

**MANAGEMENT FAMILY FISCAL YEAR 2026  
BUDGET POSTURE**

---

**HEARING**

OF THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH  
AFRICA

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

---

July 16, 2025

---

**Serial No. 119–29**

---

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov>, <http://docs.house.gov>, or <http://www.govinfo.gov>

---

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

62–443PDF

WASHINGTON : 2026

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BRIAN J. MAST, Florida, *Chairman*

|                                               |                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas                      | GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York, <i>Ranking Member</i> |
| CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey              | BRAD SHERMAN, California                          |
| JOE WILSON,, South Carolina                   | GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia                      |
| SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania                     | WILLIAM R. KEATING, Massachusetts                 |
| DARRELL ISSA, California                      | AMI BERA, California                              |
| TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee                       | JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas                             |
| MARK E. GREEN, Tennessee                      | DINA TITUS, Nevada                                |
| ANDY BARR, Kentucky                           | TED LIEU, California                              |
| RONNY JACKSON, Texas                          | SARA JACOBS, California                           |
| YOUNG KIM, California                         | SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Florida               |
| MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR, Florida                 | GREG STANTON, Arizona                             |
| BILL HUIZENGA, Michigan                       | JARED MOSKOWITZ, Florida                          |
| AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, American Samoa | JONATHAN L. JACKSON, Illinois                     |
| WARREN DAVIDSON, Ohio                         | SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE, California                  |
| JAMES R. BAIRD, Indiana                       | JIM COSTA, California                             |
| THOMAS H. KEAN, JR, New Jersey                | GABE AMO, Rhode Island                            |
| MICHAEL LAWLER, New York                      | KWEISI MFUME, Maryland                            |
| CORY MILLS, Florida                           | PRAMILA JAYAPAL, Washington                       |
| RICHARD McCORMICK, Georgia                    | GEORGE LATIMER, New York                          |
| KEITH SELF, Texas                             | JOHNNY OLSZEWSKI JR, Maryland                     |
| RYAN K. ZINKE, Montana                        | JULIE JOHNSON, Texas                              |
| JAMES C. MOYLAN, Guam                         | SARAH McBRIDE, Delaware                           |
| ANNA PAULINA LUNA, Florida                    | BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER, Illinois                 |
| JEFFERSON SHREVE, Indiana                     | MADELEINE DEAN, Pennsylvania                      |
| SHERI BIGGS, South Carolina                   |                                                   |
| MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER, Washington               |                                                   |
| RYAN MACKENZIE, Pennsylvania                  |                                                   |

James Langenderfer, *Majority Staff Director*  
Sajit Gandhi, *Minority Staff Director*

---

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

MICHAEL LAWLER, New York, *Chairman*

|                                 |                                                            |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| JOE WILSON, South Carolina      | SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Florida, <i>Ranking Member</i> |
| DARRELL ISSA, California        | BRAD SHERMAN, California                                   |
| TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee         | GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia                               |
| RONNY JACKSON, Texas            | WILLIAM KEATING, Massachusetts                             |
| THOMAS KEAN, JR, New Jersey     | KWEISI MFUME, Maryland                                     |
| RYAN ZINKE, Montana             | GEORGE LATIMER, New York                                   |
| MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER, Washington |                                                            |

Sarah Miller, *Subcommittee Staff Director*

# C O N T E N T S

## REPRESENTATIVES

|                                                                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Opening Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Michael Lawler .....                   | Page<br>1 |
| Opening Statement of Subcommittee Ranking Member Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick ..... | 2         |

## WITNESSES

|                                                                                               |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Statement of Hon. Jose Cunningham, Acting Under Secretary (M), U.S. Department of State ..... | 4 |
| Prepared Statement .....                                                                      | 6 |

## APPENDIX

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Hearing Notice .....     | 26 |
| Hearing Minutes .....    | 27 |
| Hearing Attendance ..... | 28 |



## **MANAGEMENT FAMILY FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET POSTURE**

---

**Wednesday, July 16, 2025**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Michael Lawler (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. LAWLER. The Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa will come to order.

The purpose of this hearing is to assess the budgetary posture and strategic direction of the State Department's management family for Fiscal Year 2026.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL LAWLER**

Today, we convene to conduct oversight of the Department of State's management family and review its budgetary posture and strategic priorities for Fiscal Year 2026.

I want to thank our witness, Mr. Jose Cunningham, for appearing before us. Mr. Cunningham is serving as both the acting Under Secretary for Management and the Assistant Secretary for Administration.

The Bureau of Management is the backbone of the State Department. It touches every element of America's diplomatic presence, from safeguarding our personnel and Americans abroad to adjudicating passports and visas to managing our IT, our embassies, and our financial systems.

These responsibilities are vital to our national security and we appreciate the hard work of the men and women who make up the M family.

But as we look ahead we must ask whether the department's management architecture is fit for purpose in a world of rapid geopolitical change, digital threats, and rising demands for accountability.

Is our current structure delivering results or is it weighed down by redundancy, fragmentation, and outdated systems?

We'll be examining several core issues today: the department's ability to modernize its technology, financial management and administrative systems; how the department is coordinating across bureaus to reduce duplication and deliver cost effective services;

whether key security functions like counter intelligence and cyber security are integrated and mission ready; and how the department is using flexible funding tools like the Working Capital Fund to support shared services and meet evolving global threats.

We'll also consider whether structural reforms are needed to consolidate core management functions, streamline executive offices, and align financial oversight with policy priorities so that every taxpayer dollar advances our mission abroad.

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of a strong and collaborative partnership between Congress and the State Department. When we work hand in hand, grounded in open, timely, and transparent communication, we are best positioned to advance our shared national security and foreign policy goals.

Congress stands ready to support the department's mission and we look forward to continuing that work together.

Mr. Cunningham, we look forward to your testimony and to a robust discussion of how we can work together to ensure the State Department is as agile, secure, and results driven as the world demands.

With that, I now recognize the ranking member, my colleague from Florida, Representative Cherrilus-McCormick, for her opening statement.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER SHEILA CHERRILUS-McCORMICK**

Mrs. CHERRILUS-McCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for being here. Thank you to Under Secretary Collins for coming here today and shedding some light.

