quite literally and practically not the way it works. The Security Council is not involved in these—either the decisions about how the aid is used or distributed. It is individual UN agencies. Some of the critical UN agencies that are involved in providing assistance like UNICEF, like the International Organization for Migration, like the World Food Program, happen to be led, right now, by Americans, in fact three American women.

And so we have great confidence in the ability of these agencies do the critical work that they need to do, and to do it in a way that makes sure the assistance they are providing gets to the folks who need it, not folks who do not need it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Boozman.

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you all for being here. And I would like to talk a little bit about what I think is really the underpinning of our own defense security and our ability to provide aid to others, aid to our partners, and that is our procurement ability. It is not glamorous, but it really is so, so very important.

I have learned a lot about it through working with Senator Murray on our military construction efforts, but also Camden in Arkansas is a major player in that space, and they are working really hard. The people of Arkansas, the people of Camden have really stepped up.

Secretary Austin, 2 years ago in the fiscal year '23 DOD budget hearing, I asked you about possible ways we could strengthen our industrial base to ensure we meet the current day demands and replenish our stockpiles. Since then, from your perspective, how has the industry responded? How is it performing? Are we making the right adjustments and doing so fast enough?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well thanks, Senator. I will begin by saying that I am committed to making—continuing to do the right things to make sure that we are working with industry to expand capacity where appropriate. We engaged in an industry early on as this conflict in Ukraine started, and for the most part—well, in all cases, the leaders of industry were very, very helpful, very willing to increase production, increase capacity. And so we have some good examples of that great work.

In terms of whether or not it is fast enough, if you are me, it can never be fast enough. If you are a Ukrainian, you can never get it there fast enough. But there are some limitations in terms of how quickly they can do certain things. There will continue to be workforce challenges, and when you expand capacity, you know, there is this—I mean, there is this issue of the time that it takes to build the capacity, and then make sure that the lines are running smoothly.

Now, what they have done in a lot of cases to meet urgent needs is double and triple shifts so that they can, you know, in some cases crank out the munitions and weapons at a much greater

speed. So the corporation that we have enjoyed throughout, I think has been really, really good. And we are in contact with industry leadership nearly daily, and my Under for Acquisition and Sustainment is engaging on a daily basis, and I meet with them frequently. So they are doing the right things, they are being very, very helpful, but it can never move fast enough, to answer your question.

Senator BOOZMAN. So with all the global demand now and then the possibilities of looking into the future, you know, with such an uncertain world, we have had this global demand for short range rocket motors, PAC-3 missiles, HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System), Javelin, Stingers, 155 military artillery rounds. Do you feel that the request replenishes current stockpiles to an appropriate level while, simultaneously, fulfilling current day demands? Do you feel industry is able to meet the high request if needed?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do. I think what we have in this request is the right amount. And I would say that we are going after capability as fast as industry can produce it. And so we have asked you for \$3 billion as a part of this request to invest in helping to expand that capacity with industry. But it is a thing that we need to continue to work with.

Senator BOOZMAN. So regarding the Israel portion of the supplemental, related to the Iron Dome request, the language is structured as a transfer to Israel. I am hearing from industry that they are currently lacking the investment to help quickly accelerate rocket motor production for the interceptor missile to meet the new increased demand. The Ukraine portion of the request includes language allowing appropriated dollars to support infrastructure investments to accelerate production, should we include similar language to support infrastructure investments to help meet the interceptor missile demands?

Secretary AUSTIN. Senator, as a general rule, we are going to do everything that we can to meet the demands that we see in both Ukraine and Israel. As you know, this is the munition that you are addressing is a co-produced munition.

Senator BOOZMAN. Right.

Secretary AUSTIN. And so the American company that produces that munition is a company that I once worked for, so I will have to take that question for the record, rather than answer.

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you. I do not have time to address the question, but as Ranking Member on Agriculture, I am concerned about Russia using food as a weapon. So that is for what it is worth. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. I share that concern.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome to both of you.

Secretary Blinken, in your testimony you talked about the worsening humanitarian catastrophe, and how the humanitarian challenges are relevant to our deeply held principles, that every civilian life is equally worthy of protection, and that a failure on humanitarian relief could make the conflict more likely to spread. I was heartened to hear that Israel has agreed to facilitating 100 trucks

a day of aid in, but senior UN and humanitarian agencies, senior personnel, both, have said that Rafah crossing is not equipped for that type of logistical operation. And that the place where the 500 trucks before came, was primarily through Kerem Shalom, which is also on the border with Egypt. But it is set up to facilitate large amounts of trucks getting through.

Are we pushing to really solve, for Israel to solve the logistic problems so we can actually get—and 100 trucks, really, it is one-fifth of what was supplying Gaza before. So that is really just the ultimate minimum, but much more is needed. Are we pushing to solve, have Israel solve those logistical problems quickly to get that humanitarian relief in?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. We are looking at every means possible to get assistance into Gaza. I think one of the challenges we have, is while we fully agree that even 100 trucks, and we are still not there, and we want to get there as quickly as possible, is not going to fully meet the needs, there is also an absorptive capacity problem on the Gaza side given the conflict, given the horrific disruptions that we are seeing.

So even if you could get trucks well above 100 going in, you need to have, on the receiving end, the capacity to actually both take and distribute that assistance. That is also lacking. So we have got to work on that too.

Senator MERKLEY. Right. That is true, but are we pushing—I am just looking for a yes or no, to use the additional logistical capacity that is at Kerem Shalom?

Secretary BLINKEN. Right now, our focus is on maximizing what we can do through Rafah, but even as we are doing that, we will look at other ways to get assistance in.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. I am very concerned on the testimony of other experts that that is going to be very hard, and the moment is like right now, hunger rising, thirst rising, the potential for disease and conversations with Red Cross and others, huge, because of the contaminated water, possibility of cholera, et cetera.

I am going to turn to an article by Thomas Friedman on October 19th; he said, “If Israel rushes headlong into Gaza to destroy Hamas, and does so without expressing a commitment to seek a two-state solution with the Palestinian authority, and end Jewish settlements deep in the West Bank, will be marking a grave mistake, that will be devastating for Israeli interests and for American interests.” And he notes that the impacts include fanning the flames in the West Bank, a risk of a broader war with Hezbollah and Lebanon, eliminating the possibility of any coalition governing Gaza, after all this passes. Including whether it is Palestinian, Arab League, UN, NATO, so forth, and destroying the probability of normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

That is quite a set of American interests. Do you share Thomas Friedman’s concern that without a vision of a two-state solution to address the prosperity, and thriving and Palestinian aspirations, that were locked into hostilities that will haunt us forever?

Secretary BLINKEN. It has been the policy of this administration from day one to support and try to put in place the conditions to actually get to a two-state solution. We believe that is the only way to truly ensure Israel’s security as a Jewish and democratic state,

and to give Palestinians the state to which they are entitled. So we believe that that is essential.

At the same time, we have been working very hard to both deepen and expand the process of normalization between Israel and its neighbors, both far and wide and these things not only—

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. Also, one more question. I support the two-state solution, but I think the—

Secretary BLINKEN. Go ahead.

Senator MERKLEY. Facts on the ground are making it more and more difficult. And I agree with Friedman's analysis that policy has to change around settlements in order for that to be a possibility.

I want to close with a question related to getting the Americans out, the families who are there. I have an Oregon family, they relayed to me how they three times gotten a text message, email saying, "Drop everything, go to the Rafah crossing." They waited until dark each time, nothing happened. They were not interfered with by Hamas, just the gate never opened.

NBC has reported on another family in Massachusetts, the Medway family, very, very—almost parallel experience. With the trucks coming in, why can't at the same time we get those families, those American families who were lined up at the gate, having received notices from the United States to do so. Why can't we get them out that gate?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, as I mentioned earlier, this is something we are working on every single day. We want to get our fellow citizens out, and we are trying to find a way to do that. To date the impediment has been Hamas. And I regret very much that we have had occasions where we thought that we would be able to move forward, which is one of the reasons we were in contact with people and suggested that they get in place to do that, only to find that the necessary procedures that had to be put in place to actually make that work could not go forward, and Hamas has been the impediment to that.

We continue to work on it. We are working on it with Egypt, we are working on it with Israel. We are looking for ways to get people out, but because Hamas controls what goes on, for the most part, inside of Gaza, unless it agrees, then it is going to be very difficult to get that done.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Moore Capito.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you. Thank you both for being here today. I think it is a very important hearing. I want to thank the Chair and Vice Chair for the hearing.

I remain an adamant supporter of our allies in Israel, and believe that we should continue to back Ukraine against Russian aggression. You both made that point very clear, but I do believe that you have also made clear the point and emphasized how intertwined Ukraine and Israel are important to our own national security, but in your own statement, Secretary Blinken, in your statement you mentioned one little throwaway line here when you say: That includes addressing the hemispheric challenge of irregular migration; I am assuming you are talking about our southern border here.

As has been reiterated, 269,000 last month, over 200 on the terror watch list. Americans are right to be extremely concerned about what is happening here and how it is intertwined with everything that is happening, globally, and we cannot lose sight of what we see. I am sure you, particularly Secretary Blinken, when you see the news of the anti-Semitic rallies that are occurring in our own country and across the globe, it is something I did not think we would ever see in our lifetime. And it is earth shattering.

So can you make a better—will you please make a better case of why our own homeland security here, including our southern border, is figuring into the equations that you have brought us here today to talk about?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. And I appreciate as well your reference to the, as you said, almost unimaginable instances of anti-Semitism that we have seen, as well, by the way, as expressions of Islamophobia, and other bigotry that unfortunately horrifically surfaces, particularly in times like these.

With regard to migration, as I mentioned earlier, we have a genuinely historic challenge. We have a historic challenge in our own hemisphere with nearly 25 million people on the move. What we are working to do, from the perspective of the State Department, is to work closely with other countries to get them to assume their share of responsibility in dealing with this migration, and that means—and it is in the budget—

Senator CAPITO. With all due respect, it is not working. It is not working.

Secretary BLINKEN. This is, as I said, a problem of truly historic proportions, requires a comprehensive effort that we are making. It also requires a lot of things including comprehensive immigration reform. The very first piece of legislation the President put before Congress would have done that. Unfortunately, it has not been addressed in the last three—

Senator CAPITO. Here is what I am concerned about, and I think a lot, when you see the 200 from the terrorist list, I know we are all concerned about this, that seeds of foment of terrorism could grow in all of—as you see the sort of seeds of unrest in our own country. As we are watching Ukraine and we are watching Israel, we do not want to take the eye off the ball of what is actually happening here. And I am sure that nobody here wants to see that. I am concerned.

I would like to go to another question for Secretary Austin, much like my fellow Senator from Arkansas, we do manufacture a lot of the munitions at Allegheny Ballistics Laboratory in West Virginia where we have over 1,600 people working there, and this supplemental does help build up that industrial base, and industrial production at that facility, and other facilities across the country. I guess when we see where we are now, would you say that we have learned a lot about our munition requirements because of what has happened in Ukraine? Or would you say that these were issues that had been, I guess, focused on at the Department of Defense, but we had not really realized where we were until we have to replenish everything that we have given away or sold and to be able to get our own capacity up to where we want it to be.

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Senator. I want to be clear about the fact that we will maintain—we have maintained and we will continue to maintain adequate capability to protect our interests and defend this country. And so as we have drawn down some of our stocks to provide capability to others, it is important to replenish that so that we continue to have—continue to maintain agility, and depth, so that we can respond to crisis like we have seen.

But our ability to protect ourselves and protect our interests, we will never mortgage that. And we go through a process every week as we receive requests for assistance, and we measure what is being requested against what is required for our defense, and we make the right calls.

In Ukraine's case, there are some 50 countries, as you know, that are working with us to provide security assistance. Israel, their requirement—their fight is a different fight, and their requirements are a bit different, and so, you know, they are using different types of things so we are able to meet both requirements. And so again, there is an urgent need to get the supplemental so that we can continue to do the things that you mentioned in terms of replenishing those stocks that give us that flexibility going forward.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you.

Vice Chair COLLINS [presiding]. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Vice Chair Collins. And I will thank the Chair, in your absence. And our two important witnesses today, thank you for your timely and critical leadership in this hinge point in our role in the world and in human history.

It is critical that we meet this moment and provide the full supplemental request presented to Congress by our President. And we have to sustain U.S. global leadership, and I would argue it is directly in our national security interests for us to stand up to tyrants and terrorists while meeting humanitarian needs to help stabilize critically impacted communities.

The conflicts in Israel and in Ukraine are regional in nature, but they have global consequences. As the world questions whether the United States is a reliable, trustworthy ally, we have to fund our sustained presence in these fights.

We have to see the global impact of a conflict like Ukraine that is having on global food security. We have to recognize we cannot just respond to Russian aggression in Europe while Russian proxies are spreading instability around the world in places like Africa, and addressing just the humanitarian needs in the Middle East by cutting responses in this hemisphere is not in our interests. We have to address these challenges comprehensively.

Secretary Blinken, if I could, I just briefly want to ask you, humanitarian relief has long been bipartisan. There are some who are questioning whether we are spending too much, whether we are preventing diversion to terrorists, you have addressed that previously. I have been reassured to hear directly from Israeli representatives, they value humanitarian relief in the middle of this conflict.

You are only asking for us to sustain our current year funding going forward and it will provide humanitarian relief across dozens of countries around the world that are facing threats of instability.

Could you speak to the strategic value of our continued humanitarian relief leadership?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. And I appreciate the fact you have underscored that what we are looking at is to sustain what we have already been doing, and also making the point that, yes, this would be vital for Ukraine, it would be vital for people in Gaza, but also this would cover situations that we have to address in Sudan, in Afghanistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, and in other places.

And I think, again, there are two things that are at stake here. One is, and I always lead with this because I think this really is who we are, is the imperative that America continue to be seen as the country that stands with those who desperately need assistance at the most critical time. And this goes to, I think, an impulse that most Americans feel, to help. But it is also a critical strategic proposition.

I will give you one example. It is imperative that Hamas be defeated, and it is imperative that Hamas no longer posed the threat that it has posed so acutely to Israel, but there is military defeat, there is also ideological defeat, you cannot kill an idea no matter how perverted and distorted it is. You have to be able to offer a better alternative to people who are in desperate straits.

Our ability, our willingness to be leading the effort to help them deal with the acute challenges they face in their lives, as well as offering a genuine vision for how life can be better is a vital strategic interest of ours. You are not going to—

Senator COONS. Another key piece of the support package, if I might, Mr. Secretary, is the non-lethal support to Ukraine.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is right.

Senator COONS. We are providing a significant amount, although our European partners are providing dramatically more. We are not just sending weapons we are sustaining Ukraine's ability to have a robust economy and government. How critical to Ukraine's sustained war effort and to Ukraine's independence is this ongoing non-lethal budget support? I would be interested in hearing a brief response from both witnesses about it.

