AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

THE ADMINISTRATION'S FY 2015 MENA BUDGET REQUEST: PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 29, 2014

Serial No. 113–138

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/ or http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

87–710PDF WASHINGTON : 2014

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EDWARD R. ROYCE, California, *Chairman*

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida
DANA ROHRABACHER, California
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio
JOE WILSON, South Carolina
MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, Texas
TED POE, Texas
MATT SALMON, Arizona
TOM MARINO, Pennsylvania
JEFF DUNCAN, South Carolina
ADAM KINZINGER, Illinois
MO BROOKS, Alabama
TOM COTTON, Arkansas
PAUL COOK, California
GEORGE HOLDING, North Carolina
RANDY K. WEBER SR., Texas
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania
STEVE STOCKMAN, Texas
RON DESANTIS, Florida
DOUG COLLINS, Georgia
MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina
TED S. YOHO, Florida
LUKE MESSER, Indiana

ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, American Samoa
BRAD SHERMAN, California
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
ALBIO SIRES, New Jersey
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
THEODORE E. DEUTCH, Florida
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
KAREN BASS, California
WILLIAM KEATING, Massachusetts
DAVID CICILLINE, Rhode Island
ALAN GRAYSON, Florida
JUAN VARGAS, California
BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER, Illinois
JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III, Massachusetts
AMI BERA, California
ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, California
GRACE MENG, New York
LOIS FRANKEL, Florida
TULSI GABBARD, Hawaii
JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas

AMY PORTER, *Chief of Staff* THOMAS SHEEHY, *Staff Director*
JASON STEINBAUM, *Democratic Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida, *Chairman*

STEVE CHABOT, Ohio
JOE WILSON, South Carolina
ADAM KINZINGER, Illinois
TOM COTTON, Arkansas
RANDY K. WEBER SR., Texas
RON DESANTIS, Florida
DOUG COLLINS, Georgia
MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina
TED S. YOHO, Florida
LUKE MESSER, Indiana

THEODORE E. DEUTCH, Florida
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
DAVID CICILLINE, Rhode Island
ALAN GRAYSON, Florida
JUAN VARGAS, California
BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER, Illinois
JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III, Massachusetts
GRACE MENG, New York
LOIS FRANKEL, Florida

CONTENTS

Page

WITNESSES

The Honorable Anne W. Patterson, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State 8
Ms. Alina L. Romanowski, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for the Middle East, U.S. Agency for International Development 21

LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING

The Honorable Anne W. Patterson: Prepared statement 11
Ms. Alina L. Romanowski: Prepared statement 23

APPENDIX

Hearing notice 54
Hearing minutes 55
The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia: Prepared statement 57

THE ADMINISTRATION'S FY 2015 MENA BUDGET REQUEST: PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2014

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 o'clock a.m., in room 2200 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order. Mr. Deutch, our ranking member, will be here with us shortly. So Brad, it is up to you to do the opening statement. Okay.

So after recognizing myself and Brad for 5 minutes each for our opening statements, I will then recognize members of our subcommittee who seek recognition for their statements.

We will then hear from our witnesses. Thank you, ladies, and without objection your prepared statements will be made a part of the record. I did not get the memo on the blue. I would have gone with you. But members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record subject to the length limitations in the rules.

The chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes. The Middle East and North Africa remain a region fraught with difficulties and dangers that threaten United States national security interests and must not be overlooked.

In previous years, the administration has requested but never received authorization or appropriations the authority to establish yet another flexible spending account in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs called the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund.

This account, in essence, was more like a slush fund for the administration to allocate and distribute hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance without having to justify to or get authority from Congress.

And though the name has changed, the idea has resurfaced again in this year's budget request under the name of Middle East and North Africa Initiative. I continue to object to the authorization of this initiative and question whether the shift to regional accounts is the best approach.

Many traditional bilateral accounts have decreased and it may signal to our allies that the United States is not committed to the Middle East and North Africa region. In addition, with so many regional accounts already in place there is a great risk of duplicity and overlapping of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

The United States has already spent over $1.7 billion on the Syrian humanitarian crisis to help those Syrians who are in dire need of this assistance and those host governments that have taken in a combined total of nearly 3 million Syrian refugees despite the incredible strain that it has placed on their own governments.