Congress has been left in the dark as to the vision and processes at the department, leading to many questions. For example, last Friday 1,300 dedicated professionals at the State Department were handed reduction in force announcements.

Several questions come to mind including what notices were given, what was the process or the matrices to determine who was being let go, and what is the strategy behind these RIFs.

These are the answers Congress is looking for and have not heard from the department. The truth is Congress has not seen any road map or coherent strategy. We know more from the media about what's going on in the department. Without the department filling in the gaps we only hear about the mishaps.

For example, even the basic administration of the RIFs was flawed. Employees were mistakenly issued RIFs notices by the department's own admission. Many still don't know where they stand, especially those on detail, other agencies, or here on the Capitol.

Others remain overseas waiting for answers. Moreover, reports were—reports were at our hearing saying that these notices, or RIFs, were being given just hours—only hours to pack up their belongings, saying their goodbyes and to leave.

No explanation, no performance reviews, no recognitions for their service—in some cases, not even the dignity of a proper farewell.

Worse still, some of these individuals were working abroad on assignment away from their families, serving our country and now they're stranded.

Some have been cutoff from their official emails. Their government passports have been confiscated and they have no clear way to get home.

These are the Americans, our public servants. They have been abandoned by their own country. This isn't just about policy; it's about the people who are implementing the policy.

And, yet, today we will hear from this administration about how this was all part of a strategic reorganization. We hear buzz words like rightsizing, efficiency and accountability. For these words to be true, we can't wait to hear about the systems and the harm mitigation protocol that were being used before these RIF decisions were made.

The Trump administration's own staff has boasted that the reorganization process was led by 10 people. We know firsthand that many of those people have no prior experiences in foreign affairs policy.

They don't know what makes an embassy work, what makes a regional or functional team successful. This administration chose to act recklessly, rush a reorganization without experts' input and fire over 1,000 State Department staff.

For all we know they will be begged to return, just like we have seen in the countless other cases where DOGE-inspired cuts fired essential personnel and experts only to bring them back days or weeks later.

It is important to remember at this time of global unrest we should be doing everything we can to strengthen, not weaken, our diplomatic workforce.

When the world is on fire, you don't put the firefighters off the truck. You equip them, you support them, you thank them. But that's not what's happening here today.

These RIFs cut deeply into the heart of our diplomatic workforce. We're not just losing positions. We are, in fact, losing people, people who have spent years, sometimes decades, building expertise in areas that are critical to our national security, nuclear non-proliferation, democratic governance, climate resilience, and regional stability.

We're losing young professionals who chose public service over private sector salaries because they believed in something bigger than themselves, the American mission, diplomacy and democracy, people who missed birthdays, anniversaries and at times with their loved ones to represent this country abroad and now they've been told they are expendable.

We have heard particularly alarming stories about cuts to consulate affairs despite repeated assurances from Secretary Rubio that other passport proceedings would not be affected.

With the dismantling of the State Department workforce and USAID also came the dismantling of trust, expertise, and the spirit of Americans working at the State Department.

Rebuilding this destruction will take years. We look forward to hear from you all of the procedures and processes in place and look forward to working with you to help rebuild them.

I yield back.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you to the ranking member.

Other members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

We are pleased to have acting Under Secretary Jose Cunningham before us today. Your full statements will be made part of the record and I'll ask that you keep your spoken remarks to 5 minutes in order to allow time for member questions.

I now recognize acting Under Secretary Cunningham for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOSE CUNNINGHAM, ACTING UNDER  
SECRETARY (M), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee (inaudible). I'm honored to appear before this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the U.S. Department of State's management family bureaus.

As Assistant Secretary of Administration at the State Department and performing the duties of Under Secretary for Management, I'm honored to present our budget priorities, which are designed to ensure the department fulfills its mission and that every dollar we spend and every action we take results in measurable, positive outcomes for the American people.

Every day the 13 bureaus and offices that make up the department's management family play a critical role in supporting our domestic and global workforce, our logistics, facilities, and security that underpin core diplomatic functions and ensure the department is equipped to deliver its mission effectively and efficiently.

Of the \$28.5 billion total request the department is requesting \$11.3 billion for diplomatic engagement resources to fund the department's principal operating accounts and to provide necessary protection for the department's people, property, and data.

Through our main operating accounts M family bureaus and offices enable operations for all department bureaus and offices and over 275 posts worldwide.

Our embassies around the world are the front lines of diplomacy, representing the United States to the world while providing critical information and identifying opportunities and challenges long before they reach Washington, DC.

The M family is reviewing and reforming our operational capabilities and is focused on quality, speed, and efficiency to streamline and focus on the global workforce.

A good example of this is the department's continued commitment to our review of high-threat high-risk posts through the SCORE process where we are weighing decisions on how and whether to maintain U.S. diplomatic presence in dangerous locations against the policy rewards of being there.

Another example is how the M family is using AI and data-driven tools most recently to aid the Middle East Task Force in identifying risk and potential critical assets and data.

Our Office of Foreign Missions within the M family employs reciprocity to help ensure our personnel abroad are treated fairly and equitably by receiving states and works to protect Americans from abuses of privileges and immunities by foreign diplomats in the

United States, all while safeguarding our critical national interests at home.

I am personally working with our interagency partners to maintain comprehensive and effective continuity of government capabilities.

Taxpayers deserve a State Department that serves the American people and champions the safety, security, and prosperity of our Nation. In addition to our request for appropriated resources the department plans to use \$5.5 billion collected in consular fees for enhanced visa process vetting and passport enhancements.

As Secretary Rubio has stated, a visa is not a right. It is a privilege. Individuals seeking entry into the United States must demonstrate that their presence will not harm our national interests.

We anticipate 21.8 million Americans will apply for passports in 2026, and to ensure the needs of American people are met Consular Affairs seeks to advance its information technology infrastructure, streaming—including streamlining passport applications through our highly successful online passport renewal platform.

Consular Affairs is well equipped as we prepare for major events like the FIFA World Cup that's going to be in 2026, the 2028 Olympics, and America 250.

We continue to address global challenges as demonstrated by providing information and assistance to more than 27,000 individuals during the Israel-Iran conflict.