Secretary BLINKEN. It is essential to Ukraine's success and here is why. Russia is doing two things, it is trying to go at Ukraine on the battlefield, and as you have heard the Secretary say, Ukraine has had remarkable success. Again, thanks to so much support from Congress over the last year-and-a-half and getting back 50 percent of the territory seized from it. And of course there is an ongoing intense battle now in the east and the south.

But Russia is also going at what it sees as the soft underbelly of Ukraine, and that is, its electric grids, its ability to produce and export food, its basic infrastructure. This is another way by which, basically, Putin hopes to sap the will and defeat Ukraine. The assistance that we are providing to make sure that it can secure and provide energy for its own people, that it can sustain its agricultural system, that it can sustain its economy, and grow its economy to the point where it has got a rising tax base. It can pay increasingly for its own defense and deterrence. Those are absolutely essential to making sure that it succeeds in this war effort.

Senator COONS. I will summarize if I might. Secretary, if we only send weapons to Ukraine, but we fail to support their government and their economy, they will lose to Putin's aggression nonetheless. Is that correct, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary AUSTIN. I absolutely agree, Senator.

Senator COONS. A closing quick point. There is \$2 billion in this request for support for the Treasury Department to work with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. It would unlock \$50 billion in support. I hope my colleagues will look closely at the ways that that would allow us to support critical allies like Egypt, and Jordan, as well as other countries around the region and world that are facing instability because of the war in Ukraine. Thank you and thank you for the chance to be with you.

Vice Chair COLLINS. Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Secretary Austin. Is it not true that the world is on fire in Ukraine, the world is on fire in the Middle East, and that there are embers smoldering in the Indo-Pacific?

Secretary AUSTIN. I would say that clearly there are challenges in both the places that you mentioned. Of course in the Indo-Pacific we see a China that is increasingly aggressive.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you disagree with my statement?

Secretary AUSTIN. That the world is on fire? I would describe it a bit differently. I agree with your premise that it is as challenging as the—

Senator KENNEDY. Is it not true—sorry to cut you off, but we only have limited time. Is it not true that China, Russia, and Iran have worked between and among themselves to either, start those fires, encourage those fires, or create those embers?

Secretary AUSTIN. I would say that we see evidence of them growing closer together since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. I would not—I did not see evidence of China collaborating with Russia to cause them to launch their invasion on its neighbor.

Senator KENNEDY. Is it not true that China, Russia, and Iran would like to see Russia dominate Central and Eastern Europe?

Secretary AUSTIN. I think China would like to see the United States be unsuccessful. They would like to see Russia continue to challenge us and keep us, you know, focused on that area so that we have less time and energy and resources to focus on our—

Senator KENNEDY. Well, the situation I just described, I appreciate you parsing your words, but the situation I just described would not disappoint China, Russia, or Iran would it?

Secretary AUSTIN. I am certain that it would not.

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. Is it not true that China, Russia, and Iran would like to see Iran dominate the Middle East?

Secretary AUSTIN. I certainly believe that Iran would like to see Iran dominate the Middle East, but the—

Senator KENNEDY. Do you think that would break China's heart or Russia's heart to see Iran dominate the Middle East?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do not think Russia or China would be unhappy about that, but—

Senator KENNEDY. Is it not true that China, Iran, and Russia would like to see China dominate the Indo-Pacific and be free to make moves in Sub-Sahara Africa and South America; is that not true?

Secretary AUSTIN. I think that is certainly China's goal, to be the dominant player in the Indo-Pacific.

Senator KENNEDY. And that is not a world safe for democracy is it?

Secretary AUSTIN. It is not. It is one that would be controlled by autocrats, eventually, if they were to dominate the Indo-Pacific, and if Iran dominated activities in the region.

Senator KENNEDY. And if we did not stop them—strike that. Do you believe that weakness invites the wolves?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do. I think deterrence, in order to deter you have to show strength.

Senator KENNEDY. And if we do not meet these challenges now, do you believe it will be more expensive in terms of America blood and treasure to meet them later?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. And I have got one last question. Mr. Secretary, I am looking at your and the President's proposed supplemental. What does \$16 billion for childcare, \$6.5 billion for the Federal Communications Commission to extend high-speed Internet, and \$3.1 billion for the FCC to reimburse telecommunication companies to replace insecure equipment have to do with the world challenges we are facing right now? And why did you make this request?

Secretary BLINKEN. I would defer to other colleagues on those specific aspects of the budget request.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you support those?

Secretary BLINKEN. I support the supplemental budget request.

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. Last question, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate your candid answers, but why did the Department of Defense oppose my bill calling for a special inspector general in Ukraine so we could follow every penny of American taxpayer money? Given the fact that the Inspector General of the Department of Defense has never been able to audit his own Department?

Secretary AUSTIN. The Inspector General of DOD has been involved in this effort from the very beginning.

Senator KENNEDY. Oh, I know. Believe me. He opposed my bill, and I find that ironic because the Department of Defense is the only Federal agency that has never, in the history of ever, been audited. But your Inspector General insisted that he be in charge. Do you not see the irony there with respect to Ukraine?

Secretary AUSTIN. Senator, I am confident that our Inspector General will do a great job in making sure that we remain on track with our responsibilities in Ukraine, in Ukraine and in Europe.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY [presiding]. Senator Schatz.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Chair and Vice Chair. Thank you, Secretaries, for being here. I do not think there is anyone on this dais who would disagree that we are in a fight against global fascism, and that what happened in Israel is Israel's 9/11. It causes anguish, it causes outrage, and hopefully we can achieve some collective moral clarity about moving forward.

But Secretary Austin, I want to ask you about the post-9/11 period in the United States. It seems to me that that collective anguish, and outrage, and moral clarity converted itself into some bad

strategic decisions that we are still dealing with in the region. And so my question for you is: What kind of strategic advice are you giving to your Israeli counterparts about avoiding the mistakes that we made in the past?

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Senator; great question. And I have had those conversations with my counterpart, and my advice to them—to him was to be thoughtful about, you know, actions, and objectives, and what they were trying to accomplish. And really think that through because if you do not, then the consequences can be long-lasting. And so we have shared that with them on a number of occasions, and hopefully that has made a difference.

Senator SCHATZ. Do you think Israel has completed its strategic deliberations about what comes next?

Secretary AUSTIN. I do not know for sure, Senator Schatz, if they have, because I am not privy to their internal cabinet discussions. But I certainly would say that from the very beginning I have encouraged them to think about what this looks like at the end of the day, what this transitions to. And really to begin to think through many of the things that Secretary Blinken mentioned earlier, because I think that is really important. If you do not, if you do not things to address the underlying causes of instability, then you create a bigger problem, or you have a lasting problem that, you know, will just go on forever and ever.

Senator SCHATZ. Secretary Blinken, let us do a thought experiment. Hamas, at some point in the future is disabled, I think eliminating, it is a rhetorical flourish that puts us in a position where we will never stop fighting against some offshoot, some first-cousin of Hamas someplace on the planet. So let us stipulate that the objective is to disable them to the point where they cannot pose a threat. Who runs Gaza?

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, I think we have two shoals, if you will. One is we cannot have a reversion of the status quo with Hamas running Gaza. We also cannot have, and the Israelis start with this proposition themselves, Israel running or controlling Gaza. That is not their intent. That is not what they want to do, and it is not something that would be supported. So in between those shoals are a variety of possible permutations that we are looking at very closely now, as are other countries. At some point—

Senator SCHATZ. And sometimes—

Secretary BLINKEN. Let me be more precise.

Senator SCHATZ. Sure.

Secretary BLINKEN. At some point, what would make the most sense would be for an effective and revitalized Palestinian authority to have governance and ultimately security responsibility for Gaza. Whether you can get there in one step is a big question that we have to look at. And if you cannot, then there are other temporary arrangements that may involve a number of other countries in the region, it may involve international agencies that would help provide for both security and governance.

Ultimately though, beyond that is what we come back to, what this administration believes, which is the imperative of getting to two states for two peoples. That is where you finally get the kind of sustained security that the Jewish and Democratic State of

Israel needs and must have. And you also get the state that the Palestinians are entitled to.

Senator SCHATZ. I think you are both being very thoughtful about this, I want to say that, but I think the worry that I have, and I have heard it around, bouncing around the halls of the Capitol, is that when we ask about what the end state is, what I have heard is: Well, we did not ask what the end state was in World War II, we just went ahead and fought the bad guys and let the—and let us sort it out later.

I am not sure that is satisfactory in this instance. And I think the question of what the end state is ought to be wrestled with, at least simultaneously, and in an ideal situation, proceed the military strategy, because what are we even fighting towards if we do not know what the political objective is?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I think you are absolutely right. And just to reassure you somewhat, we are very much grappling with that. This is a very active, ongoing deliberation both within the government as well as with allies and partners including in the region. And everyone is focused on not only what is happening right now in Gaza, but exactly as you say, where this lands, where this goes.

And in a way that fundamentally and materially changes two things. It changes the security for Israel, and changes the situation for Palestinians who have been living under, well before October 7th, a Hamas regime that is, in so many ways, destroying their lives, misogynistic, repressive, and instead of spending the resources that it was getting to better the lives of Palestinians, spending them instead on building tunnels and building rockets so that it could attack Israel.

We need to see a fundamental change in the circumstance of Palestinians living in Gaza, and we need to see a fundamental change, I think in the circumstance for Palestinians that gets to a State of their own.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Hyde-Smith.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you both for being here. We know how critical that this hearing has been. And I certainly appreciate your contributions. Iran has long—has a long and well documented history of being the primary funder of Hamas. Iran has supplied Hamas with the funds, arms, missiles, drones, and other equipment, as well as training and technical expertise. I find it extremely hard to believe that Hamas would have carried out its brutal attack on Israel without Iran's knowledge.

Secretary Austin, in the immediate aftermath of Hamas' attack, the administration claimed it did not have evidence that Iran was involved. Is this still this administration's position?

Secretary AUSTIN. It is. And from the standpoint of, we did not see direct involvement in the planning or the decision to execute this, on the part of Iran. Having said that, the point that you made earlier, Senator, that they have funded, resourced, enabled, trained Hamas operatives means that they have a big part in this, but in terms of their actual participation in the planning and the decision to conduct this attack, we did not see evidence of that.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Do you think they are the puppet master?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, I think they are—they certainly control a number of entities throughout the region, Shi'a Militia, Lebanese Hezbollah, and so that is what they do. They export mischief and use other people's resources to carry that out.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. And Iran continues to illegally sell more than 150 million in petroleum and petroleum products each day primarily to China. Iran uses these funds to support Hamas, Hezbollah, and other bad actors while oppressing the Iranian people. What more does this administration plan to do to curtail these sales? And I will direct that to you, Mr. Blinken.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. First, it is important to note that over the course of this administration we have sanctioned more than 400 Iranian individuals or entities for things like supporting Hamas, and that is something that continues to this very moment. We are very aggressively engaged in cracking down on financing and support for Hamas, wherever it is coming from, and including in, notably, Iran.

We have also taken action against the so-called "ghost shipping" of oil and trying to cut off the proceeds from that, and going against different entities that are engaged in that kind of trafficking. And we have a very vigorous effort underway to make sure that, wherever we can, we are cutting off Iran from getting illegal proceeds that then turn around and go to finance terror, or go to finance its own activities.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. And continuing with, following the Hamas attack, the administration stated that it froze the \$6 billion in funds that were cleared for release to Iran in order to secure the release of Americans held hostage by Iran. Is this freeze permanent, and what mechanism is the United States using to freeze these funds?

Secretary BLINKEN. So let us be very clear about this because it is important. I am afraid that some people have been misinformed and others may be misinforming about the \$6 billion. These are funds that accrued from the sale of Iranian oil over many years to an account in South Korea that was established by the previous administration. The proceeds were to be used under our laws and under our sanctions for humanitarian purposes. Those have never been prohibited by our sanctions against Iran.

And indeed, the previous administration set up a mechanism to enable any oil proceeds that Iran was getting to be channeled to accounts where they could be controlled and only used for humanitarian purposes. The money in that South Korean account that accrued from the sale of these proceeds, for technical reasons, related to Korean banks, was unable to be used even though it lawfully could be. So it was moved to an account in Qatar where it could be used for human humanitarian purposes, just as the previous administration established another account in another country, for these very purposes.

The money never goes, and would never go to Iran. It can only be used for authorized transactions overseen by our Treasury Department, and only for things like food, medicine, and other authorized humanitarian purposes. To date, not a single dollar has been expended from that account. There are currently no plans to ex-

pand a single dollar from that account, and in any event, that money never touches Iran directly.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator Baldwin.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin for your service always, but especially at this moment. You have both commented through your opening statements and through questions about the interconnectedness of the elements of this supplemental package, support for Israel in its fight against Hamas, support for Ukraine in its efforts to repel Putin's invasion, support for humanitarian aid for displaced civilians, and those caught in the crossfire, a focus on our manufacturing sector and its workforce needs to ramp up production, among many other elements that this package has.

You have also both answered questions about the urgency of congressional action, especially given the fact that House Republicans dropped funding for Ukraine from the current continuing resolution that is keeping Government running here in the United States. So against this backdrop, I was really taken aback to see calls in the House for dismantling this package and taking it up perhaps only one or two elements of the package.

So in terms of urgency, President Zelenskyy told us, as Senator Durbin mentioned, when we met with him back in September that without our help Putin will prevail. And then again, that was followed by a pause in assistance during the current CR. So I just want to ask you, Secretary Austin, to tell this panel in no uncertain terms how urgent it is for us to pass this package, in its entirety, with respect to keeping Ukraine in this fight.

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Senator. I think it is absolutely urgent. As you may have heard me say at the very top, they are in a fight. This is not a notional thing. They are fighting to protect their sovereign territory, they are fighting for their existence, and our help has enabled them to do what they have done to date, and they have made credible progress. They have impressed the world with their bravery, with their professionalism, with their determination, and so their goal is to take back as much of their sovereign territory as possible, and I think, you know, we need to provide them the ability to continue to do that, and we need to do that urgently.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. Secretary Blinken, I participated in the same briefing that Senator Merkley referenced earlier with the UN Relief and Works Agency, getting an update on the humanitarian situation in Gaza for those displaced, and literally, in the crossfire. Among the things we were hearing were just an assessment of what is happening in the hospital, the lack of medical supplies, anesthesia, things like that, and the dwindling, if any remains, in food stocks and storage.

You have talked about our efforts to support increasing the number of supply trucks that are able to get in, but again, your own reflections that prior to October 7th and the terrorist attack on Israel, there were 5- to 800 trucks going in a day, and now we are at 50 to 60. How will this humanitarian aid package assist in our leadership in increasing that, and how urgent is it that we pass that part of the entire package?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. Look, from my perspective and our perspective, it is beyond urgent, precisely for the reasons that you cite. And we are trying to ramp up now to a 100 trucks, and my hope is that will happen this week. And as you pointed, as I pointed out earlier, that is still well less than what was happening before October 7th. But as I also mentioned on the Gaza side, even if we could get 5- or 600 trucks, we have got an absorptive capacity challenge, in terms of the ability of folks on the ground, in Gaza, to actually receive the assistance, to distribute it, to use it effectively. So that also needs to be ramped up in the middle of a conflict, we are working on both ends to make that happen, but—

Chair MURRAY. Mr. Secretary, I do not want to interrupt you. But I have been informed that you need to leave at 12:30. We have several Senators here who have not had an opportunity to speak. I want to make sure we keep everybody's time to 5 minutes so they have that opportunity.