However, we cannot continue to throw money at the problem if the administration lacks a clear and decisive plan in dealing with the Syrian conflict.

We continue to treat the symptoms of the problem but not the disease. Perhaps nowhere is this failed leadership and misguided policy in the region more salient than the current state of the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

As the deadline came and went today, the process has failed and the result has been an announced agreement between Fatah and Hamas. This unity reconciliation deal has major implications for the Fiscal Year 2015 budget request as the administration is seeking over $440 million in direct bilateral assistance for the Palestinian Authority and the West Bank and Gaza.

However, if Hamas is part of this Palestinian unity government, the U.S. law that I drafted and became a law would prohibit this assistance and we must abide by the law. In 2006, I authored the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act, which later became the law that put this prohibition in place.

The law is clear. The U.S. cannot send funds to a Palestinian Government that includes members of the terrorist group Hamas. Unlike the United States, which continues to negotiate with the world's biggest state sponsor of terrorism, Iran, Israel will not and should not be pressured into dealing with a Palestinian Government that seeks closer ties with Hamas.

That is why I was deeply dismayed to read Secretary Kerry's comments this weekend suggesting Israel will become an apartheid state if it abandons the negotiations. These remarks are offensive and are beneath the office of the highest ranking U.S. Government diplomat.

But the reconciliation movement is not the only real consequence of the administration's failed policies of peace in the Middle East. This past weekend, reports indicated that the Palestinians plan on moving forward with their scheme at the United Nations to be granted de facto recognition by becoming members of other agencies, not just UNESCO.

The administration continues to seek waiver authority to fund UNESCO including arrears payments that would leave the U.S. taxpayers on the hook for nearly $1 billion after it admitted the nonexistent state of Palestine.

Now this latest move by the PA could force the administration into defunding any U.N. agency that admits Palestine and I will continue to do everything within my power to ensure that no such waiver is granted and that the law will be fully enforced.

Another matter in which the administration's policies have been indecisive and where our dithering has served only to complicate the situation is the political transition in Egypt.

While I recognize the security needs of Egypt that are essential for stability in the region, I remain concerned over the steps that still need to be taken for a democratic transition and respect for human rights and feel that perhaps more should be done to help establish and fund democratic institutions rather than the military.

The upcoming Presidential elections will be a litmus test for Egypt's transition and will give us an opportunity to reassess our aid package. I am also increasingly concerned about the endless capitulations and concessions to the Iranian regime and the havoc that the Syrian conflict is causing in Lebanon as that country draws closer to an all-out sectarian war.

And while countries like Yemen, Tunisia and Libya and others in the region continue to struggle with deteriorating security, economic and political environments, it is clear that the U.S. must reevaluate our foreign policy and that there are far too many countries of strategic importance to the United States' national security in the region for the administration to continue to pivot to Asia.

We must address these issues by first dealing with them directly and effectively, and I am so glad that now we can turn to the ranking member of our subcommittee, Mr. Deutch, from Florida. Thank you, Ted.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madame Chairman, for convening today's hearing. It is a pleasure to welcome back Assistant Administrator Romanowski and to extend a warm welcome to Assistant Secretary Patterson.

Thank you for being here. This is your first appearance before the subcommittee. It is nice to have you. I want to take a moment to commend the work both State and USAID are doing in a very challenging region. Both State and USAID have been actively engaged in responding to what is, to say the least, a very fluid situation in the Middle East, clearly, the most immediate being the response to the Syrian crisis. The situation is dire. Nine point three million people in need of assistance, potentially 3.5 million in besieged areas.

The $1.1 billion budgeted for Syria humanitarian response funds will help to deliver needed humanitarian goods to those displaced inside Syria and refugees in neighboring countries. In addition, we have increased our aid to countries dealing with the influx of refugees.

Lebanon, with over 1 million officially registered refugees, received an increase in aid for training the Lebanese Armed Forces to assist with border control and ensure that the LAF and Lebanese security forces can have sole control over Lebanon security.