I look forward to working with Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and the entire committee on the State Department authorization bill.

The Secretary has already begun the essential initiative of restructuring the department to align our resources with policy priorities. This effort will eliminate redundant functions, enhance accountability, and empower our people to deliver results.

Every bureau and office will have a clear responsibility and mission. I look forward to answering your questions today and hearing the committee's thoughts, particularly as you're writing your State Department authorization bill, and I thank you for your time and attention.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cunningham follows:]

**Assistant Secretary José Cunningham**  
**Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary (M) for Management**  
**Testimony**  
**Before the HFAC MENA Subcommittee**  
**Regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget**  
**July 16, 2025**

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the U.S. Department of State's management family bureaus. Thank you to Chairman Lawler and Ranking Member Cherfilus-McCormick – I look forward to speaking with you today. As Assistant Secretary of Administration at the State Department and performing the duties of the Under Secretary for Management, I am honored to present our budget priorities, which are designed to ensure the Department fulfills its mission and that every dollar we spend and every action we take results in measurable, positive outcomes for the American people.

The Department's overall FY 2026 budget request of \$28.5 billion reflects the Administration's commitment to cutting the federal deficit, while improving the return on investment for the American people. This budget aggressively realigns resources toward objectives that will make America stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

Every day, the 13 bureaus and offices that make up the Department's Management (M) family play a critical role in supporting our domestic and global workforce, logistics, facilities, and security that underpin core diplomatic functions and ensure the Department of State is equipped to deliver its mission effectively and efficiently. Of the \$28.5 billion total, the Department is requesting \$11.3 billion for Diplomatic Engagement resources to fund the Department's principal operating accounts, and to provide necessary protection for the Department's people, property, and data. For years, the Department's organizational structure expanded in size and costs with offices and positions that were not fiscally sustainable. The request includes sufficient funding to pay and train a streamlined and effective workforce, in a manner consistent with the Department's statutory requirements. If enacted, it will advance key national

security priorities. In alignment with the Administration's commitment to fiscal responsibility, our budget request takes into account savings from Department-wide contracts and grants reviews. I commit to you that resources will be directed toward the Administration's highest priority initiatives.

Through our main operating accounts, M family bureaus and offices enable operations for all Department bureaus and offices and over 275 posts worldwide. Abroad, our embassies around the world are the front lines of diplomacy, representing the United States of America to the world while providing critical information and identifying opportunities and challenges long before they reach Washington, D.C. Empowering these missions is essential to creating a more nimble and effective Department that delivers results for the nation. Our requests for Worldwide Security Protection and Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance seek to ensure the continued security of our personnel operating in challenging environments. With FY 2026 funding, we will continue to deliver secure, resilient, and modern technology globally in support of the Department's diplomatic mission and workforce with a state-of-the-art federated IT and cybersecurity service model. The FY 2026 request also aims to consolidate USAID's real property footprint with State's.

The M family is reviewing and reforming our operational capabilities and is focused on quality, speed, and efficiency to streamline and focus on the global workforce. A good example of this is the Department's continued commitment to our review of high threat, high risk posts through the SCORE process – weighing decisions on how and whether to maintain the U.S. diplomatic presence in dangerous locations against the policy rewards of being there. Another example is how the M family is using AI and data-driven tools, most recently to aid the Middle East taskforce in identifying risk and protecting critical assets and data. Our Office of Foreign Missions within the M family employs reciprocity to help ensure our personnel abroad are treated fairly and equitably by receiving states and works to protect Americans from abuses of privileges and immunities by foreign diplomats in the United States all while safeguarding our critical national interests at home. I am also personally working with our interagency partners to maintain comprehensive and effective Continuity of Government capabilities.

Taxpayers deserve a State Department that serves the American people and champions the safety, security, and prosperity of our nation. In addition to our

request for appropriated resources, the Department plans to use \$5.5 billion collected in consular fees for enhanced visa process vetting and passport enhancements. As Secretary Rubio has stated, a visa is not a right; it is a privilege. Individuals seeking entry into the United States must demonstrate that their presence will not harm our national interests. We anticipate 21.8 million Americans to apply for passports in 2026. To ensure the needs of the American people are met, Consular Affairs seeks to advance its information technology infrastructure, including streamlining passport applications through the highly successful Online Passport Renewal platform. In addition to its 29 Passport Agencies and Centers around the country, Consular Affairs also intends to open six new passport agencies domestically to expand capacity, reduce in-person wait times, and expedite the issuance of U.S. passports and passport cards. Consular Affairs is well-equipped as we prepare for major events like the FIFA World Cup in 2026, the 2028 Olympics, and America250, along with the anticipated 12.4 million nonimmigrant visas in FY 2026. At the same time, we continue to address global challenges, as demonstrated by providing information and assistance to over 27,000 individuals during the Israel-Iran conflict. These efforts underscore our commitment to both domestic and international priorities.

M family bureaus are critical to the successful transition of USAID foreign assistance programs to the Department. Our request reflects the planned transition of USAID personnel and systems to the Department. In addition to personnel, IT, and facilities resources, we have requested a new general provision that would provide the Secretary with broad flexibility to realign residual USAID programs, funding, and responsibilities to the Department. This provision is essential to optimizing operations and enhancing the Department's ability to manage foreign assistance with accountability and efficiency.

I look forward to working with Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks and the entire committee on the State Department authorization bill. The Secretary has already begun the essential initiative of restructuring the Department to align our resources with policy priorities. This effort will eliminate redundant functions, enhance accountability, and empower our people to deliver results. Every bureau and office will have a clear responsibility and mission.

The FY 2026 budget request reflects our commitment to advancing the national interests of the United States. It prioritizes safety, strength, and prosperity while ensuring that the M family bureaus and offices are equipped to deliver on the Department's mission.

I look forward to answering your questions and hearing the Committee's thoughts, particularly as you are writing your State Department authorization bill. Thank you for your time and attention.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Mr. Cunningham. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. Cunningham, the State Department's Fiscal Year 2026 budget request includes authority to obligate \$517 million in projected passport application and execution fees, and Secretary Rubio noted that, quote, "Every decision on a visa application is a national security decision," end quote.