Secretary BLINKEN. In any event, yes, it is very urgent. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Madam Chair. And welcome to both Secretaries.

Secretary Blinken, I would like to start with you. I sent a letter last week to both yourself and to Administrator Powell asking for specific details on the funding that has gone into Gaza, the foreign assistance funding—U.S. taxpayer dollars, foreign assistance funding that has gone into Gaza, the recipients and the sub-recipients of that funding. Are you in a position to give me complete answers today to that?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. Yes, we have got the letter. We are working on it. You asked important and very detailed questions. We need some time to make sure that we are giving you the most robust and accurate answers possible. So in short, we will get that back to you.

Senator HAGERTY. At a high level, can you tell me the amount of funding, overall, under your watch, that has gone into Gaza?

Secretary BLINKEN. So overall, we provided about a billion dollars in assistance to the Palestinians through the UN Works and Relief Agency.

Senator HAGERTY. That is a significant amount of money. I look forward to going through the detailed response, when you provide it.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator HAGERTY. And I appreciate that commitment to do so in a timely fashion. I would like to tell you why I am asking this. I want to make certain that you can guarantee that not one dime of U.S. taxpayer funding is going to—the funding that is going to Gaza is going to benefit Hamas in their terrorist activities. Has that happened? And I think the question I would like to ask is can you guarantee us that no taxpayer money, no U.S. taxpayer money went to fund the attack that Hamas delivered in Israel on October the 7th?

Secretary BLINKEN. So we have, and we have from day one, and we will obviously get back to you in response to this letter, a robust

monitoring inspection verification system for the assistance that goes to any international organization, and including—

Senator HAGERTY. Can you guarantee though that U.S. taxpayer dollars did not go to Hamas to help fund this attack on October the 7th?

Secretary BLINKEN. So everything that we are doing in terms of making sure that the assistance is used for purposes for which it is designated, not for other purposes, as I said, we have a robust system in place.

Senator HAGERTY. Can I share my concern with this, Mr. Secretary, to be more specific about this. In May of 2021, I traveled to Israel after the Eleven-Day War. I met with Prime Minister Netanyahu with his National Security Advisor, they briefed me and my team, on the fact that every humanitarian aid dollar, every foreign aid dollar that goes into Gaza is controlled by Hamas.

They either direct it, they tax it, or they divert it, they even take pipes intended for the water system for civilians and turn those into rockets that are aimed at Israel. We have seen Hamas' own videos demonstrating this. So I want to come back and ask you, can you guarantee that U.S. taxpayer dollars were not used in October 7th attack?

Secretary BLINKEN. What I can guarantee is that we take every possible precaution to ensure that these resources are not diverted. Second, we—

Senator HAGERTY. Let me come at it another way then, Mr. Secretary, because your own internal—your own State Department has made an internal assessment on this.

Madam Chair, I would like to submit for the record a set of internal State Department emails from 2021 that were obtained via FOIA.

Chair MURRAY. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

October 26, 2023

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power:

Given the Administration's national security supplemental request, I write to seek information and transparency regarding the use of U.S. taxpayer funds. U.S. taxpayers have provided funds, in the form of U.S. foreign assistance, to Gaza, which is controlled by Hamas, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) that is backed by Iran's terror-sponsoring regime.

As a State Department records response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request recently revealed, State Department officials warned during internal deliberations in March 2021:

Due to its overall strength and level of control over Gaza, we assess there is a high risk Hamas could potentially derive indirect, unintentional benefit from U.S. assistance to Gaza. There is less but still some risk U.S. assistance would benefit other designated [Foreign Terrorist Organization] groups.¹

Moreover, multiple reports over the last year have revealed that the State Department has sent funds to Gaza-based organizations that cooperate with and support Palestinian terrorists.²

I want to ensure that not one single penny of U.S. taxpayer funds ever ends up again in the hands of Hamas and other Iran-backed Palestinian terrorists who savagely murdered over 1400 people in Israel—including at least 33 Americans—on October 7, 2023. Therefore, in the interest of transparency, I request, on behalf of the U.S. taxpayers who fund the U.S. government and its activities, that the State Department and USAID fully and faithfully respond to the two questions below prior to Secretary Blinken's appearance before the Senate Appropriations Committee hearing titled "A Review of the National Security Supplemental Request" on October 31, 2023:

¹ Letter from Diamonece Hickson, Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch, Office of Information Programs and Services, U.S. Department of State, to Morgan Yardis, Protect the Public's Trust, in re: Case No. FL-2022-00043, June 14, 2023, p. 58 at <https://freebeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/FL-2022-00043-June-2023-Production.pdf>.

² See Gabe Kaminsky, "State Department bankrolls group accused of 'cooperating' with Palestinian terrorists," *Washington Examiner*, September 27, 2023, at <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/state-department-bankrolls-accused-cooperating-with-palestinian-terrorists>. See also "New State Department Grantee Supports 'Resistance,' Partners with Palestinian Islamic Jihad Leaders," *NGO Monitor*, September 27, 2023, at <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/new-state-department-grantee-supports-resistance-partners-with-palestinian-islamic-jihad-leaders/>.

Question (1): Although Hamas—a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)—controls Gaza, the United States has continued to send U.S. foreign assistance to Gaza. For each of the following appropriations laws, I request the Department of State and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide the total amount awarded—directly or indirectly—to any entity in Gaza, including whether the entity in Gaza was a recipient or sub recipient:

- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division F of Public Law 116-6,
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division G of Public Law 116-94,
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division K of Public Law 116-260,
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division K of Public Law 117-103, and
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division K of Public Law 117-328.

Question (2): For each award provided—directly or indirectly—to an entity in Gaza, including whether the entity in Gaza was a recipient or sub recipient, under the appropriation laws described in question (1), I request the Department of State and USAID to provide:

- the total amount awarded,
- the source of the appropriation,
- whether the amount has been obligated, and
- what amounts remain unexpended.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter of transparency to the U.S. taxpayers.

Sincerely,



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 14, 2023

Case No. FL-2022-00043

Morgan Yardis
Protect the Public's Trust
712 H Street NE, Suite 1682
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Yardis:

As we noted in our letter dated May 3, 2023, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State ("Department") has identified an additional 10 responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined all 10 records may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

50

2

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Doug Dreier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, at Douglas.Dreier@usdoj.gov and 202-725-4614. Please refer to the case number, FL-2022-00043, and the civil action number, 22-cv-00105, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diamonece Hickson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Diamonece Hickson
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

From: (b)(6)@state.gov
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 E Clearances <E_Clearances@state.gov>;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
To: (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 WBG Desk <wbqdesk@usaid.gov>;
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov;
 CT CTFD <CT_CTFD@state.gov>;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
 (b)(6)@state.gov;
CC: EB-A-TFS-TFC-ThreatFinanceDesignations <EB-A-TFS-TFC-ThreatFinanceDesignations@state.gov>
Subject: 12pm Friday Clearance: License Application for West Bank and Gaza
Date: Thu, 25 Feb 2021 22:26:35 +0000

Colleagues,

Below is a license application to OFAC seeking authorization to conduct official USG activities in the West Bank and Gaza that might otherwise be prohibited by CT sanctions regulations. Please review and provide edits/clearance by 12pm Friday (2/26). NEA requested this urgently, so we plan to submit to OFAC on Monday morning.

State FPG - License Request for USG Activity in West Bank Gaza - 2.2021.docx

EB and NEA spoke with OFAC today to underscore the need for broad authorization to enable flexible programming as conditions on the ground change and the political environment evolves. For that reason we're not including the typical comprehensive list of activities we want authorized but rather are focusing on the foreign policy objectives and providing illustrative examples of our programming. Program offices should feel free to correct or elaborate on the examples included in this list, but please keep the bullets relatively short and high level.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB)

(b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.gov

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Sender: (b)(6)@state.gov
(b)(6)@state.gov;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
E Clearances <E_Clearances@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov;
(b)(6)@state.gov;
WBG Desk <wbgdesk@usaid.gov>;
(b)(6)@usaid.gov>;
CT_CTFD <CT_CTFD@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
EB-A-TFS-TFC-ThreatFinanceDesignations <EB-A-TFS-TFC-ThreatFinanceDesignations@state.gov>



United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

March 1, 2021

TO: Brad Smith
Acting Director
Office of Foreign Assets Control
Department of the Treasury

FROM: Andrew Weaschenk
Director
Office of Threat Finance Countermeasures

SUBJECT: ~~(SBU)~~ Request for Specific License to Authorize U.S. Government Official Activity in the West Bank and Gaza

~~(SBU)~~ The Department of State requests that OFAC issue a specific license authorizing for a period of two years the conduct of the official business of the U.S. government by employees, grantees, or contractors thereof in the West Bank and Gaza that would otherwise be prohibited by the Global Terrorist Sanctions Regulations and the Foreign Terrorist Organization Sanctions Regulations. Such authorization would enable activities, including assistance activities, that are critical to support the Administration's efforts to advance prosperity, security, and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians and to advance and preserve the prospects of a negotiated solution in which Israel lives in peace and security alongside a viable Palestinian state.

Foreign Policy Objectives

~~(SBU)~~ Secretary Blinken has stated that this Administration intends to restore assistance to the Palestinian people to advance U.S. interests. U.S. assistance serves important purposes, including supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, providing critical humanitarian relief, and fostering economic development. The United States is committed to advancing prosperity, security, and freedom for both Palestinians and Israelis, which is important in its own right, but also as a means to advance and preserve the prospects of a negotiated two-state solution, in which Israel lives in peace and security alongside a viable Palestinian state. The two-state approach remains the best way to ensure Israel's future as a democratic and Jewish state, while enabling the Palestinian people to live with freedom, security, and prosperity in a viable state of their own. We are working with all parties to advance that goal, and reengaging diplomatically and restarting assistance programs will help support a stable environment that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Assistance to be Provided

(SBU) The Administration seeks to restart economic, humanitarian, and security assistance activities in the West Bank and Gaza that will benefit all Palestinians and address critical issues that further progress toward peace. Our assistance programs improve the lives of millions of Palestinians through support to health, infrastructure, humanitarian relief, and economic development activities. Moreover, our support for the development of the Palestinian economy, civil society, and other private and public institutions helps improve the lives of Palestinians and ensure the viability of a future Palestinian state.

(SBU) Because we are restarting assistance after a multi-year gap, State, USAID, and other U.S. government agencies that may provide assistance or engage in other economic initiatives need maximum flexibility to adjust programming quickly in response to fluid conditions on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza. Below is an illustrative list of assistance activities State and USAID intend to implement in the near term. As we better understand the specific economic, humanitarian, and security needs in the West Bank and Gaza and identify assistance or other economic initiatives that would support our objectives, the programs in our assistance portfolio will likely evolve. We are seeking maximum flexibility under this license to enable U.S. government activities to respond to changing needs as quickly and effectively as possible.

- **COVID-19 Rapid Relief (\$15 million)**: USAID intends to provide emergency, life-saving humanitarian assistance to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19 in Gaza. This includes efforts to treat the sick, support vaccine rollout, and enable public health responses against a potential re-emergence of the virus. This program could also support the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) effort to help meet COVID-exacerbated food security needs in Gaza.
- **UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (\$100 million)**: State intends to resume support for UNRWA's activities in the West Bank and Gaza. UNRWA provides humanitarian interventions for Palestinian refugees such as food, cash-for-work, cash assistance, health and psychosocial support, education, water and sanitation, and COVID-19 prevention.
- **International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (\$89 million)**: State intends to support the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Interior's efforts to improve training, civilian security, prosecutions, and corrections.
- **Private Sector Growth (\$7 million)**: USAID intends to provide support to the Palestinian private sector by supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the West Bank and Gaza. U.S. assistance will help SMEs regain productivity and expand activities through a package of grants, technical assistance, and increased access to finance.

Commented [CA1]: L -- intended to cover DFC. Sufficient?

Commented [CA2]: OFAC clearly stated we do not need to provide all activities, just an illustrative list. Better to keep this concise and illustrative, rather than exhaustive.

Commented [CA3]: PRM -- can you confirm amount?

Commented [CA4]: Correct?

- **Youth Employment and Engagement** (\$4 million): USAID intends to support vulnerable and marginalized youth in the West Bank and Gaza with programs that provide psychosocial support, life skills, and technical training, as well as community engagement opportunities that aim to provide an alternative means of empowerment and prevent youth from joining extremist organizations.
- **Immediate Humanitarian Relief** (\$6 million): USAID intends to provide rapid relief to needy households in Gaza with programs that could include short-term employment, grants for income generating projects and small businesses, and food and non-food vouchers.
- **Water and Sanitation (WASH) and Water Improvement** (\$23 million): USAID intends to help marginalized communities in Gaza access clean water and improve hygiene, in addition to constructing water storage reservoirs in northern Gaza that will ensure sustainable, reliable, and safe drinking water. Some recent studies show only about 10 percent of available water in Gaza is potable.

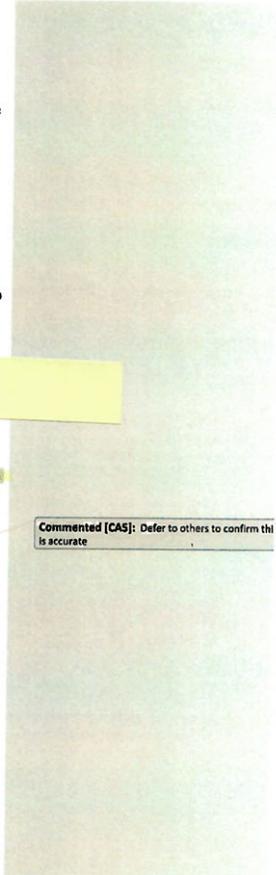
Need for an OFAC License

(SBU) Hamas is a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). Other terrorist groups are present in the West Bank and Gaza, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Due to its overall strength and level of control over Gaza, we assess there is a high risk Hamas could potentially derive indirect, unintentional benefit from U.S. assistance to Gaza. There is less but still some risk U.S. assistance would benefit other designated groups.

(SBU) According to USAID's West Bank and Gaza mission, there have been no known cases of U.S. government or other donor supplies or equipment being stolen or destroyed. In addition, USAID is not aware of any explicit, conscious effort by sanctions groups to seek reputational benefit from U.S. assistance in the West Bank or Gaza. Notwithstanding this risk, State believes it is in our national security interest to provide assistance in the West Bank and Gaza to support the foreign policy objectives outlined above.