In Jordan, we are supporting efforts to keep critical water supplies flowing and increase the quality and capacity of educational institutions as well as continuing to train and supply needed military equipment to ensure that Jordan can secure its borders.

I am pleased to see the full funding of security assistance to the democratic state of Israel, our greatest ally in the region. A safe and secure Israel is vital to ensuring U.S. interests in the region and while I believe the continued economic assistance to the Pales-

tinian Authority to build viable state institutions is critical to supporting peace efforts, we must ensure that the letter of the law is being upheld.

Let me be clear. No Palestinian Government that includes terrorist members of Hamas can or will receive U.S. funding. I hope that each of you will provide insight into our aid strategy going forward in Egypt.

Secretary Kerry's recent certification resumed some large-scale military aid is a result of Egypt's continued commitment to securing the Sinai, preventing the smuggling of weapons to Hamas and upholding peace with Israel.

But it is clear that there are real and serious concerns that must be addressed with respect to basic human rights and democratic values. I am afraid that the status quo is unsustainable.

This budget continues to support strong ties with our Gulf partners as we seek to confront mutual challenges like the preventing of a nuclear-armed Iran and stopping the spread of both Sunni and Shi'ite extremism.

For long-term success, I believe we have got to focus our resources in areas where we can have a sustainable impact. I am pleased to see an increased focus on building civil society, increasing engagement, building institutions and strengthening the rule of law in North Africa.

In Morocco, USAID is implementing a new country development cooperation strategy aimed at increasing civic participation, decreasing youth unemployment and increasing access to quality basic education.

As Tunisia moves forward in its quest for democracy, strong U.S. support for both civil society and economic programs will be vital to its success.

The situation in Libya requires increased attention. I am pleased that this budget reflects our commitment to restoring security in Libya. Instability has not only led to increased violence, but poor border control has increased the flow of weapons and arms into the Sahel.

And since the withdrawal of American troops in Iraq, we have sought to find a balance between our security interests in stabilizing the country and our broader regional interests.

Our reduced presence has resulted in nearly 50 percent decrease over the Fiscal Year 2013 funding request. Unfortunately, spillover from the Syrian crisis has exacerbated the security situation in Iraq as we are now seeing the resurgence and emboldening of extremist elements in western Iraq.

At times we find ourselves at odds with the Maliki government over Iraq's role in the Syrian crisis, particularly as has been discussed many times in this committee the reluctance of Iraq to ground and inspect Iranian flights to Syria.

Nonetheless, our continued support for Iraq's stabilization advances our security, economic and political interests in the region. We all know the United States can't solve the problems of the Middle East.

But in addition to addressing the most pressing security challenges, we can put in place strategies and policies that attempt to

shape the outcome in a way that reflects universal democratic values that are of the utmost importance to this country.

I appreciate the flexibility of the Middle East North Africa Initiatives Transitions and Reforms Fund to respond to changing events on the ground.

But I hope to hear from both of you today how the United States intends to maintain a cohesive policy that not only responds to the situation on the ground but continues to address what are the underlying causes of instability and could be for future generations.

And again, I want to thank you both for being here today and thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Deutch. Thank you very much, and I know Mr. Meadows came here first but I think it will be easier for me just to go down the line, if that is okay, Mark. Mr. Chabot is recognized, the subcommittee chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I will be very brief. As always, we face daunting challenges in the region and I think we all look forward to hearing from the administration here today and we welcome them.

Yesterday evening, Madam Ambassador, we both had the opportunity to speak at a Lebanese-American event commemorating, and I think the chair—yes, the Seder Revolution last night and I think prior to that I think our paths had last crossed in Cairo when you served so well as our Ambassador there.

So we very much welcome you here and welcome you here, Ms. Romanowski, as well and so rather than drone on I will yield back so we can get to the witnesses as soon as possible. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chabot, and so pleased now to recognize Mr. Schneider. He was going to pinch hit for you, Mr. Deutch, for the opening statement. He would have done an equally good job.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I don't want to interrupt you. Keep going. Thank you very much. Thank you for being here.