Is part of this funding request to deal with expanded social media vetting, for instance?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you for that important question, Chairman.

One of the great joys of my job is being able to work with Consular Affairs. The professionals that we have on a global basis are doing incredible work and you are absolutely right to point out that national security is first and foremost as we move forward.

The Consular Affairs team works diligently to make sure that we are combating passport and visa fraud. We are also addressing issues related to human trafficking and then, of course, we work closely with Homeland Security to ensure that we have got the right kind of entry qualifications for anybody who is coming to the United States.

Part of that effort to make sure that we are addressing national security concerns is making sure that we do everything we can to look at those individuals who are applying for visas overseas when they want to come to the United States.

Absolutely, a visa to the United States is a privilege. It is not a right. And particularly I think we have found, given what we have seen on college campuses and university campuses over the last year and a half or so, we want to make sure that we are vetting those applicants to ensure that they are not involved with any kind of anti-Semitism or terrorism activity and part of that, of course, is going to be taking a look at their social media profile, looking at what they have posted in the past, and ensuring that when they come to the United States they're here for the reason that they say they are—hopefully, getting to know America, learning our values, and studying in these great institutions.

Mr. LAWLER. While I agree that the vetting is absolutely necessary, we do need to make sure that you have all the resources to do it well and prevent delays or backlogs.

Under the prior administration we saw significant backlogs in processing passports and visas, and all of our offices have dealt with that.

Is the State Department hiring more staff to engage in that expanded social media vetting and how else are you ensuring that this program remains efficient and does not create a backlog?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you for that question, Chairman.

In fact, during the reorg that we just recently announced as well as the intended reduction in force that went with that and into effect on Friday, I'm pleased to say that Consular Affairs did not take a hit.

We have the necessary manpower and workforce in place to be able to address the issues that you were just talking about and we won't have delays.

Right now for a passport, especially through this new online passport renewal system, we're finding that folks are able to get passports in anywhere from three to 6 weeks. The average time is about 3 weeks right now, and then for visas the median time for receiving a visa is about 1 month.

Mr. LAWLER. State's Fiscal Year 1926 request includes an \$81.7 million reduction in worldwide security protection funding for Iraq, reflecting equipment returns and a drawdown of operations.

As the department considers scaling back its presence at Embassy Baghdad what steps are being taken to ensure that core diplomatic functions such as intelligence gathering, crisis response, and interagency coordination can continue safely and effectively?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. It's an excellent question, sir. I must say that not only pertaining to Baghdad and Iraq, on a regular basis we are looking at our posture—our global posture—from a security perspective.

I'm happy to say that the \$28.5 billion request that we have for Fiscal Year 1926 is about 48 percent less than the Fiscal Year 1925 budget and so in essence what that means is we're able to return or at least save about \$20 billion-plus for the American taxpayer.

Part and parcel of that, of course, is just finding opportunities overseas for us to reduce our cost while at the same time maintaining the security posture that we need not only bilaterally but also multilaterally.

You are right to point out that in Baghdad we have found significant cost savings by closing down our fixed and rotary wing aircraft operation there.

We are looking for many, many more opportunities for cost containment in Baghdad in particular just given the changing nature of the relationship that we have in Iraq but also broader—more broadly in the Middle East.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you. My time has expired.

I now recognize the ranking member, Representative Cherfilus-McCormick, for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to go and start digging in through the reduction in force that recently transpired. There's been a lot of questions about what happened in the processes.

So I wanted to give you the opportunity to tell us what processes were in place to ensure that it was actually merit based and what we—what did you take in consideration when you released these people?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. That's a fantastic question and one that I've been intimately involved with for the past few months.

I had the good opportunity of working at Export-Import Bank for the first 8 weeks, 9 weeks, of this administration and when I moved to the State Department to assume this role I encountered a State Department under the leadership of Secretary Rubio that was talking in very broad strokes but absolutely doing everything it needed to do to get down to brass tacks and how we make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous through a reorganization.

The reorganization was actually done in a very thoughtful and organized way. When it came to the reduction in force it was a

data-driven exercise whereby we first and foremost looked at the organizational structure that we needed in place in order to carry out the America First foreign policy agenda.

So we put the organizational structure in place. As you can imagine, we found a lot of waste, fraud, and mismanagement along the way and those are—that's really what constituted—when you hear about offices that were eliminated and removed that's how we came up with the first organizational structure.

I focus on that reorg first because what we did was then, you know, to follow along with that to ensure that we have the right workforce that matched and aligned that organizational structure we looked at positions.

We did not look at names. We did not look at titles. We looked at positions that were necessary for us to carry out that America First foreign policy agenda and worked very, very closely with the Office of Personnel Management—OPM—to ensure that we have the right folks in the Foreign Service, in the Civil Service, and we also looked at it from a contracting perspective.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. What are some of your data points? I just don't want my time to lapse.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Sure.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. What were some of the data points that you looked at? Because as we're talking to more and more of our diplomats they're concerned about the merit-based justifications for who actually was released.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Right. You're absolutely right to point out that a merit-based personnel policy is absolutely vital. One of the first things President Trump did in this administration was to ensure through executive order that we had a merit-based workforce, not only at the State Department but throughout government.

Included in that was taking a good hard look at our diversity, inclusion, and equity rules, and so what we have today through this data-driven process that we used for the reorganization is that we have—we made sure that we were looking at skill sets wherein in the Foreign Service so we also wanted to look at language capabilities.

We also wanted to look at their experience. We were able to match up just about all of that with—and overlay it with the organizational structure in place. We did that. This is actually worth saying.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. My time is running out so I'm sorry—

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. OK.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK [continuing]. I just want to jump in. I also want to look at some of the mishaps that we're actually seeing in the reports of people who were let go and who have been hired back.

Was that anticipated when you guys were setting out your process and procedures?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I have not heard of mishaps. We have found an anomaly or two that absolutely needed to be addressed and if you yourself, Ranking Member, hear of an anomaly and would like to be able to share that with us we would—we will absolutely look at that.