Mitigation Measures

(SBU) State and USAID will continue to take appropriate steps to mitigate the risks that U.S. assistance benefits Hamas, PIJ, or any other terrorist organization in the West Bank and Gaza. Risk mitigation measures include counter-terrorism vetting of all partner organizations, as well as requirements for partner organizations to mitigate risk for fraud and diversion. The U.S. government maintains a "no contact" policy with Hamas, and U.S. implementing partners do not engage Hamas on the locations or types of assistance provided, nor on the recipients of U.S.



Commented [CAS]: Defer to others to confirm this is accurate

assistance. Implementing partners are required to notify State and USAID of developments that have a significant impact on the activities support in any award and the problems, delays, or adverse conditions that materially impair the ability to meet objectives in the award, including attempts by a sanctioned group to control a program's resources or beneficiaries. Further risk mitigation measures could be pursued if and as needed depending on how U.S. activities develop in the coming months and years.

Summary of Request

(SBU) The Department of State requests on foreign policy grounds that OFAC issue a specific license for a period of two years authorizing the conduct of the official business of the U.S. government by employees, grantees, or contractors thereof in the West Bank and Gaza that would otherwise be prohibited by the Global Terrorist Sanctions Regulations and the Foreign Terrorist Organization Sanctions Regulations to support the Administration's foreign policy objectives. We request the license be unclassified so relevant U.S. government agencies can share a copy with partners as necessary.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~



Approved: EB/TFS (b)(6))
 NEA/FO (b)(6))

Drafted: EB/TFS/TFC (b)(6)

Cleared: EB/TFC: (b)(6)
 EB/TFC: (b)(6))
 D: (b)(6))
 F: (b)(6))
 S/P:)
 E: (b)(6)
 NEA/AAC:
 NEA/PA: (b)(6)
 L/EB: (b)(6)
 L/LEI: (b)(6)
 L/AN: (b)(6)
 L/AN: (b)(6)
 L/LFA: (b)(6))
 USAID/ME:)
 USAID/BHA: (b)(6))
 CT/CTFD: (b)(6))
 F: (b)(6))
 PRM: (b)(6))

-SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED-

Senator HAGERTY. And Secretary Blinken, I would like to specifically read from part of that the assessment of your own State Department in 2021 is that, quote, "Due to Hamas' overall strength and level of control over Gaza, there is a high risk that Hamas could potentially derive indirect, unintentional benefit from U.S. assistance to Gaza."

Secretary Blinken, do you agree with this assessment?

Secretary BLINKEN. I do. And here is the challenge that we face, Senator. We have in Gaza somewhere over 2 million people, the overwhelming majority of which, virtually everyone, not a member of Hamas, and indeed increasingly discussed—

Senator HAGERTY. I understand. I am talking about Hamas' control over the funds, not the citizenship there and with respect—

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, no, but the support—

Senator HAGERTY [continuing]. To their control of funds, can you guarantee that the U.S. is not funding both sides of this war, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary BLINKEN. It is important that the one agency that has the ability to operate either directly or through agencies that it works with, and that we have robust controls in place to ensure that the money is used—

Senator HAGERTY. Let me come back to this, because I need to reclaim my time. I am losing it. Israel has said that Hamas is diverting foreign aid. Hamas has even demonstrated that with their own videos. Your own department has warned about the high risk, and I have yet to see, but I hope to, that where the actual funds flow is coming to Hamas from our Government to Gaza.

Secretary BLINKEN. We would also—

Senator HAGERTY. And I am deeply concerned here. And we need to be convinced that we are not funding both sides of this war, that U.S. taxpayers are not put in a position of funding a vicious cycle. And I think this Department—I mean I think your Department needs to confirm that with this committee. We need that level of detail so that as we appropriate a massive request for funding, we can assess the risk ourselves, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BLINKEN. And Senator, we will work with you on that, and we will get you the information. I want to respond as robustly as we can to your letter. I also want to make sure that we are doing everything we possibly can for the 1 million children in Gaza who desperately need food, medicine, support—

Senator HAGERTY. I hear you. I just do not want to see the U.S. taxpayer funding both sides of this war in Israel and Hamas.

Chair MURRAY. Mr. Secretary, and I hate to interrupt and I know you will respond to that, but we want to make sure we get to all the senators that are here. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you Madam Chair. Secretary Blinken, Secretary Austin, we know you have been working around the clock to protect our friends in Israel and Ukraine. Thank you for your work. Thanks for being here.

Secretary Blinken, I want to thank you. At the outset you described in really horrific detail what happened on October 7th. I think it is important that we be absolutely clear the nature of this brutal terrorist attack. And I share with you the real worry that in this country and around the world, the memory of October 7th, just a few weeks in our rear view mirror, has disappeared. It is incredibly important for us to remind the world about how our Nation was changed after September 11th, and how Israel has been changed as well by this, and how we have an obligation to stand up for them.

Secretary Austin, I wanted to talk to you as Senator Schatz did about the lessons that we have learned in our counter-terrorism operations. I note a story from this weekend in The Washington Post entitled, “U.S. Urges Israel Against Gaza Ground Invasion, Pushes Surgical Campaign”. I do not want to ask you about the confidential communications you have had with your Israeli counterparts, but one of the lessons that we have learned in our counterterrorism operations is that, not done well you can end up creating more ter-

rorists than you kill, in particular when you are careless about civilian casualties.

Those civilian casualties become terrorist fuel. They become bulletin board recruiting material for terrorist groups. And so there is a moral imperative to reduce civilian casualties, but there is also a strategic imperative. And so I want to ask you whether you have a worry that the nature of the Israeli ground operation, and the number of civilians that have been killed and will be killed could end up strengthening Hamas, or other affiliated anti-Israel terrorist groups in the long run?

Secretary AUSTIN. I agree with everything that you said, Senator. And that is a key lesson that we learned in our—in the fights that we fought over the last 20 years or so. That the things that you do on a battlefield could, if you are not thoughtful about them, they could create a resistance to your effort that lasts for generations, and so there is an operational and strategic imperative to make sure that we are doing the right things as we outline our objectives, and prescribe our techniques about how we are going to go about this. So we have had those conversations for exactly the right—the reasons that you mentioned.

Senator MURPHY. Secretary Austin, turning to Ukraine, I think the reason why many of us are so worried about splitting Ukraine aid and Israel aid is because there is an urgency, a real urgency in Ukraine right now. And we know that this place has trouble doing one difficult thing, never mind splitting it into two or three. I know that we are careful about talking about the urgency because we do not want to cause panic or damage morale in Ukraine, but I do think we have to be honest with the American people, and with this Senate about the consequences of not funding Ukraine.

Admiral Rob Bauer of the Netherlands, who you know well, said that the bottom of the barrel is now visible. And so I just want to ask you a pointed question about ammunition. We are really getting to a point, very soon, where there are not bullets in the guns, and we need to be serious with our colleagues about the consequences for the rank and file soldiers in Ukraine, if we do not get this assistance soon. The need is dire, isn't it?

Secretary AUSTIN. It absolutely is, Senator. And again, this funds artillery munitions, small arms munitions, you name it, and they desperately need a constant supply of warfighting capability in order to be successful. You know, we would like to see them continue their operations through the winter. I think that is an imperative. They cannot do that if we have caused them to pause because there is a pause in the security assistance that we provide.

Senator MURPHY. 30 seconds, Secretary Blinken, fuel into Gaza. Do we have a process to deliver fuel into Gaza that assures that it does not get diverted to Hamas?

Secretary BLINKEN. We are working urgently on that. I will say two things very quickly about it. First, Hamas has its own supply, stockpile of fuel. If it cared a wit about the people of Gaza, it would make sure, itself, that it use that fuel to have the hospitals be able to operate, have the incubators stay turned on, et cetera. But of course it does not. And we have an obligation to do everything we can, if Hamas is not going to do it, to look out for people in Gaza.

So we are working on a mechanism that can get fuel to where it is needed, particularly to hospitals, bakeries, desalination plants, so the people can—

Chair MURRAY. Mr. Secretary, I am going to have to interrupt you because, again, you have informed us you need to leave, and I want to make sure as many Senators as possible have time. Senator Britt.

Senator BRITT. Thank you so much Madam Chairman. I would like to start by telling you and the Vice Chair how much we appreciate you holding this hearing. It is critically important that we have the opportunity to ask tough questions, to get answers for the American people and to do our job. You allowing us to be here today will certainly make great strides towards that.

Thank you both for being here before this committee. Before we start in on talking about some of the topics that we are here to talk about today, I want to make sure that we make a point on our border. So the National Defense Strategy of our Nation promises that, first, we will defend our homeland.

In order to do that, we must secure our border when we are talking about the number of people here, and the number of countries. Secretary Blinken, I would like to add to the countries that you just said, we have people from Iran, people from Syria, people from Yemen, people from Jordan, people from Lebanon. We know the foothold that Iran has in so many of these nations.

Now, these were the people that we have encountered at the border. There exists a problem that we have 1.7 million got-aways into this nation, where we do not know who they are, where they are going, or what their intentions are. As we see anti-Semitic behavior rise, not only across the oceans, but here in this Nation, we must do every single thing that we can to keep our homeland safe. And that starts with securing our border.

When we look at what is happening in Israel and the atrocities, I want to thank both of you for going and putting boots on the ground immediately, telling our friends and greatest ally in the Middle East, Israel, that we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them, particularly in the face of these barbaric atrocities that occurred on October 7th.

Secretary Blinken, thank you for what you just said. Talking about what actually happened. I hope that every media outlet plays what you testified to earlier, and that is that we have seen men with their eyeballs gouged out. We saw children watch their parents be executed. We saw families at their breakfast table be tortured and murdered.

This must stop. And in order for people in this Israel to be able to tuck their children in at night, and people across this globe, we must eradicate Hamas. In doing so, we have got to take the threat of Iran seriously and what they have been doing across the globe, what they have been funding, who they have been training.

You said earlier, Secretary Blinken, you agreed with Senator Graham that the normalization efforts with Saudi and Israel, that that was one of the links in the chain that led us to where we are today. My question for you is, do you agree that the strategy of what I would call, appeasement, from this administration that occurred starting with the Obama administration, now to here, when

it is easing off of sanctions, even offering to enter back in into talks about the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), that that type of behavior also contributed to where we are today?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. It will not surprise you that I would not agree with that statement, even though I agree with pretty much everything you said right up to that statement. And again, I just point out that when it comes to Iran, two things very quickly, one—

Senator BRITT. Go ahead. And I know I have a limited time.

Secretary BLINKEN. Very quickly, we have been engaged in going at Iran for its support in a whole variety of ways for malicious activities throughout the region, including support for terrorism, including destabilization, that has involved, as I said, sanctioning more than 400 Iranian entities and individuals, over the last two-and-a-half years.

Senator BRITT. And not to cut you off, but I know that she is going to cut me off.

Secretary BLINKEN. Go ahead, please.

Senator BRITT. So you know, in order to actually do this, we have to go back to a strategy of maximum pressure, I hope you will work with your other countries here in G7 to actually do that. Can you commit today that this administration will not resume talks to enter in with Iran to enter the JCPOA?

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, I am not going to get into hypotheticals about our diplomacy. I can simply say that it was a big mistake to walk away from the JCPOA, because at least it took one problem off the table, which was Iran's nuclear program. Unfortunately, since we have moved out, Iran has turned that back on. And so that just adds to the threat that Iran poses.

Senator BRITT. Obviously, we are going to disagree—we are going to disagree on that—

Secretary BLINKEN. Being able to deal with one—with at least one problem was a positive.

Senator BRITT. So we have one more minute. Secretary Austin, when we are looking at what is happening across the Middle East there, particularly with attacks on our troops, do you believe that Iran understands—we more recently heard this administration say that there is a red line. Do you believe that Iran understands what that red line is?

Secretary AUSTIN. Senator Britt, we have been clear that the protection of our troops is important, and we will do what is necessary to protect them. And this activity has to change. If it does not change, we will respond. And again, we will respond at a time and place of our choosing.

Senator BRITT. At a time of our choosing. Yes, and I just want to make sure that we have—have we been clear with Iran what that red line is? Do they understand that?

Secretary AUSTIN. We have been clear about what I just said, Senator Britt.

Senator BRITT. Okay. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. And thanks both of you all. It has been very enlightening, and it

has been very interesting hearing you all's approach on this. First of all, we know that Ukraine cannot succeed without U.S. support. Can Israel succeed without U.S. support? Yes or no, very quickly on that, either one.

Secretary AUSTIN. That is correct. My assessment is that if the United States does not continue to support Ukraine that they will not succeed.

Senator MANCHIN. Right, but can Israel without our support?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is right.

Senator MANCHIN. Can Israel make it without our support?

Secretary AUSTIN. I think—no, I think we have to continue to support them, as they try to—

Senator MANCHIN. I am just asking you questions that people are asking me. So they are saying we have been giving \$3 billion and Israel is very advanced. Ukraine was not, we had to bring them up to speed, to be able to fight the fight, and we are committed there.

And Secretary Blinken?

Secretary BLINKEN. I would simply say that on the one hand, Israel prides itself in being able to defend itself by itself. But a critical function of its ability to do that is the support that we provide, including through the Memorandum of Understanding that was negotiated by the Obama administration to give Israel a level of—

Senator MANCHIN. So it is just as far as support, the support is not only justified but needed. You are saying it would be hard to take on all the fronts, or taking on without our support. Next of all, it brings me to the munitions, I know has been asked about what we can produce; is the United States running a risk, maybe, not having enough to defend our self if we are pulled into any of these battles because of what we are basically producing?

Are we producing enough here, with the trusted allies in our self, producing enough ammunition to defend our own homeland and help our allies too?

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Senator. The first order of business for us is to make sure that we have the capability required to defend our Nation, and protect our interests.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you.

Secretary AUSTIN. And then above and beyond that we can—

Senator MANCHIN. Do you think we are producing enough? We are ramping up. I know we are trying to.

Secretary AUSTIN. Yes. We are ramping up, but it was—if we had if we had to only resource ourselves, yes, but we are at a point in time where we are resourcing allies and partners like Ukraine and Israel, and it is going to require more—

Senator MANCHIN. I am just asking the question because people are asking me. Are we running our self critically low on our own volume of what we need in our own, basically inventory? Or are we basically overproducing, or can we produce enough, or are we supplying more than what we can produce to backfill? That was a question.

The other thing that has been asked of me, first of all, our commitment to win, our track record has not been too good with Vietnam, and basically Afghanistan, Ukraine, getting out—the end result. Are we committed to staying with this to win? Because I believe Ukraine is the most—I just think it is the purpose and the

most honorable position we have ever taken in my lifetime of seeing that we were committed to playing the role the United States plays as defender of freedom and liberties. And when you have a country willing to risk their own life and put their own people on the line; that is the least we can do to support them. So I am all in on that. But are we committed to staying the stay all the way through?