As has already been said, there is so much happening in so many places around the Middle East and each of these countries having great strategic importance and in many cases being a strategic threat to the United States.

How we stay engaged, how we stay involved, where we put our limited resources is crucial here. So I welcome you here. I am grateful for your willingness to come and speak with us and I look forward to hearing your testimony. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, thank you, Madam Chair, and, again, thank you both for your service to your country and for being here.

I am interested and one of the things I will be looking forward to hearing is how the pivot away from the Middle East toward Asia has gone and whether or not we are considering a repivot back to the Middle East as we have seen pretty much a campaign promise of getting out of Iraq fall into our face as we see Fallujah now owned by ISIS and al-Qaeda-linked elements.

And I'm also very interested in the Syrian policy. I am a big believer that we should have enforced the red line in Syria and that that is a conflict that is only going to continue to get worse and there will be no end state in which it stops getting worse.

So, again, thank you both for being here and, Madam Chair, I will just yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much and we were consoling Mr. Chabot here as we were talking bad about pivoting to Asia, since he is the subcommittee chair. Ms. Meng is recognized.

Mr. CHABOT. They appoint me chair of the committee. Then they pivot towards——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And then they pivot.

Mr. CHABOT. Yes, please.

MS. MENG. I would like to thank Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen and Ranking Member Deutch for calling this important hearing today.

There is certainly a great deal to discuss and I think we have a particularly distinguished panel so we are excited for that. Thank you both for being here.

One thing that occurred to me while reading about the Afghan elections last week was the degree to which this administration has unburdened the American people of Iraq and Afghanistan. And you know, I don't think the President always gets enough credit for that.

With everything going on here at home and with the humanitarian and political crises going on in the Levant the President has done a great job of enabling us to focus on the most important things.

Obviously, the troop draw downs are huge parts of this but there are many other points at which the administration has shown discipline and political acumen in relation to Iraq and Afghanistan.

And these less publicized things have helped relieve the American people of the burdens of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that have so consumed us in the last decade.

That is not to say we are not still terribly burdened by the effects of the wars on our veterans and troops who continue to suffer casualties in Afghanistan. But we are largely unburdening ourselves of the emotional and financial costs of the current situations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Turning westward, I look forward to a discussion today of where we are going in Syria, under what conditions we will continue to support the Palestinians and what we should expect of the Egyptians as they undergo yet another transition of power.

We have spent significant sums in each of these areas so I look forward to today's discussion. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, ma'am. Mr. Weber is recognized.

Mr. WEBER. Madam Chair, I have no comments and I am ready to go.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. All right. Let her roll.

Mr. Meadows is recognized.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you both for being here. Ambassador Patterson, thank you for your service. Truly, the Egyptian people know that you love and care for them and I just want to say thank you for doing that.

It is critical as we start to look at this in this tough time to be precise with our dollars, and as I look at the budget request if this were a 5-year request then more ambiguity and allowing greater

flexibility would be something that I think most of us could get behind just because of the fluid nature of that.

But because it is a short-term authorization, you know, what we really need to hear from both of you is specifically how we are going to help in those areas—Egypt being one, Jordan another. As we start to look at investment in those areas that are perhaps salvageable more so than those that are more difficult, what I would like to see is how do we emphasize and leverage our dollars most effectively in those areas that we can create stability in the Middle East and go forward.

Thank you. I yield back, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you sir.

Dr. Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ladies, I appreciate you color coordinating today. Madam Chair, I agree also with your assessment about your objection to a blanket approval of approving this aid without substantial reforms to our foreign aid policies.

So we do not continue to treat a symptom and not a causative agent or the underlying cause of the problems that we have seen over and over again for it would be analogous to giving an aspirin to treat a brain tumor is just not going to work.

We have got to get at the underlying problem, and I look forward to hearing your statements and suggestions on how to effectively utilize our support in these times of an economic downturn.

I mean, we don't need to go—you all know where we are at, and more desirably I would like to see suggestions on a paradigm shift instead of doing the same thing we have done over and over again for so many years—a paradigm shift of how to better administer the aid that the United States of America gives to the countries in the Middle East and elsewhere around the world.