We're looking at all of those in a case by case basis.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. And do you have a course correction plan that you're going to be using, going forward, in case these mishaps—

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Absolutely, because we want to make sure that we get this right, not only from a personnel perspective but also, perhaps, even more importantly from a mission-driven perspective to make sure that we're able to really deliver on the America First foreign policy agenda.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. And before my time runs out, we have been hearing more and more about people who were actually let go who were supposed to be rotating to other countries and other posts, and they were actually supposed to go within a day, 2 days, a week.

So those people who are no longer going to that new post are they being replaced and do those people have the same expertise as the people who were let go?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you for that question, Congresswoman.

I will say that more than likely you're referring to some of the folks that—the effective date of the reduction in force and the reorganization was May 29, and as you probably know there was a stall in us being able to move on that reorg because of a district judge in San Francisco.

Depending on where the individual was on May 29th when the Secretary signed that reorganization in final that probably is what dictates where that person is today and whether or not they're going to be able to go on to a forward assignment or if they got caught in an office that actually was eliminated.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. LAWLER. The gentlelady's time has expired.

I now recognize the gentleman from California Representative Issa for 5 minutes.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to followup briefly on that. So because of a—what turned out to be a wrongful action of a rogue judge in this case who was overturned people were basically RIFed and not given one or 2 days' notice.

They were, by definition, given a substantial period of time because the original date versus the effective date was 2 months apart, right?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. That's absolutely right, Congressman, and I thank you for pointing that out.

I must say that I'm from the corporate world as you are and you know that oftentimes when we are doing a reorg or actually implementing a reduction in force this often happens in the corporate world without any notice whatsoever.

In this instance the workforce at the State Department knew this was coming weeks if not months in advance.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. Following up on a couple of areas, as you know, Chairman Mast has set all of us as committee members as vice chair, the subcommittee chairman, to do a full reorganization of the State Department.

So this is one of the reasons it's so important was to follow your reorganization and mirror our activity. There are a couple of areas of concern that I want to touch with you briefly.

One is since 2001 the State Department has had a dual relationship in visas with Homeland Security. Just from the time you've been there shouldn't this committee find a way to harmonize that so we not have a he says/she said as we have had where your people look at somebody but they can't say "you're in."

In fact, the visa will disappear into Homeland Security for an undetermined period of time without the ability for the State Department to answer when they're going to be cleared or not cleared. Is that correct?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Congressman, for that.

I do manage the Consular Affairs Bureau at the State Department and I must say that we work hand in glove and actually quite well with the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. ISSA. I'm going to interrupt you. No, you don't. It doesn't work. It hasn't worked for 20-plus years. So the—I would ask you to please look into it with a different eye.

Look into it as to the people who, quite frankly, may be coming back to the United States multiple times, may be coming back for school having been in the U.S. and they cannot get a timely answer, and the authority does not lie with the State Department.

But, ultimately, that's the odd situation is we rely on you to do the interviews and then it disappears into Homeland Security. I'm not badmouthing Homeland Security.

I'm proposing that harmonizing the authority to a single place of accountability may in fact be something this committee looks at.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I promise to look into that, sir.

Mr. ISSA. I'm going to look onto one that is near and dear to my heart. Ever since the tragedy at Benghazi we have recognized that after the departure of George W. Bush's administration the State Department went back to its old standard at OBO of simply wanting to do one-of-a-kind beautiful palaces like the one in London—I call it the Crystal Palace—with huge cost overruns and time delays.

You currently have 24 embassies and consultants under construction. Most are if not all are delayed. Fifteen are delayed more than 2 years.

The Lebanon embassy is at about twice its original forecast, is more than 6 years under construction, is not completed, and we continue to rent 40 separate buildings now, making it the most expensive embassy in the world.

What are you planning to do? What will the State Department do to—and I'm asking you to put your businessman hat on—returning to a standard design, returning to a schedule to—returning to fixed contracts that have penalties for not making deadlines, obviously, with some recognition of war and other events that can be justified.

But when we're talking about simply cost overruns, change orders that they ask for and then bill you for and the like, what are you going to do to change that to get us out of a situation in which we cannot give you enough money to meet the requirement of mak-

ing our State Department personnel safe around the world unless we change the time schedule and the cost for these buildings.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you for that, sir.

I am thrilled to be able to work hand in glove with our professionals at OBO. They do an incredible job on a global basis.

I must say—

Mr. ISSA. Pardon me. I'm just going to interrupt briefly.

They are the source of that overrun, the source of those decisions to make one of buildings. So I appreciate what you're saying but what can we do to change us?

Under General Williams we had a program that was working. It was reversed when President Obama came in and it's never been sent back to a process that would give us timely delivery.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. One very specific thing, Congressman, that we are doing as a result of this reorganization is looking exactly at—one of the points you made was at contracts and the procurement function.

We have consolidated in this reorganization contracts and procurement, IT, human resources, finance and accounting, and the contracts and procurement function that took place in OBO has now been moved to a new—it's not a bureau but it's a directorate within the Management Bureau that will focus just on global acquisitions.

And so we'll have much tighter, more unified opportunity to look at those contracts and I'm happy to work with you and your team to make sure that we follow the kind of rules that you're looking for.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, and I'm pleased and I thank you for your indulgence. Yield back.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Representative Issa.

I'm now going to start a second round of questioning and I know there are other members on their way as well.

Mr. Cunningham, in your testimony you mentioned the SCORE process as a key mechanism for evaluating whether to maintain a diplomatic presence in high-threat environments.

Can you elaborate on how the SCORE process informs strategic decisions about oversea posts including how it was applied in the case of U.S. Embassy Baghdad and the department's broader posture in Iraq?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Absolutely, Chairman. Thank you for that question.

One of the—I'm blessed to be able to work hand in glove with our Under Secretary for Foreign Policy, Allison Hooker, on a regular basis in the SCORE process.

Part of that process is making sure that we support the execution of the America First foreign policy and through that process we're ensuring that we're looking at economic budget issues as well as security issues to determine whether or not—and we do this on a regular basis—whether or not that presence is necessary for our mission.

Quite frankly, today, if we have a presence in a particular country, it's because that's part of our policy and I support the execution of that policy but—and part of the process whereby we're look-

ing as to whether or not we need to make any changes in our footprint on a global basis and we'll adjust our policy accordingly.