And next of all, on our support to Israel; Israel has got to take out Hamas. Israel has to be supported to do that. And with that, are we committed to make sure that happens? So I think at least, and in this final question, people have asked me saying why can't—are the people in—the Palestinian people in Gaza, are they committed to the cause, to Hamas' cause, basically? And that is why they are not leaving when we have—basically been warned that you should leave? That they are being held hostage by Hamas? Can we not get aid to them making sure it is being used for the purpose of their survivability? And can we not get them out of there? What is holding that back? Secretary Blinken.

Secretary AUSTIN. We are committed to making sure that Ukraine has what it needs to be—to defend its sovereign territory. That is why we are here asking you for support.

Senator MANCHIN. No problem. But I am just saying, is there a way to do that? Secretary Blinken, I know you have been over there quite a bit. Both of you all have been, and appreciate it.

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, very quickly the overwhelming majority of Palestinians living in Gaza are not part of Hamas, do not support Hamas. In fact, are subjected to its repressive rule. But these are impoverished people who have virtually no opportunity, and so no ability—

Senator MANCHIN. You are saying nowhere to go?

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. So very hard for them to move out of the way, although obviously we are working on that to try to get them out of harm's way, very little ability to provide for themselves, which is why we are trying to get assistance in. But ultimately, this is their land, we do not want to see them displaced—

Senator MANCHIN. Very quickly—

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. And we do want to see different governance in Gaza.

Senator MANCHIN. The problem that we have, basically we are saying that \$10 billion for humanitarian aid, when we know we cannot even get the aid that we are putting in there now, going into the hands—

Secretary BLINKEN. No. No. We can—no, we can, and we are. We are making sure that the assistance going in is going to the people who need it and deserve it, not the people who do not.

Chair MURRAY. Mr. Secretary, I am going to—

Senator MANCHIN. My final—

Chair MURRAY. I am going to interrupt you. I apologize to everyone.

Senator MANCHIN. I know.

Chair MURRAY. Secretary Blinken has said he has to leave. I respect that. And Senator Austin—or Secretary Austin said he would stay. We have four Senators who have not—

Senator MANCHIN. Let me just—I just had—

Chair MURRAY [continuing]. Who have not had a chance to ask anything: Senators Rubio, Van Hollen, Fischer, and Murkowski. If you will indulge me, I would like to ask each of those to ask, quickly, their question for Secretary Blinken to respond to those.

Senator MANCHIN. Can I just have a final—

Chair MURRAY. And Secretary Austin will be here and stay here to answer, and those four, we will call back on you in—

Senator MANCHIN. I have one final comment I want to make to both of you all. This is a bipartisan, so when you hear all of the—my Republican colleagues saying about how important it is to secure our own borders, I want you to know it is bipartisan. I have got more concern about our own borders from my own people in West Virginia, and I want to make sure that you understand that we will do anything and everything humanly possible to support securing the borders of the United States of America. Thank you.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you. I am going to call on Senator Rubio, Van Hollen, Fischer, and Murkowski to simply ask a question. Mr. Secretary, if you can respond to those together? And then I will call on all of you to ask Secretary Austin a question.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Well, since I only have one question, no one else is going to ask you about this, and it is unrelated to this matter, tangentially anyway. We recently did a deal with the Maduro Regime in Venezuela, in which we lifted sanctions in exchange for free and fair elections that they were supposed to comply with. It has taken them 2 weeks now. They have violated that. They canceled the opposition's primary election; continue to ban their—the winner of that primary. They basically wiped out the election. They have broken the deal. Are we going to reimpose sanctions?

Chair MURRAY. Senator Van Hollen, your question please.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Secretary, in the aftermath of the horror visited upon Israel by Hamas and the ongoing war in Gaza, much of the world has turned its eye away from what is happening on the West Bank. And what we are seeing, and our own folks on the ground have been reporting this on a daily basis, is that with support of extremists in the Netanyahu government, people like Smotrich and Ben-Gvir, extremist settler violence against Palestinians has skyrocketed, as more Palestinians are pushed off their land in Area C.

As you know, all this does is strengthen Hamas, undermine the already weak PA, and open another front in this war. I know the President has raised this issue with Prime Minister Netanyahu, but according to every report I get, and I know both of you, Secretaries, get these. We have seen no improvement. So my question is pretty simple: What is your plan beyond urging that something be done when—or pleas continue to be ignored?

Chair MURRAY. Senator Fischer, your question, please?

Senator FISCHER. No question.

Chair MURRAY. No question.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Given the overlay that we have heard, the interconnectedness between what is happening in Ukraine with Putin's war, what we are seeing truly explode now in Israel by

Hamas with the support of Iran, given what we have all been discussing here, with regards to the tension in China and Taiwan. We are not talking about North Korea today, but we should always be thinking about North Korea's intentions.

This is a simple question that I was going to ask both of you. Given the situation, globally, and what is at play and how it all intersects. Are we at a time and a place where, from a national security perspective, we are as vulnerable as we have been as a nation, in your professional estimation?

Chair MURRAY. Mr. Secretary, your responses, please?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. And I very much appreciate the accommodation. I want to try to quickly answer, at least address initially the questions that are raised before I leave.

Senator Rubio, I thank you very much for the question about Venezuela. As you know, following the agreement that the Unitary Platform, the Opposition, reached with the Regime on a way forward toward elections, we wanted to support that and part of supporting that was to encourage that to move forward, including by lifting some sanctions with the ability, of course, to snap them back, or to put some licenses in place that can be revoked very quickly.

If the regime has, in fact, violated the agreement that it reached, then of course we will take the necessary action. We have been very clear about that, they are not getting a free pass for actions that they take that are in contradiction to the commitments that they have made to move towards free and fair elections, which is a shared objective that we have with the Opposition, with the Unitary Platform. So we are tracking that very carefully and happy to come back to you further as this moves along.

Senator Van Hollen, with regard to the West Bank, we very much share the concern that you have expressed. Palestinian authority is doing everything that it can to keep security, to keep stability in the West Bank. It is vastly under-resourced. This is another aspect of the problem and we have urge the Israelis, for example, to provide the authority with the resources that it needs that are being held back, tax revenues and other fees that it collects and then normally gives to the authority so that it can do its business, to release those.

And at the same time, the President himself has been very clear, very direct, and very explicit about our concerns about extreme settler violence and the impact that that is having on the West Bank, including adding fuel to the fire. We have seen that people have been, in effect, forcibly displaced from their communities as well as killed, so this is something that we are in direct communication and conversation with the Israeli government at the very highest levels, and something we are tracking very carefully.

Secretary AUSTIN. Tony, if I could add.

Secretary BLINKEN. Please.

Secretary AUSTIN. You know, I mentioned earlier, I talk to my counterpart nearly every day, and this is something that I bring up every time I talk to him. As you mentioned, Senator, I am watching these reports and some of the things that we are seeing are fairly disturbing, and it will work against them going forward if they do not make a decision to control this better.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank. It really needs to stop.

Secretary BLINKEN. And then, Senator Murkowski, I think I would say this, we see the challenges that we have been discussing today. You also mentioned North Korea. Another challenge that we take with dead seriousness, that is on one side of the equation. The other side of the equation is this, there has never been a time in my own experience where we have had greater unity of purpose, greater unity of action, greater convergence with our partners in Europe, our partners in Asia, and indeed in other parts of the world than we have now in facing exactly those problems.

We built a coalition of more than 50 countries to help deal with the aggression that Putin is committing in Ukraine, an extraordinary coalition that is supporting Ukraine in so many different ways, as well as dealing with broader problems that Russia poses. At the same time, we built much greater convergence than I have ever seen on how to deal with and approach to the challenges posed by China. And we see that in Asia itself. We see that in our relationships with everyone from Korea to Japan, to the Philippines, to Vietnam, to India, countries wide and far, as well as in Europe.

So I am very comforted by the fact that because we have revitalized, reenergized, reengaged our core alliances and partnerships, our greatest strength, and built new ones, and brought them together in new ways, we have tremendously effective groupings of countries that are prepared to deal with these challenges.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you. And thank you. I understand you have a meeting with the Speaker. And appreciate your answering those questions.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. I will go back to the Senators who have not had a chance now.

Secretary Austin, thank you for your willingness to stay and answer the final questions.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Secretary Austin, I wanted to ask you, and really I will just be I guess very quick, in respect for all the people's time here. These attacks from these, we continue to call them proxies, they are basically agents of the IRGC and the Iranians, they would not be occurring without the Iranians, not just permitting them, but frankly facilitating them. And the Iranians would not facilitate or permit them because in fact there was a pause in those attacks for some period of time.

They would not facilitate or permit them unless they calculated that these attacks do not cross some threshold, in their mind that if they cross that threshold that would trigger a price, a response—a price they do not want to pay, a response they do not want to see. At this moment, I do not believe that we can argue that we have deterrence in place for these attacks.

And this is more of a comment than it is a question, although you are obviously free to comment, and I think we are very interested to hear what your response will be, but it is my deep belief that I hope is shared by the Department, that if we do not—I do not want a broader war with Iran, none of us have talked about, and I am not one of those people who have out there been talking

about airstrikes and starting a war with Iran is a tinderbox to begin with.

But if we do not have a credible, not just the deterrence, a credible deterrence with the Iranians, these attacks are going to escalate. They are going to come faster, they are going to spread beyond Syria and Iraq, and they will involve weaponry of increasing sophistication and lethality. And that is my biggest fear, is that we will find ourselves if we do not soon establish a credible deterrent, they will begin to cross lines that will require, not just a defensive posture on our front, but imposing a cost on them.

One of the biggest, obviously I share all the comments that have been made here about the horrifying incident involving Hamas, and everything they have done in the past and moving forward, the need to stand with our allies, but I think this is the one that really, really—this is the one that has the threat to quickly spiral out of control, is that these groups escalating these attacks to include more places, at a faster clip, with more lethality and sophistication if we do not establish a credible deterrent quickly.

Secretary AUSTIN. Senator, I agree with that if they are not convinced that we will do what is necessary to protect our troops, then they will continue on as they are. But I have been clear, the President has been clear that that is something that we will not tolerate. And we will do what is necessary to protect our troops. You saw me move another carrier battle group, actually it is in the Med now, it is headed to the Gulf region. That gives us more capability, more strike capability. We have additional aircraft in the region now, we have the punch that is necessary to protect our interest, and we are going to do what is necessary to do that.

Senator RUBIO. Well, I have no question that we have the assets positioned in the region to impose a cost on Iran that they do not want to pay. I hope we never have to do it. I guess the fundamental question really becomes, do they believe we will actually do it.

Again, I understand the complexity of the situation where something could trigger, and suddenly this thing begins to move in a direction that spirals out of control. What I have real concerns about is their perception of what we are willing to do, that may not match up with what we are actually willing to do. Hence, at this moment we do not have a credible deterrent. And I sense from your answer that you share that concern, sometimes even when we say things they may not believe us, even if we have the capability to do it.

So it is one of those situations where we do not want there to be a shooting war, certainly, and seeing this thing escalate, but I think one of the things that guarantees escalation is the lack of a credible deterrent. It is a complex and serious matter, and one that I hope you—it sounds like you share my concern about it quickly spiraling here, primarily because of Iranian perceptions of our willingness, not our capability, but our willingness to take deterrent action.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Secretary Austin, thank you for your service. And I agree that we have to provide the people of Ukraine with military assistance that they need to

defend themselves against Putin's aggression. And President Biden is right to stand with Israel in its hour of need. All of us have been repulsed by the horror and brutality of the Hamas terror attacks that left over 1,400 innocent Israelis murdered, including women and children, including those massacred at Kibbutz Kfar Aza, which I visited in June.

When scaled to the size of the U.S. population that is comparable to over 40,000 Americans killed; a horror that will never be erased. All of us agree that Israel not only has the right but the duty to defend itself and eliminate the threat from Hamas. Hamas must immediately release all the hostages, and as Israel conducts its operations, many of us believe it should prioritize returning the hostages safely home.

Also, as President Biden has said, it must conduct its operations in accordance with the laws of war. Not only because taking all possible measures to avoid civilian casualties and human suffering is morally and legally required, but that it is also in the best strategic interests of the United States and Israel to do so. Something both you and Secretary Blinken have affirmed today.

The President has been very clear about the need to distinguish between Hamas and the overwhelming number of Gaza's over 2,000,000 Palestinian civilians who have nothing to do with Hamas. But some members of Prime Minister Netanyahu's coalition have indicated that all Palestinians in Gaza are responsible for the horror visited upon Israel. And Israel has imposed, as you know, a full siege on the people of Gaza, cutting off most water, food, medicine, electricity, and fuel shipments.

Secretary Blinken described the desperate humanitarian situation in his testimony today, but to date, we have only seen a trickle, a trickle of the needed humanitarian aid crossing the Rafah border. I saw the readout from your conversation today with Minister Gallant where you indicated, and I quote, "That humanitarian law requires that there be unfettered humanitarian assistance."

So Mr. Secretary, simple question. We have got a trickle going. You would agree that in the interests of humanitarian law and helping innocent people in Gaza, we have to do a lot better? A simple question.

Secretary AUSTIN. I agree, Senator, and as I said earlier, it is a moral, and operational, and strategic imperative. If you fail to do that, then I think we are going to create a problem that—they will create a problem, a bigger problem for themselves.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Now, the siege is being accompanied by a ferocious bombing campaign. In just the first six days of the war, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs in the densely populated the Gaza Strip. Israel has stopped reporting the number of bombs being dropped, but the intense pace has continued. Last night, my wife and I learned that someone we know well lost two family members, and four of their children killed in bombing in Gaza.

So they are not yet included in the most recent death toll reported by the United Nations yesterday, which says the number of dead has risen to over 8,300 people, 70 percent of them women and children including 3,457 children, these are UN figures. According to UN figures, that is about six times more children killed in 3

weeks in Gaza than the number of children killed in Ukraine during the entire war there.

And if you sail the death of those Palestinian children to the United States population it is comparable to over 230,000 American children killed. The executive director of UNICEF, Catherine Russell, said at the current rate, more than 420 children are being killed or injured in the Gaza each day. A number, she said, which should shake us to our core. I agree.

Now, Mr. Secretary, I know that people are on opposing sides of this conflict provide different reasons for why the death toll is so high, and you are right about Hamas' despicable practices of operating among civilians, but regardless of the explanation, we must not look away from these terrible facts. You and the President have repeatedly said that Israel must comply with the rules of war, but as we consider additional American military assistance to Israel's fight in Gaza, don't we have an obligation not only to state that expectation, but to ensure that our support is used in a manner that complies with the laws of war and U.S. law? That is my question, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary AUSTIN. We will continue to emphasize to our allies here the necessity to account for the civilians that are in the battle space. They are a part of the battle space. They must account for them. They must do the right thing in terms of taking that into consideration as they do their targeting, they must create such—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Secretary, with respect, my question is a little different. My question is now that we are talking about—

Chair MURRAY. Senator Van Hollen, I apologize. Secretary Austin has just a few minutes left.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right.

Chair MURRAY. We still have four Senators here.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. Just, additional assistance, don't we now have an obligation, not just a stated expectation, for that to be the case?