Mr. LAWLER. I appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

We'll now recognize for 5 minutes Representative Mfume.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cunningham, I want to ask you a couple of real simple questions and try to get your honest reaction here.

As you know, this past Friday the State Department laid off over 1,300 employees including 1,100 of which were Civil Service employees and 246 which were Foreign Service officers.

That figure is in addition to the, roughly, 1,600 employees who have left the agency since January, many of whom will say that they left under duress.

At the same time, the Foreign Service Institute has indefinitely postponed any and all promotions, holding up promotions and shutting the entry point for new Foreign Service officers to get in.

So I'm disturbed by the sheer number of employees fired but also by the seemingly indiscriminate nature and manner of those firings. If I'm incorrect I certainly would welcome your comments on some of this.

I'm concerned also about the loss of expertise from the Civil Service and Foreign Service, employees that had dedicated their lives, quite frankly, to serving this government, this Nation, and the American people.

So can you for the sake of the committee here on the record give us a sense of what you've done since being there to ensure that the recent staff reductions at the State Department will not harm—will not harm—the ability of the United States to engage in important diplomatic work?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Congressman.

I can assure you right from the very start that what we're doing will not disturb the important mission that we have.

I would welcome the opportunity just to talk to you a little bit about how that America First foreign policy is in place, how that relates to the reorganization as well as the reduction in force that you were so specific about.

When Secretary Rubio came to office he pledged that we were going to make foreign policy the purview of our Ambassadors, of our embassies, of our operations overseas, and in order to support that overseas element we decided that we needed to streamline and consolidate our operations here in Washington, DC, and through the reorganization as well as the attendant reduction in forces we were able to do that.

Indeed, if you look at the——

Mr. MFUME. Well, let me reclaim my time here. I don't have that much of it.

Secretary Rubio was before this full committee and we entertained a number of State Department persons, the last of which was just a couple of days ago.

I want to know, though, have you completed—since you're saying this will not impact negatively have you completed an assessment of the impact and the loss of expertise from the State Department officials that have, as I said before, been fired or let go this year?

That's a tremendous brain trust, a tremendous wealth of experience, and so when you extrapolate that out of an existing workforce I need to get some idea of what assurances were made or what assessment was done to be able to say that there is no impact.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Congressman, the assessment to actually implement the reorganization and the attendant reduction in force was done long in advance and, of course, we executed on that on Friday.

It would be short sighted of me to say that we have already done an assessment as the—of the impact on what happened on Friday just a few days later, less than a week since that.

I can assure you that there are plenty of us—in fact, even later this afternoon when I get back to the building we're having our second meeting of a group of folks who were responsible for the implementation of the reorganization to make sure that we're looking at any potential anomalies that have come to our attention.

Mr. MFUME. Good, and I hope that you would get back to us with those anomalies or to say that there were none, or to say that this assessment once it is done shows no negative impact.

Mr. Cunningham, 36 months ago the Government Accounting Office released four recommendations, all of which were aimed at improving diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as accessibility in the State Department's workforce.

The previous administration made some progress in addressing those but of those recommendations four of them remain open.

Is there any plan in place by Secretary Rubio or yourself or others to address the Government Accounting Office's recommendations or since it is listed as DEI can we assume that under this leadership at the State Department and at the White House that they are dead?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Under this administration, sir, we have eliminated diversity and inclusion initiatives throughout government. That includes the State Department.

We have now moved to an entirely merit-based system that looks at skill sets, language capabilities, and experience in our identification, recruitment, hiring, and promotion and retirement of our workforce on both the Civil Service side as well as the Foreign Service side.

Mr. MFUME. I understand that and my time is expiring, but I'd be less than honest if I didn't say I don't know how a less diverse workforce will affect the efforts of the United States to engage with the vast amount of different peoples and cultures that are relevant to our national interests.

I don't know how we do that when we become less diverse. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. ISSA. [Presiding.] The gentleman yields back.

We now go to the gentleman from California Mr. Sherman for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. I want to echo the gentleman from Maryland. I can't agree with him more. The world is diverse and we've—the job of the State Department is our relationship with the world.

Okay. You've got to decide how much effort to put in the process of giving visas, particularly business visas, tourist visas. Business

people come here to buy products, some of them made in my district. Tourism is a big deal for Los Angeles.

And time and again I get calls from people who are delayed for a year, 2 years, sometimes three or 4 months.

I was in the business world before I came here. I know our chair has spent a lot of time in the business world. I've never seen a good business deal that can wait 3 months for the meeting.

Has the State Department ever even tried to calculate the enormous harm that you do to our economy by basically telling people in a lot of countries, don't try to do business in the United States—it's a huge hassle. Don't try to visit the United States. There are beautiful vistas elsewhere and it's a huge hassle to get here.

Has there been any cost benefit analysis of the decision to have what has got to be the slowest visa-granting process of any foreign ministry in the world?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Congressman, for the question.

It's a supreme joy of mine in this seat to be able to manage Consular Affairs at this Department of State. We are responsible for taking a look at visa fraud, passport fraud, human trafficking, illegal immigration on a regular basis.

You specifically are pointing out the visa——

Mr. SHERMAN. It was pretty much a yes/no question. Has there ever been an analysis cost——

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. The answer is yes. The answer is yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. So you have an analysis that says that the delays in issuing business and tourist visas are not costing America billions of dollars of economic activity?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. The median wait time for all visas for Consular Affairs globally is 1 month.

Mr. SHERMAN. Oh, that's great if your business deal wants to wait a month. And by the way, I get calls all the time, particularly from India, from Pakistan, where the delay is four, five, 6 months and——

Mr. ISSA. Would the gentleman yield to——

Mr. SHERMAN. I'll yield to the chair, yes.

Mr. ISSA. Following up on that since we do see the same situation, you're saying how long between the time you actually get the appointment—you actually get there.

You are aware that it can be months, many months, sometimes beyond belief, before somebody can get the appointment that goes there.

So the 1-month may be a wonderful average but, you know, Abraham Lincoln told us you could drown if you were six foot tall in the average five foot depth river. The average doesn't tell the story that the gentleman is talking about of delays of months before you even get an appointment.

Mr. SHERMAN. And I would hope that you would do the analysis because there are a lot of businesses that can't wait a month and a lot of places in the world where that visa to, first, get the appointment and then the appointment is a month after you get it is many, many months.

Okay. We fired a bunch of people. You wanted to reduce the number of staff, and it makes sense to look at the organization

chart and see some boxes and say, well, we don't need a person in that box. We don't need a person in that box.

But what I understand you did is if you had a superb employee in the box that you don't need you didn't move them to another box. You fired them, and then you could have an underperforming employee in a box you're keeping and you're keeping that employee.

Did you evaluate the capacities and performance of individuals and then put them in the boxes you wanted or did you just fire anybody who was in a box that seemed like we don't need that box?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Congressman, the reduction in force is all about functions and not the individual, not people.

Mr. SHERMAN. Yes, but if you want to perform this function and you have a great person that's performing a function you don't need why not keep the great person and have them do the function you want instead of firing people based—because in the State Department you guys are moving people around from function to function. It's a game of musical chairs.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. It's what we do. It's what we do.

Mr. SHERMAN. If somebody happened to be 6 months ago a great performer in a great function they still have a job. But if somebody was a great performer and they've recently been transferred to a function you don't need that great performer is out, right?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. In this instance, Congressman, if someone has been RIFed—I'll start last Friday—they will have the opportunity to apply for a job that absolutely fits their skill set, their experience, and their language capabilities if that's part of the job. We have a—we have the—

Mr. SHERMAN. But as far as immediate decisions you've retained certain underperforming employees and you've terminated some spectacular employees because you didn't evaluate the individual employees and all of their experiences.

You just said, well, if in the musical chair games it is the State Department, they happen to be in a box we don't need they're out. They can apply for something else unless if they're really good they'll find a job in the private sector.

I believe I've—have I gone too long?

Mr. ISSA. You've gone as long as I'm going to let you go, Mr. Sherman.

[Laughter.]

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you. We now go to the gentleman from Massachusetts Mr. Keating for 5 minutes.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm just concerned when you fired over a thousand employees and, you know, eventually you're going to have to replace those people—new people coming in.

What's your pitch to those people after you've just fired a thousand career people?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Congressman, I'm afraid I didn't hear the exact question. What's the—

Mr. KEATING. I just said you just fired more than a thousand employees.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Right.

Mr. KEATING. Eventually you're going to have to recruit and bring new people into the service. So what's your pitch to these people after you've just fired these career people that are thinking of making a career here?

I mean, what do you say to them? Maybe you'll get lucky. Maybe if you take an allegiance to something beforehand.

I mean, what—you know, what if you had a son or daughter and they're thinking of a career and they want to become a Foreign Service person and have a career here? Would you be worried that embarking on a career where career people just got ruthlessly fired?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Congressman, there's never a perfect time to conduct a reduction in force. We are very aware of that. We took all the—we did everything we could with as much heart as we could when we went through and exercised and implemented this reduction in force on Friday.

Mr. KEATING. Oh, please. You know, I have 5 minutes but I don't believe that. You know what my son or daughter would call that? BS.

This was just done so ruthlessly. So let's not even go there because I don't have time for that. I'm concerned about the future after you've done this and I'm concerned, too, so many of the people that I know that have made careers and people that I talk to that had careers a lot of those things occurred in the university. Have you ever spoken to a U.S. diplomat in residence?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I have, sir. Yes.

Mr. KEATING. Do you see the value of that position?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. In many instances, absolutely.

Mr. KEATING. So you've got these young people. What would you tell them, if it was your son or daughter, you know, about job security?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I will say—Congressman, you are perhaps referring to some of the details and fellowships that we have in the State Department that take place with other government agencies, with DOD, with nongovernmental organizations, with State and local governments, as well as with people—as well as with Congress.

Mr. KEATING. I'm also—no, no, people at the college stage, post college stage, who are thinking of making careers. You know, this is going to—you don't think this would damage the future potential to hire the best, going forward?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. We made a concerted effort, sir, to put in place an organizational structure that matched the foreign policy goals of this administration.

Mr. KEATING. Well, I'll tell you this. Those goals don't include recruiting the best down the road coming forward. I'm also concerned, too, when you're looking at major events like the Olympics in 2028 and what's going, you know, are we going to have the people in place.

I know the Secretary of State said don't worry about it, but I don't see how in some of these countries we're going to have the people in place to do big functions like that.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Congressman, we feel quite good about being able to welcome visitors to the United States for the FIFA World Cup as well as America 2025 and the Olympics in 2028.

I will tell you that the majority of the folks that we expect to come for the FIFA World Cup will be coming from Mexico and Canada so those folks for the most part have visas and are able to come into the United States.

We have all of government effort to ensure that we are prepared and ready for the onslaught of visitors that we absolutely welcome to the U.S. for the Cup.

Mr. KEATING. Remember those words when the time comes because the way you're progressing with this and the things you're doing don't inspire confidence that that's going to be the place and invariably—we can look right down this row and it's our offices that get these calls all the time when these things aren't undertaken properly.

I just want to touch too—I don't have much time—on the cuts to the consulate offices that have occurred and the danger—you know, the dangers actually that represent not having those in place in places like France and Germany.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Well, I can tell you that with the reorganization and the reduction in the force that took place last Friday there are no cuts to the number of personnel in the Consular Affairs Bureau. We have—part of that whole reorganization—

Mr. KEATING. My time is running out.

So the cuts in the—there's no cuts in the fraud prevention office?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. No, sir.

Mr. KEATING. There's no cuts in the consular systems?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. No, sir.

Mr. KEATING. And Technology Office?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. No, sir.

Mr. KEATING. That's not the information I have. I yield back.

Mr. ISSA. The gentleman yields back.

We now go to the gentleman from New York for his 5 minutes.

Mr. SUOZZI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield my time to the ranker Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Thank you, Representative.

I just wanted to followup on some questions. My biggest question is that you mentioned that you were directed to reduce by 15 percent for M and what was the basis of that number? How did you derive that 15 percent that was supposed to be cut?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. That 15 percent, Congresswoman, was not just for the M family of bureaus but across the board at the State Department.