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. While I appreciate Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken testifying today, I will echo my colleagues' sentiment and say that I am disappointed Secretary Mayorkas is not here. However, I am very, very pleased to hear that he will be before this committee next week. Because there is a national security crisis at our southern border, and this administration must make serious policy changes to address the crisis. I look forward to hearing from Secretary Mayorkas on how the administration intends to address that crisis.

Twenty-four days ago, Israel suffered the worst terrorist attack in its history. Israel has the right and the responsibility to respond to these barbaric attacks. We can best help them by giving them the time and resources they need to eliminate Hamas. The atrocities committed by Hamas demand nothing less. The administration's request included over \$14 billion for Israel, including \$5.2 billion to replenish their Iron Dome and David's Sling systems and accelerate development of their Iron Beam system, and \$3.5 billion in foreign military financing. I strongly support the full inclusion

of this request in the supplemental funding bill that this committee will draft.

The administration has also requested significant funding for Ukraine. I would note that while many of our allies and partners are capable of providing generous humanitarian and economic assistance packages, only the United States can provide Ukraine with lethal aid at the scale that it needs. That is where we should focus our efforts as a country, but we can only continue to provide lethal aid if we aggressively expand our munitions production capacity. And we do that here at home. And that is a point that is being lost by many.

A significant portion of the funding request is to replenish and build out U.S. capacity. The United States faces threats from around the world, from Russia, China, Iran. Earlier this month, the bipartisan bicameral Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States released its final report on America's Strategic Posture.

The report unanimously endorsed by the Commissioners found that we will soon face a security situation that quote, "The United States did not anticipate, and for which it is not prepared." I am working with my colleagues to turn many of the Commission's recommendations into law, but fundamentally, we simply do not have the workforce, supply chain, or infrastructure necessary to meet the coming threats. Building out this capacity, it is going to take time and resources, but we can start now by making targeted investments in our munitions production base.

The administration's supplemental request includes over \$18 billion to replenish our own weapons stockpiles, and over \$4.6 billion to expand production capacity for those critical munitions. This is a step in the right direction, and I will support its inclusion in the supplemental funding bill.

Secretary Austin, what would be the impact of not including replenishment funding in the Appropriations package for this supplemental?

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Senator. We would lose the ability to do the kinds of things that we have done with Ukraine and Israel in support of our allies, you know, in a time of need.

Senator FISCHER. And what does it do to our own national security?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, it certainly—as I said earlier, we will maintain the ability to defend this country and protect our interests, but this additional capability gives us the ability to address emerging crises. And so I think without that, we would be challenged to do the kinds of things that we have done here in the past.

Senator FISCHER. You know, I know it is important that we continue to do that for our allies and partners, but it helps our own stockpile requirements, and that includes expanding the production lines for long-range precision-guided munitions as well; is that correct?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is absolutely correct, Senator, and you know that—

Senator FISCHER. Which we need for the Pacific, right?

Secretary AUSTIN. That is right. And you know that some of these munitions are long-lead time in terms of what it takes to

produce them. And so we are looking at ways to shorten some of those time lines, to increase capacity, to automate the production lines to address some of the issues that you raised earlier.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Senator Peters.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. And as Chairman of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, I know how important it is for us to secure our northern and southern border and provide law enforcement with the resources that they are going to need to complete that mission. And that is why I am very pleased to see substantial funding in the supplemental to support border operations as well as security for our country.

But I also believe we cannot stop there. We also must work with international partners to understand some of the root causes of the increased migration that we are seeing show up at our border, and commit adequate resources to addressing those challenges.

I know Secretary Blinken had another engagement that he had to leave, but I have a number of questions for him that I will be submitting to the record as to how that we work internationally to deal with border security here in our country.

Secretary Austin, thank you for staying for additional time. You have been very generous with your time. The question is, with the recent escalation of violence and attacks that are aimed at U.S. personnel in the Middle East now, I remain concerned about the Air Force's decision to divest the A-10 aircraft. Notably the DOD recently deployed A-10s to further deter Iran and their proxies that may seek to attack U.S. Forces, and in the process destabilize the region even more than it already is.

As you know, my home State of Michigan is the home of 107th Fighter Squadron, a unit certainly capable of providing air support to our troops and allies should they be called upon. And my question for you, Secretary, is that clearly the Department of Defense has recognized the need for this aircraft's very unique capabilities, and are deploying those fighters right now in support of operations related to this contingency.

So my question for you is: Is this current conflict causing the Department to reconsider A-10 divestment? Or at a minimum perhaps delaying some of those divestitures given the fact that there is a mission today, and will very likely continue at least in the foreseeable future?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, thanks, Senator. I have personally benefited from the capability of the A-10s, so I have great respect for the platform. And the A-10 will be with us for the near term. But I have asked you for \$61.1 billion in my fiscal year '24 budget to invest in air power so that we can remain the dominant force.

And so we are going to have to transition over time to address the new challenges that we will face with peer competition. And we are making an effort to do that. And we will have to make some choices down the road, but we are going to have to continue to make that transition, but they will be with us for the near term.

Senator PETERS. Good. Well, as you talk about the future, certainly we have to be focused, and warfare is changing dramatically, but I believe that the very close working relationship and security cooperation that we have with Israel is incredibly important to that

task. The U.S. and Israel have some of the world's most innovative technologies as you are well aware of. And now more than ever we need to continue to develop those.

This Congress, I introduced along with bipartisan support from Senator Fischer, the U.S.-Israel Future of Warfare Act, which authorized \$50 million to create the U.S.-Israel Future Warfare Research and Development Fund to increase collaboration in areas of artificial intelligence, drone, and cybersecurity, directed to energy and automation; that is a \$50 million authorization. Given the current conflict, given the rapidly changing nature of warfare, how important is it that we make those investments, and should we be prepared to make even more investments, and may have an even closer cooperative agreement with Israel and the IDF?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, thanks, Senator. Thanks for your work. I certainly will not comment on pending legislation. What I will say though is that we are great partners. We have done a number of things together, and Israel, as you pointed out, is a source of innovation—excuse me. And our work together I think will continue to create advantages for us in the future battle space. So we look forward to that.

Senator PETERS. Great. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I think this is probably the most important and most significant hearing that we have had here in the Congress this year. This is not only about the United States and our national security, it is about food security. As we heard earlier, we have not really talked about energy security, but there is a dynamic there as well. This is significant that this committee is weighing in to evaluate the supplemental request.

My hope is that we are able to take the contours of this, which is absolutely the imperative in the support for Ukraine. Absolutely the imperative in the support for Israel. Also recognizing that we need—we must do more when it comes to our own border here in this country. But also a piece that we have not really talked much about here today, and that is the Indo-Pacific piece. There is a small increment here or a smaller insignificant, in relative terms to the other areas, but recognizing that we will be doing some adjustment within those contours, those four pillars and how they intersect, and how they allow this proposal to move forward I think is so very, very important.

I was reading something this morning, Madam Chairman, as I was coming in. It was a statement that said something to the effect that: In the United States we lead through the power of our example, but we also need the example of our power. And that example of our power is manifested through our defense appropriations. And so as we are talking about the need for replenishment of our own stocks, and then what that can do to help Ukraine, what we must do then to help Israel.

Mr. Secretary, can you speak to the Indo-Pacific piece? There is \$2 billion included for state—for foreign military financing. In your

view, why is it imperative that we also include in this package an increment for the Indo-Pacific?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, thanks, Senator. As you know from our strategy, our National Defense Strategy, China is our pacing challenge. And as we look at China's behavior in the Indo-Pacific, we are increasingly concerned. So we must have the ability to continue to be able to deter China and to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. And so we are going to continue that work.

In this request we have asked you for \$3.3 billion to invest in our submarine industrial base, and that will help us with our efforts with AUKUS. And as you know, AUKUS is a generational capability that I think will do great things in enabling us to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific. We have also asked for \$3 billion or so—

Senator MURKOWSKI. Mr. Secretary?

Secretary AUSTIN [continuing]. To build more capacity in our industrial base so we can produce greater quantities of munitions and weapons. And so I think that investment is going to apply to the Indo-Pacific as well.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I appreciate that. Madam Chairman, a question has not yet been asked in this hearing about the impact, the implication of a long-term CR. I know we are talking about an emergency supplemental now, but our reality is in 18 short days. We will once again be beyond where our budget is.

Mr. Secretary, if we were to go to a long-term CR, given the state of the world right now and the role that we play in it, what would that mean?

Secretary AUSTIN. It would be—it would make things much more difficult for us, Senator. You know, you cannot buy back time. And this takes away the time we have to conduct—to effect new starts. The time that we have to go after specific projects, to invest in capabilities, and you just cannot buy that back. Our budget is directly linked to our strategy. And so if we do not have the full budget it is not—we are not able to execute the strategy to the degree that we planned it. And so I think this is critical and I think it is really, really important that we get an on-time appropriation if possible.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you very much.

Senator SINEMA.

Senator SINEMA. Thank you, Chair Murray and to Vice Chair Collins, for holding this hearing today, and for our witnesses for joining us. This is my first hearing as a Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and I am honored to further the Committee's bipartisan work.

The Senate Appropriations Committee serves as an example for the U.S. Senate and for the Congress for how lawmakers from both sides of the aisle can come together to advance priorities and further the values that unite us as Americans. And thanks to the leadership of the two Wonder Women who run our Committee, Chair Murray and Vice Chair Collins, the Senators who have crafted our Nation's spending priorities while supporting important priorities for communities in our States.

I have been proud to work with each of them on a variety of bipartisan bills to help our country thrive, from our Infrastructure Law, to CHIPS (Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors) and Science, Bipartisan Safer Communities Law, and many more, what we have shown is that how possible it is when folks come together to solve challenges and create opportunities. And I could not be more excited and proud to continue that work as a Member of the Appropriations Committee, while addressing Arizona's unique needs for our water future, our border security, defense, and housing affordability.

And there could be no better time than now to show our Committee's unity and Congress' commitment to advancing our shared values. America's adversaries are watching how we act and how we react, while actors across the globe that stand against everything we as Americans believe in actively trying to destabilize and destroy democracies. We must pass legislation to support Israel, Ukraine against Putin, and Arizona's border. Each of these three are urgent concerns and should advance together as they are all critical for both my State and for our country's national security.

China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are strengthening partnerships to undermine America's interests and create chaos, while Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, and Ukraine, a critical supporter of American's values, continue to be attacked.

At the same time, at home in Arizona, we know there is a clear crisis in our border, and cartels are using the porous border to smuggle migrants and dangerous drugs into our State, weakening our national security. So the supplemental request includes resources for Ukraine to fight against Putin, to support Israel in her time of need and border security all in one package. And I encourage my colleagues to join me in doing the bipartisan work that is necessary to address all of these priorities.

Secretary Austin, the request includes additional appropriations for Iron Dome and David's Sling replenishment. I agree we need to quickly surge production to support significant replenishment in Israel as soon as possible. Now, we have been talking about capacity shortfalls and revitalizing the defense industrial base for years. This request, however, only includes \$200 million to mitigate industrial base constraints to allow for faster production of weapons and equipment. Can you speak to the impact of this funding in the context of supporting multiple conflicts?

Secretary AUSTIN. Thanks, Senator. That \$200 million that you are speaking of is focused on our DPA efforts. And the larger amount that we are asking for to invest in the industrial base is \$3 billion. And so that is a component of the bigger number. And again, I think all the things that we are doing to replenish our stocks, to enable Ukraine to purchase new equipment from the United States, all those things also contribute. But we specifically asked for \$3 billion in this request to focus on the industrial base. And again, that \$200 million is a component of that, not the total amount.

Senator SINEMA. So the request includes provisions for the "expansion" of facilities for the purpose of increasing production of critical munitions. How quickly will these investments lead to increased capacity?

Secretary AUSTIN. It will vary. In some cases, you know, industry can move fairly quickly. In other cases for more sophisticated items like Javelins and Stingers and those kinds of things, it will take a bit longer. But we are working with industry each and every day to do everything we can to send the right signals so that they can invest in the right things and be able to expand where required.

So we have been supplying our Ukrainian allies with munitions to push back on Russian aggression for almost 2 years now. There are numerous reports that suggest that the manufacturing of those munitions and supplies is not yet keeping pace with demand, and that we are depleting our own stockpiles at a fairly significant rate. Of course, now we are going to send some of that inventory to Israel as well, which I am supportive of.

But as we look to support Israel and Taiwan, in addition to Ukraine, against the aggression that all three of them face, are you worried that this could put too much trust on our inventory? And if so, can targeting software that improves the accuracy of our munitions help? And is that software investment reflected in the supplemental package?

Secretary AUSTIN. Well, we have the most accurate and lethal weapons in the world, and in terms of our targeting, we are always looking for ways to do things better and more efficiently. But the specifics of those things, I will leave to my great airmen who, again, are the best in the world. In terms of the depletion of our stocks, again, as I have said a number of times here today, we will make sure that we maintain what is necessary to defend this country and protect our interests, and I will not change that direction of travel.

Senator SINEMA. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair MURRAY. Thank you. I want to thank all of our colleagues for a really thoughtful discussion. Secretary Austin, thank you for sharing your time and knowledge with us.

You know, if there is one takeaway from this conversation today, it should be that these global challenges that we face, the war in Ukraine, terrorism in Israel, humanitarian needs for those who are caught in the conflict, and the posturing of the Chinese government in the Indo-Pacific region, these challenges may be distinct, but they are all connected, and they all are urgent.

We have to respond to all of them in a comprehensive way that sends an unmistakable message to the world that American leadership is still strong and our resolve has not wavered. So I am going to make sure we take what we have learned today into account as we continue working together to craft a comprehensive security package that meets this pivotal moment, and lives up to our promises to stand by our allies, stand for democracy, and stand up for civilians.

I hope all of our colleagues will continue to work with me and Vice Chair Collins to make sure we avoid insufficient half measures, and get all of our allies the robust support that they need. And of course, I do believe we need to continue to work to address our domestic priorities like the childcare crisis, situation at the border, and more.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

That will end our hearing today. For any Senators who wish to ask additional questions, questions for the record will be due in 7 days on Tuesday, November 7th at 5:00 p.m. The hearing record will also remain open until then for Members who do wish to submit additional materials for the record.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Departments for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. ANTONY J. BLINKEN

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Secretary Blinken, I appreciate the steps that the Department of State has taken to address the passport backlog and shorten the wait times for people renewing or applying for passports. The supplemental appropriations request that Congress received from the Biden-Harris Administration includes transfer authorization to allow the State Department to use Consular revenue to address other funding needs in the region. How would drawing upon this transfer authority affect the State Department's ability to address the passport backlog and quickly process new applications?

Answer. Unforeseen emergencies may compel an urgent State Department response to protect life and safety. Congress previously authorized transfer of appropriations to the Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service account for such emergencies. The State Department is seeking comparable authority from the Consular and Border Security Program (CBSP) account.

The Department has no immediate plans to implement such a transfer, but any such transfer would duly consider planned CBSP spending on passport and visa services and be subject to any applicable consultation and notification requirements.