When we started the reorg—the discussions regarding reorganization we weren't looking at a specific number to cut a certain percentage but, rather, we worked with our under secretaries, with career and Foreign Service personnel, to make sure that we got that right.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. So that 15 percent was across the board?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Across the board at the State Department, yes.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. My next question—I just want to clarify some statements. So when it comes to the Consular Affairs there seems to be a discrepancy as far as the cuts because we have reporting that there were cuts made and you're saying that there were no cuts made. Is that correct?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. There were no—there were no cuts in Consular Affairs. I would just harken back to what I said before it—

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. So our information that we have is different. If we can reconcile that with further information—

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. We'd be happy to work with you on that. I think a lot of it stems back to the fact that the decision and the memo that was signed for reorganization and reduction in force is effective May 29th and a lot of—any of those people that were impacted were probably in a different place, maybe in an office that had been eliminated on May 29th.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Well, as long as we can reconcile it, because the information we have it does say that there were cuts, and so we want to see that because we're concerned about the impact that those cuts would have, specifically on processing passports and visas.

So once we get that we can reconcile that and move forward.

The second thing I wanted to talk about also were some of the cuts that were made to personnel in Syria. Now, Syria has been an area that's been very fragile and we're starting to see some—an up-tick or some hope in Syria.

Reducing the number of the regional experts working on Syria at the same time as the State Department is working on reopening its embassy in Damascus is not just counterintuitive but it also seems like a step backward. It puts American citizens directly in harm's way across the Middle East.

I recently returned from a CODEL with Chairman Lawler in which the issue was raised directly. What steps are you taking actually to protect and make sure that we have adequate amount of personnel in Syria but also to support so we can make sure Syria does not regress?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Congresswoman, for that very good question. I'm thrilled to be able to have been part of the initial discussions about the changes that took place as a result of President Trump's trip to the Middle East a little more than a month ago.

It was during that time that he was able to—the President himself was able to meet with the president of Syria and as a result of that, quite frankly, everything in the Middle East has changed.

We are looking forward to giving the Syrian people and the Syrian government an opportunity to an economic and diplomatic opportunity to deal with the rest of the world. In this seat as Under Secretary of Management, I worked hand in glove with our Operations Center Task Force, which was put in place to make sure that we looked at all of—

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Because my time is running out—

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Please.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK [continuing]. we want to know about implementation and the proper number of personnel to carry

out that implementation. So with those cuts we want to know how you're going to fill in. Do they have the accurate expertise to make sure that we're successful in Syria?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I have very good news for you, Congresswoman.

I do work very, very closely with our Ambassador to Turkey. His name is Tom Barrack. He is also the special envoy to Syria and he's already made a couple of trips to Damascus to meet with the president of Syria.

All of the—many of the functions that are required to get the proper security in place and get the right team in place in order for him to make that trip successful and to raise the flag above our embassy there—our Ambassador's residence there on May 29th—fall under the purview of the Management Bureau.

And I was thrilled to be a part of that. We are looking every single day—every time he wants to take a trip to the region we work hand in glove with the—

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. So as my time is running out, could we receive from your office specific details of what steps were taken so we can be able to make sure that we're on an upward course and not a downward trajectory by having the proper amount of personnel?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I'm happy, Congresswoman, to work with you on that, yes.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. LAWLER. [Presiding.] Mr. Cunningham, I just want to followup on one thing.

In today's threat environment cybersecurity and counterintelligence must be fully integrated into all levels of State Department operations with functions spread across various bureaus and families.

Coordination and clarity are critical. How is the Bureau of Management overseeing counterintelligence and cyber security functions department wide?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Chairman, for that question.

In today's multipolar world where we are facing challenges that are so unique to the 21st century, obviously, defending against cyberattacks is a very important function of the Management Bureau.

We have identified and responded to two very specific nation State cyber-attacks recently, and we're doing everything we can to ensure that our records retention and records review of anything related to WhatsApp and Signal are part and parcel of what we do.

We also have done something through this reorganization, sir, to make sure that all of the—in fact, I think it was seven or eight bureaus in the department had their own IT shops and so we have consolidated that under our chief information officer and we'll get the economies of scale that we need out of that operation.

Mr. LAWLER. Furthering up on this, what steps are being taken to embed counter intelligence awareness and training into the daily operations of overseas missions?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. That's a very important question, sir.

There are a number of trainings that take place. In fact, we're reimagining the kind of training that is necessary. Earlier I think one of your colleagues mentioned the Foreign Service Institute.

We're making sure that we have the right kind of training and skill sets in place that will address any counter terrorist issues before they head off and go overseas.

In fact, I'm—I think next week I'm going through a 2-day training just to make sure that I understand what that training entails and make sure that it also matches our goals in the America First foreign policy agenda.

Mr. LAWLER. I appreciate that. I thank the witness for his valuable testimony as well as the members for their questions. I thank the ranking member as well.

The members of the subcommittee may have some additional questions for the witness and we will ask you to respond to these in writing.

Pursuant to committee rules, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record subject to the length limitations.

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:03 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

## **APPENDIX**

---

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD



Chairman Brian Mast

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

**Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa**  
**Michael Lawler (R-NY), Chairman**

July 9, 2025

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

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa at 2:00 p.m. in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

**DATE:** Wednesday, July 16, 2025

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** 2172 RHOB

**SUBJECT:** Management Family FY26 Budget Posture  
Hearing

**WITNESSES:** The Honorable José Cunningham  
Acting Under Secretary (M)  
U.S. Department of State

\*NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

**By Direction of the Chair**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-226-8467 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
MINUTES OF MENA SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date July 16, 2025 Room 2172 RHOB

Starting Time 14:00 Ending Time 15:03

Recesses ☐ (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ )

Presiding Member(s)  
*Chairman Lawler*

*Check all of the following that apply:*

Open Session ☒  
Executive (closed) Session ☐  
Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒  
Stenographic Record ☒

**TITLE OF HEARING:**

*Management Family FY26 Budget Posture Hearing*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*Attached*

**NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*N/A*

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

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

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

*Attached*

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

or

TIME ADJOURNED 15:03

*Meg Wagner*  
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

## ATTENDANCE

Date: July 16, 2025

[illegible]