Question. If the transfer authority is authorized, how would the State Department ensure that Consular Affairs is able to continue to address the backlog in passport processing and maintain the resources necessary for full staffing at its processing centers?

Answer. The State Department has no immediate plans to implement such a transfer. It is a risk management contingency for future emergencies, and any such transfer would duly consider and protect planned consular operations and service improvements. There is ample funding in FY 2024 to continue the Bureau of Consular Affairs' (CA) aggressive hiring campaign.

CA is also ramping up IT investments, particularly for Online Passport Renewal's next phase. If needed, the transfer authority would draw from available carryforward and would not impact hiring, investments, and other consular operations.

Question. How would the State Department monitor staffing levels to ensure adequate customer service for Americans?

Answer. Staffing remains a top priority for the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA). CA's Consular and Border Security Program-funded domestic Civil Service and Foreign Service employment ceiling is currently set at 3,226. Each office and directorate in CA is allocated a set number of positions to fill with over a dozen recruitment options to choose from depending on position and need.

Set allocations help us monitor staffing levels to ensure adequate customer service for U.S. citizens, and we continue to expand recruitment to build a robust and diverse pipeline to meet current and future demand.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Congressional Notifications: The supplemental includes \$7.2 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), of which \$3.5 billion would go to Israel. This portion appears to waive the notification requirement for arms sales funded by this supplemental FMF for Israel. This would be an unprecedented removal of the requirements under the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) of 1976, which itself contains a mechanism for emergency cases. Can you explain the efficacy of exempting arms sales funded by the FMF portions of the supplemental from Congressional notification? Please elaborate on why the provisions in the AECA that permit an emergency notification waiving the notify-and-wait period for Congress are insufficient.

Answer. The provision does not waive the Congressional notification requirement for arms sales. The provision only impacts foreign military financing (FMF) and would allow the State Department, under extraordinary circumstances, to waive the requirement to notify that we are providing supplemental FMF to Israel's account. This would mirror how we treat FMF to Israel in the regular base budget. A number of countries, including Israel, do not require notification for FMF because they receive the exact amount of funding included in the Congressional budget justification.

Question. Israel Foreign Military Financing: The President's supplemental request notes that "up to \$3.5 billion may be available for the procurement in Israel of defense articles and defense services" for the purposes of Foreign Military Financing (FMF). Typically, only a portion—about 20% of FMF—has been allowed to be used this way for Israel. In this case, it appears to be the entire requested amount. Please confirm whether the entire \$3.5 billion in FMF requested for Israel can be spent on Israeli defense articles. If so, how does that benefit U.S. interests and manufacturers?

Answer. I anticipate the funding priority for supplemental foreign military financing will be replenishing consumables, which are being used in real time, to include spares for air-to-ground components and ammunition, most of which are produced in the United States. Most of Israel's requests continue to be for U.S.-produced defense articles. However, the State Department has requested maximum flexibility for local procurement to meet emergent requirements and ensure timely delivery, especially in light of delayed production and supply chain issues with U.S. industry.

Question. Civilian Harm: In August, the State Department announced the new Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance, under which U.S. officials will investigate reports of civilian harm by partner governments suspected of misusing U.S. weapons and recommend actions that could include suspension of arms sales. Can the Department of State provide assurance that if American weapons provided to Israel inflict civilian harm and violate human rights, that the agency will fully implement the Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance process?

Answer. Yes, the State Department is implementing the Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance globally, including with respect to the current conflict between Israel and Hamas, to review incidents of civilian harm potentially involving U.S.-furnished or authorized end-items. When credible information is received, the Department investigates the report and develops coordinated policy response recommendations to mitigate and prevent further civilian harm.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOE MANCHIN

Question. The national security supplemental funding request we've received totals over \$105 billion. We've also advanced the appropriations bills for both the Department of State (State Department) and the Department of Defense (DoD) which, together, total nearly \$900 billion. How are you ensuring we're not providing duplicative funding in either the national security supplemental request or the FY24 appropriations bills?

Answer. The State Department is seeking additional emergency supplemental funds to address national security needs that surpass our base appropriation. Our request includes assistance to enable Israel and Ukraine to defend themselves against horrific attacks, to strengthen our partners and bolster security in the Indo-Pacific, and to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people around the world. Without supplemental funding, we would have to choose between investing in core global programs, such as advancing democracy and health security, or addressing emergent crises.

Question. As you both know since the beginning of Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, the United States has provided over \$76 billion in justified funding to support Ukraine, and we annually provide over \$3 billion to Israel. The issue of accountability is highly important to ensure good stewardship of American resources, but also to disprove the disinformation campaigns that support the false narratives of Putin, Iran, and terrorist organizations such as Hamas. Can you each simply explain the Joint Strategic Oversight Plan that was announced this year by the Inspectors General for DoD, the State Department, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)?

Answer. Due to the statutory independence of the State Department's Office of the Inspector General, they will communicate directly with your office.

Question. We simply must do better to get accountability reporting out to the public, can each of your Departments put together a fact sheet that our office can use when discussing this topic with our constituents?

Answer. Due to the statutory independence of the State Department's Office of the Inspector General, they will communicate directly with your office.

Question. Secretary Blinken, this is a question for multiple agencies in the Federal Government, but your Department has the lead so I'm hoping to get a good answer from you. My position has been consistent that we should only put sanctions relief on the table after bad actors have demonstrated good behavior, but the Iran Deal went counter to this. Additionally, Iran reportedly has a fleet of 16 "ghost ships" which transport oil and evade sanctions by turning off their transponders to secretly transfer oil, but we have DoD, State, and Intelligence Community assets that keep a close eye on these ships. Why aren't we immediately seizing every oil tanker leaving Iran and selling that oil to finance part of the assistance we're sending to Israel?

Answer. This Administration has not lifted any sanctions on Iran, including those on its energy sector, and will continue to enforce U.S. sanctions on Iran. I must refer you to the Department of Justice for further comment on the seizure actions it has undertaken with respect to Iranian-origin oil.

Question. Do you need any legislative authority to do that?

Answer. I must refer to the Department of Justice on whether additional authorities would better facilitate these law enforcement actions to the extent consistent with international law.

Question. Recent open source reporting also says these ghost ships are also transporting Russian oil, why aren't we doing the same thing to finance Ukraine's assistance?

Answer. The Department does not have sanctions against exports of Russian oil to third countries; restricting the flow of Russian oil ultimately raises global prices and increases revenues back to Putin. The oil price cap policy works to constrain Russia's revenues while ensuring sufficient supply on global markets. Russia has responded to our pressure by turning to some service providers that lack a track record of safety and environmental standards. The Department is committed to working with allies, partners, and industry to reduce the heightened risks Russia is imposing on global maritime oil trade.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR GARY PETERS

Question. Secretary Blinken, what programs does the State Department have in place to address the root causes that are driving migration?

Answer. The Administration's FY 2024 budget request includes \$978.8 million in State Department and USAID foreign assistance to continue support for the Root Causes Strategy for Central America. These funds would sustain and expand programming to support a democratic, prosperous, and safe Central America, where people have access to economic opportunities; can live, work, and learn in safety and dignity; contribute and benefit from democratic processes; have confidence in public institutions; and enjoy opportunities to create futures for themselves and their families at home.

Question. How does this supplemental support those programs?

Answer. Funds in the border supplemental request would complement State Department and USAID programs by expanding migration integration support to host target communities, increase access to labor pathway mechanisms, and promote engagement with the private sector and multilateral partners to spur greater investment in integration initiatives.

These funds will address urgent needs to support safe, orderly, and humane migration in the hemisphere and bolster efforts to reduce irregular encounters at the U.S. southwest border.

Question. Secretary Blinken, does the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism have the necessary resources to respond to these increased threats?

Answer. Ambassador Lipstadt and her small team have done amazing work to counter global antisemitism with a relatively small budget. The State Department made full use of the \$1.5 million provided for the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism (J/SEAS) in FY 2023 to support the U.S. response to the rapid global rise of antisemitism. The FY 2024 request includes an additional position in J/SEAS to combat rising antisemitism globally. As the process moves forward, we greatly appreciate strong Congressional support for the Department's efforts to combat hate.

Question. Additionally, how is the State Department handling the responsibility of curbing anti-Muslim hate?

Answer. The State Department regularly denounces discrimination and abuses against Muslim individuals in our diplomacy. The Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF) advocates for the rights of Muslims as part of its religious freedom mandate under the IRF Act, the National Security Strategy, and E.O. 14091. The Department documents hatred against all religions in the annual IRF report, and we use the office's earmark for foreign assistance programs to support the rights of Muslims and other religious communities where they are targets of religiously motivated violence, discrimination, and inequality.

Question. Given that this supplemental package includes over \$9 billion in much needed humanitarian assistance for crises around the world, can you share how the State Department plans to continue providing lifesaving assistance to the people of Armenia?

Answer. Since 2020, the United States has provided more than \$23 million to the Nagorno-Karabakh response, including in Armenia. The State Department is in touch with the Government of Armenia and humanitarian organizations working on the ground, and we will continue to assess needs as the situation develops. Additionally, the Department will continue to urge Azerbaijan to guarantee ethnic Armenians who fled Nagorno-Karabakh a safe, dignified, and sustainable return, should they so choose, with protections of their rights and security.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY VICE CHAIR SUSAN M. COLLINS

Question. Secretary Blinken, how would abandoning Ukraine affect America's global standing and America's other international interests?

Answer. A lapse in U.S. support would immediately impact Ukraine's battlefield performance, compromise NATO Allies' security, call into question U.S. commitments to our core values and to a free and fair international system, and affirm for Putin that he can wait out Ukraine's supporters. The Department expects other security assistance donors would follow our lead, which is why our continued support is important to get Ukraine the security assistance it needs. It would also risk Allied and partner unity on sanctions and other economic measures meant to change Russia's calculus for waging this war.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI

Question. Earlier this month we saw your Director of Political-Military Affairs resign stating President Biden was repeating the same mistakes Washington has been making for decades, referring to the "blind support for one side". Additionally, the top concern that I've heard from my constituents in Alaska that oppose military support for Israel is that they don't want to support a conflict that creates so many civilian casualties. Obviously, civilian casualties are driving the strongest opposition to the United States helping Israel. When U.S. provided weapons systems to Ukraine, you all put certain limitations on the way they could be used, such as software that disallowed striking targets too far inside of Russia, in order to prevent the war from going in a direction that we didn't want it to go. Are you considering any methods to limit civilian casualties in the conflict between Israel and Hamas?

Answer. The U.S. government is committed to fully providing for Israel's self-defense. At the same time, the State Department has made clear to Israel that it matters how it conducts this war, that their forces must operate in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law, and the Department has urged Israel to take all possible steps to protect civilians. The Department also continues to discuss with Israel our own experience working to minimize civilian harm.

Question. The Israelis have stated their objective is to eliminate Hamas. This is a very difficult objective considering most would concur that the U.S objective to eliminate ISIS, the Taliban, and al-Quaida after 9/11 was unsuccessful because we didn't have a clear objective that would trigger the declaration of a successful mission. Have you identified meaningful objectives that we can assist Israel in completing that will move them closer to the cessation of this conflict?

Answer. Beyond any military operation, defeating Hamas requires defeating an idea. The way to do that is by presenting a better idea: a better future, with a clear vision and a path to achieve that vision. The Administration continues to believe that a negotiated two-state solution along the 1967 lines—with mutually agreed-to swaps—is the best way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BOOZMAN

Question. Secretary Blinken, we have a fentanyl crisis in this country. This supplemental includes funding to provide resources to stop the flow of fentanyl into the United States. Secretary Blinken, the State Department released a statement on 13 October that states, "Together, the United States and Mexico will intensify our efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking, particularly synthetic drugs such as fentanyl and their chemical precursors." DHS surge efforts, like Operation Blue Lotus and Four Horsemen, resulted in seizures of 12,500 pounds of fentanyl. Secretary Blinken, do you believe fentanyl trafficking into the United States is a national security issue?

Answer. The State Department consider the manufacturing, trafficking, and consumption of synthetic drugs like fentanyl as a top national security and public health priority. The Department launched a Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats to advance international action to counter global synthetic drug supply chains and demand. The Department use accountability tools to complement diplomatic efforts, including designating over 150 fentanyl-related targets through E.O. 14059 and announcing over \$85 million in fentanyl-related reward offers for those involved in the synthetic drug supply chain since 2021.

Question. Secretary Blinken, what efforts are being worked to enable first responders to detect the presence of fentanyl and emerging variants in real time prior to entering the US, at the border, and within the US?

Answer. The State Department learns from and incorporates DHS best practices into our foreign assistance programming. The Department work closely with DEA to identify the latest patterns and trends related to fentanyl trafficking and synthetic drug composition. Both DHS and DEA are actively engaged in the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats. The Department are also building Mexico's capacity to regulate and prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals, seize clandestine drug labs, interdict illicit drugs, and investigate and disrupt drug manufacturing, trafficking, and related illicit finance.

Question. Secretary Blinken, the cartels are manufacturing new fentanyl variants that make it harder to detect and counter. What efforts are being made to develop and field new technologies for fentanyl detection that can't be deceived by evolutions in the drug's chemistry, enable forensic determination of the source, and facilitate antidote administration in real time?

Answer. The State Department learns from and incorporates DEA and DHS best practices into our foreign assistance programming. The Department refer you to DEA's Special Testing Laboratory and DHS's science and technology experts for their assessments of new technology.

Question. Should the US be investing in developing and fielding these types of leading edge technologies?

Answer. The State Department learns from and incorporates DEA and DHS best practices into our foreign assistance programming. The Department refer you to DEA and DHS's science and technology experts for their assessments of new technology.

Question. As you know the impact from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and then Putin pulling out of the Black Sea Grain Initiative has drastically worsened the global food crisis at a time when the world is experiencing a hunger crisis of unprecedented proportions. Putin also continues to attack Ukrainian ports and grain while gaining record agricultural exports and profit at the expense of starving families. Would you agree that Putin is weaponizing food?

Answer. The State Department agree Putin is weaponizing food. Russia's war in Ukraine has exacerbated global food insecurity, disrupted grain and fertilizer markets, and increased the vulnerability of people around the world. Russia's unilateral termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and its ongoing destruction of Ukrainian grain and infrastructure manipulate markets and hurt the Global South. To counter Russia's weaponization of food, the Department is working with partners and allies to develop alternative routes for Ukraine to export its grain, including through EU solidarity lanes and Danube ports.

Question. Even with Ukraine's new humanitarian corridor to complement the Danube River ports and other solidarity lanes, are there any opportunities for international collaboration or partnerships that could provide additional security and protection for Ukraine's grain shipments?

Answer. With the Kremlin disinterested in resuming the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the Department continue to engage Türkiye and the UN as they look for an alternative that could provide a more predictable Black Sea shipping option than the humanitarian corridor alone, which more than 150 vessels have traversed. Mines and security remain a significant concern and three NATO members—

Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Romania—have agreed on a joint mine sweeping force to improve the corridor’s safety. The United States and our partners continue contributions to bolster air defense at Ukraine’s ports.

Question. What is the administration’s plan for ensuring humanitarian aid to Gaza is not diverted to Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

Answer. The Administration provides humanitarian assistance through trusted international and local partners in a manner consistent with applicable U.S. law. The United States has robust oversight systems in place to prevent diversion, and we require our humanitarian partners to have the same. Israel also monitors and approves all humanitarian assistance going into Gaza and is tracking how it is distributed inside Gaza.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

Question. In the supplemental request materials received by Congress, there are a few buckets of funding that appear to include humanitarian aid for Ukraine, Israel, for Gaza, and for “countries impacted by the situation” in those places. Which other impacted countries would be receiving these humanitarian funds?

Answer. The majority of the requested humanitarian assistance funds will support global humanitarian needs, such as providing access to life-saving food assistance, sanitation, health care, safe drinking water, and shelter. The U.S. government will be able to continue responding to unprecedented levels of need from natural disasters and conflicts, from floods in Libya to conflict in Sudan; the flight of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh to earthquakes in Afghanistan, Türkiye, and Syria; and the recent impacts of Hurricane Otis in Mexico and Tropical Cyclone Lola in Vanuatu.

Question. If you were to receive the requested \$5.7 billion under International Disaster Assistance and the \$3.5 billion under Migration and Refugee Assistance, how would that funding ultimately be spent among Israel, Ukraine, Gaza, and other countries impacted?

Answer. While some of the requested funds address the acute humanitarian needs inside Ukraine and Gaza, the vast majority of the requested humanitarian assistance funds will provide vulnerable populations around the world with access to life-saving food, nutrition assistance, sanitation, health care, safe drinking water, shelter, and other basic needs. This assistance will enable the U.S. government to respond to new disasters as they arise. Major crises to be addressed include those in Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.

Question. For aid provided to the Palestinians, which countries or organizations are responsible for handling delivery?

Answer. UNRWA has a global mandate to assist Palestinian refugees. UNRWA also serves as the provider of last resort for other Palestinians in need, including in Gaza as well as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank. Other UN agencies, international organizations, and NGOs also deliver humanitarian assistance to Palestinians. Regional partners, including the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, help facilitate aid delivery. Israel monitors and inspects all humanitarian assistance going into Gaza and is tracking how it is distributed inside Gaza.

Question. What is the UN’s role in the provision of assistance to the Palestinians?

Answer. UNRWA provides humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees and other vulnerable Palestinians—both in Gaza and the West Bank as well as in three other regional areas of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. UNRWA also coordinates the work of other UN agencies in Gaza, given its unique presence and capacity there. Other UN agencies, such as UNICEF and the WFP, have scaled up their own assistance to civilians in Gaza since October 7 and also coordinate with UNRWA in other locations, including Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank.

Question. Is UNRWA a reliable partner in this effort?

Answer. Yes. For this reason, the United States is the top donor to UNRWA, providing \$422 million against its 2023 appeals. UNRWA is the only UN agency with the experience, footprint, and personnel necessary to deliver aid rapidly, effectively, and safely. Since the onset of this crisis, UNRWA has supported millions of vulnerable people in Gaza despite unprecedented challenges, including the staff’s own displacement, and while maintaining operations elsewhere. UNRWA follows strict procedures to maintain neutrality and prevent the transfer of supplies to Hamas or other terrorists.

Question. What visibility does the U.S. have into how humanitarian items are used on the ground?

Answer. The U.S. government has robust monitoring processes to ensure humanitarian relief reaches those in need and to mitigate the risk of material support to Hamas or other terrorists. These include vetting implementing partners and their

key personnel; monitoring partner activities directly and through third parties; conducting post-distribution surveys; and coordinating closely with Israel, which monitors and inspects all humanitarian assistance going into Gaza and is tracking how it is distributed inside Gaza. The 2023–2024 U.S.-UNRWA Framework for Cooperation lays out oversight commitments.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. On the Necessity of Transparency for U.S. Foreign Assistance to Hamas- Controlled Gaza: I first posed questions (1) and (2) directly to you via a letter that I sent to you on October 26, 2023. In that letter, I requested that “the State Department and USAID fully and faithfully respond to the two questions below prior to Secretary Blinken’s appearances before the Senate Appropriations Committee hearing titled ‘A Review of the National Security Supplemental Request’ on October 31, 2023.” During the Senate Appropriations hearing on October 31, 2023, Secretary Blinken committed to providing full and faithful answers to two questions below. I therefore am repeating the questions so that the Senate Appropriations Committee receives answers to these questions that are relevant to responding to the Administration’s request for a National Security Supplemental. Although Hamas—a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)—controls Gaza, the United States has continued to send U.S. foreign assistance to Gaza. For each of the following appropriations laws, I request the Department of State and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide the total amount awarded—directly or indirectly—to any entity in Gaza, including whether the entity in Gaza was a recipient or sub recipient:

- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division F of Public Law 116–6,
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division G of Public Law 116–94,
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division K of Public Law 116–260,
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division K of Public Law 117–103, and
- Amounts provided by Titles III, IV, V, and VI of Division K of Public Law 117–328.

Answer. Thank you for your October 25 letter to me and Administrator Power concerning the use of U.S. foreign assistance. The U.S. government considers the responsible use of all taxpayer funds to be of the utmost importance. U.S. economic and humanitarian assistance programs in Gaza are designed to bolster stability for both Palestinians and Israelis through the provision of life-saving assistance and by improving the lives of millions of Palestinians, with the ultimate goal of promoting a negotiated two-state solution. The Department is working to provide a response to your letter soon.

Question. For each award provided—directly or indirectly—to an entity in Gaza, including whether the entity in Gaza was a recipient or sub recipient, under the appropriation laws described in question (1), I request the Department of State and USAID to provide:

- the total amount awarded,
- the source of the appropriation,
- whether the amount has been obligated, and
- what amounts remain unexpended.

Answer. The response to your letter will be transmitted soon.

Question. On the Administration’s Support for “Humanitarian Pauses” in Israel’s War Against Hamas and Other Iran-Backed Palestinian Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) in Gaza: Please clearly explain your understanding of the difference between a “ceasefire,” which the Administration has said it does not support, and a “humanitarian pause,” for which the Administration has repeatedly advocated.

Answer. Humanitarian pauses are temporary, localized stoppages to fighting aimed to permit civilians to depart areas of active hostilities, allow for or increase the flow of aid, and enable hostage releases. Alternatively, a ceasefire is an indefinite cessation of military action which, in this case, would restrict Israel’s ability to defend itself from Hamas terrorists. The Administration’s position is that a ceasefire right now would only benefit Hamas by giving them time to regroup and plot new attacks.

Question. Can you describe what kind of “pause” in Israeli military operations would not benefit Hamas by giving them time to regroup?

Answer. Humanitarian pauses of limited duration allowing for the release of hostages and/or the establishment of humanitarian corridors would not give Hamas the same time to regroup that it might have otherwise exploited under a ceasefire. The pauses would also serve other strategic purposes.

Question. Please list other examples where any state besides the Jewish state of Israel was pressured to agree to “humanitarian pauses” to protect civilians whom its adversary was purposefully using as human shields and where the “pause” was not conditioned on any change in behavior by the adversary.

Answer. Humanitarian pauses or truces aimed at temporarily facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance have previously been observed in numerous contexts around the world—for example in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Syria, and Yemen. In those cases, pauses were often pursued despite state and/or nonstate armed actors’ inconsistent respect for the protection of civilians and adherence to the principle of distinction. In the case of Israel, the humanitarian pause was contingent on a change in Hamas’s behavior, namely the release of hostages.

Question. On the Administration’s Waiver Enabling Iraq to Provide Funds to Iran: How much money has been spent out of these previously sanctioned funds since the July waiver?

Answer. The Administration continues to strictly enforce U.S. sanctions on Iran. Iran can only request that proceeds from Iraqi energy purchases be sent to third parties for humanitarian and other non-sanctionable transactions. None of the funds will ever enter Iran. Between July 18 and November 14, approximately \$848.3 million was spent from Iran’s restricted funds held in Iraq. This includes approximately \$732.2 million for foodstuffs and approximately \$118.4 million for Iranian dues owed to the KSA-based Islamic Development Bank.

Question. Since October 7, has the Biden Administration refrozen all funds in Iraq, Oman, France, and Germany? If so, by what means?

Answer. Iranian funds held in Iraq or elsewhere remain restricted. Along with trusted partners, we have established rigorous oversight mechanisms so that these restricted funds can only be used for humanitarian trade, meaning food, medicine, medical devices, and agricultural products from third-party vendors, as well as certain other non-sanctionable purposes with separate authorization by the U.S. government. None of the funds will ever enter Iran. It is in the U.S. interest that this money be spent from Iran’s accounts held overseas to reduce Iran’s leverage over Iraq.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. LLOYD J. AUSTIN III

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOE MANCHIN

Question. As you both know since the beginning of Putin’s illegal war in Ukraine, the United States has provided over \$76 billion in justified funding to support Ukraine, and we annually provide over \$3 billion to Israel.

The issue of accountability is highly important to ensure good stewardship of American resources, but also to disprove the disinformation campaigns that support the false narratives of Putin, Iran, and terrorist organizations such as Hamas.

Can you each simply explain the Joint Strategic Oversight Plan that was announced this year by the Inspectors General for DoD, the State Department, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)?

Answer. In September 2023, the Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency announced the selection, effective October 18, 2023, of the Honorable Robert P. Storch, the Department of Defense Inspector General, as the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) for Operation Atlantic Resolve, which includes U.S. Government activities related to Ukraine, in accordance with the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. Section 419, previously found at 5, U.S.C. App, Section 8L).

Section 419 of the IG Act requires the Lead IG to engage in a strategic oversight planning process to ensure comprehensive oversight of U.S. Government activities related to overseas contingency operations. During the oversight planning process, the Lead IG agencies developed strategic oversight areas (SOA), identified as 1) Security Assistance and Coordination, 2) Non-security Assistance and Coordination, and 3) Management and Operations. The Lead IG staffs considered many factors during this process, including U.S. Government and partner objectives; the amount of resources appropriated or otherwise made available to support military, diplomatic, and humanitarian activities; major departmental management challenges identified by each of the Lead IG agencies; and feedback from departmental and congressional stakeholders. The Joint Strategic Oversight Plan issued by the Inspec-

tors General for the Department of Defense, State, and U.S. Agency for International Development (collectively referred to as the Lead IG agencies) on October 26, 2023, represents a steadfast commitment to work together to provide Congress and the American public with transparent, timely, and comprehensive oversight to ensure that U.S. assistance is reaching intended beneficiaries, achieving intended goals, and free from fraud, waste, and abuse. It describes specific projects that Lead IG and partner oversight agencies intend to conduct during FY 2024.

Question. We simply must do better to get accountability reporting out to the public, can each of your Departments put together a fact sheet that our office can use when discussing this topic with our constituents?

Answer. A fact sheet for the Joint Strategic Oversight Plan is enclosed with this submission. It highlights strategic oversight areas for Operation Atlantic Resolve and describes the on-going and planned oversight work of the Lead IG Agencies. The DoD OIG also welcomes an opportunity to provide further information on specific oversight issues of interest to the Committee and Senator Manchin.



JSOP-OAR IN BRIEF

The annual joint strategic oversight plan for Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), including U.S. Government activities related to Ukraine, is a whole-of-government effort involving more than 20 agencies. As the Lead IG agencies, the DoD, State, and USAID OIGs will work closely together to deliver comprehensive and effective oversight of OAR, including the wider U.S. response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. OAR in Europe will continue into FY 2024. This joint strategic oversight plan contains 96 ongoing and planned oversight projects for FY 2024.

Lead IG Designation

In 2014, the United States launched OAR as a response to Russia's military actions in Ukraine. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the OAR mission has grown. In July 2023, the U.S. President signed an executive order approving the mobilization of select reserve forces in support of OAR. In August 2023, the U.S. Secretary of Defense designated OAR as an overseas contingency operation.

The Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD IG as the Lead IG for OAR, effective October 18, 2023. The Lead IG coordinates oversight efforts with the State and USAID IGs along with other partner agencies. The DoD IG selected the State IG as the Associate Lead IG for OAR.

Lead IG Oversight Objectives

- Inform Congress and the public about ongoing contingency operations and the complex challenges facing the United States and its partners
- Advise the DoD and State on the effectiveness of their security assistance missions, and State and USAID on the effectiveness of their diplomatic, governance, stabilization, development, and humanitarian assistance missions
- Promote the integrity, efficiency, and accountability of U.S. Government operations and associated funding by deterring fraud, waste, and abuse
- Assess the impact of U.S. Government programs, including the capacity of host nation governments to sustain these programs, to improve U.S.-provided assistance and outcomes
- Evaluate the safety and security of facilities occupied by U.S. military and civilian personnel

FY 2024 OAR Oversight Highlights

ONGOING AND PLANNED PROJECTS: 96

Security Cooperation and Coordination: 35

- DoD OIG evaluations of the DoD's **routine and enhanced end-use monitoring** of military equipment provided to Ukraine
- DoD OIG evaluation of the DoD's **replenishment and management of 155mm high explosive ammunition**
- DoD OIG audits of the DoD's **training** of Ukrainian Armed Forces
- State OIG evaluation of the implementation of the interagency strategy to **counter illicit diversion of advanced conventional weapons** in Eastern Europe
- State OIG audit of the **Global Threat Reduction Program** in Eastern Europe
- Army Audit Agency audit on **missile replenishment and replacement**
- Commerce OIG audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's **enforcement of Russia and Belarus export controls**
- GAO audit on **cyber operations** with allies and partners in Europe
- Treasury OIG audit of Office of Foreign Assets Control's **Ukraine/-Russia related sanctions** program

Non-Security Assistance and Coordination: 30

- State OIG audit of **humanitarian assistance** to Ukraine
- State OIG audit of State's **anti-corruption programs and activities** in Eastern Europe
- USAID OIG audit of USAID's **energy activities** in Ukraine
- USAID OIG evaluations of USAID's **direct budget support** to Ukraine through the World Bank's trust funds
- USAID OIG audit of USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia's **Programming to counter democratic backsliding**

Management and Operations: 31

- DoD OIG audit of the DoD's **execution of funds** provided for assistance to Ukraine
- DoD OIG audit of DoD's controls for **validating and responding to Ukraine's requests for support**
- State OIG audit of **disposition of defensive equipment and armored vehicles in advance of evacuations** at U.S. Embassies in Kyiv and Kabul
- State OIG audit of **emergency action planning** at selected U.S. Embassies in the Baltic States
- USAID OIG evaluation of USAID's **policies and practices following ordered departures**
- USAID OIG review of USAID's **Ukraine staffing**
- GAO audit of **DoD funding** in support of Ukraine

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

Chair MURRAY. With that, the committee stands adjourned. [Whereupon, at 1:08 p.m., Tuesday, October 31, the hearing was concluded, and the committee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]