And I would like to focus on trade, not aid, and I look forward to hearing you and I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Dr. Yoho. And now I would like to recognize Mr. Connolly for his opening statement. I don't know if the ladies are aware that he is a former staffer in the Senate Committee of International Relations.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am—I thank the chair for pointing that out. We former staffers like to believe it makes for a better Congress, you know.

Madam Chairman, I have an opening statement I would like to have entered into the record.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I look forward to hearing the testimony of our witnesses today. Thank you for calling the hearing.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much and thank you to all of our members and thank you. I am so pleased to recognize our two excellent panelists today.

First, we welcome Ambassador Anne Patterson, who is assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs. Ambassador Patterson has been the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Colombia, Pakistan and, most recently, as we know, Egypt.

She has also served as assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law enforcement affairs, deputy permanent

representative to the United Nations and deputy inspector general at the State Department. Welcome, Madam Ambassador.

We also have with us Ms. Alina Romanowski, who is the acting assistant administrator for the Middle East Bureau at USAID, the U.S. Agency for International Development. Prior to this position, she served as deputy assistant administrator in the Middle East Bureau focusing on U.S. assistance programs in support of political transitions in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco.

Welcome, ladies, and we will begin with Ambassador Patterson. Thank you so much, and as I stated, your entire statement will be made a part of the record. Please feel free to summarize.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ANNE W. PATTERSON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. PATTERSON. Thank you, Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Pull the microphone a little bit closer to you.

Ms. PATTERSON. Members of the committee, again, thank you for inviting us to discuss our Fiscal Year 2105 budget request. We are requesting $7.6 billion for diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance to better position us to provide support for political and economic reforms as well as to promote security and stability in the region.

This will be hard work and will require all of the tools at our disposal. We need dedicated diplomats in the field who can operate from secure facilities yet also get out and meet with citizens and officials across the region.

My staff and I pay close attention to threats to our people but we also work in some high-threat environments.

Our targeted assistance programs will support humanitarian and security needs, promote economic reforms and strengthen governance and democratic values. We will focus on helping regional partners counter violent extremism, strengthen their economies, improve education and provide jobs, especially while expanding business and trade with the United States.

The department seeks $1.5 billion to respond to Syria-related and regional contingency needs and to support region wide economic and political reform initiatives. The request includes $1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance accounts for Syria-related humanitarian needs.

More than 11 million people, half the country's population, are displaced or in need of humanitarian assistance and these numbers continue to grow.

We are seeking $155 million in support for the moderate opposition and particularly the local councils in Syria that are providing services as a bulwark against violent extremists.

We continue to adjust bilateral programs in order to meet changing needs, particularly for Syria, Yemen, Libya and Tunisia. We need to be able to respond rapidly to critical priorities and take advantage of opportunities.

Our request includes $225 million to support reforms promoting broad-based economic growth, stability and democratic change. Beyond our Syria-related and regional contingencies request, the

Yemen and Iraq bilateral request are our most important changes from previous years.

Our request anticipates the continuing transition of contingency operations in Iraq to a more traditional diplomatic presence. However, Iraq is fighting off a ferocious effort by violent extremists who seek to disrupt its national elections and exploit the Syrian civil war to expand their influence across the region.

The United States is providing targeted security and development assistance to assist Iraq in its fight and to further U.S. strategic interests in Iraq. The $309 million request for Iraq is a significant decrease but it focuses on U.S. priorities such as programs for counterterrorism, vulnerable populations, governance and commercial development, especially in the energy sector.

Yemen's political transition is progressing. It reached an important milestone recently through the broadly inclusive national dialogue and is working to implement the outcomes. With active U.S. engagement, Yemen has made some gains extending security in the country both through military operations and through reorganization of its security ministries.

We are proposing an enhanced Yemen bilateral budget of $106 million to help continue the fight against violent extremists and humanitarian assistance for vulnerable Yemenis, consolidate the transition's democratic gains and address critical economic challenges.

I have just returned from Tunisia, which is making considerable strides. Some of you may have met Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa during his recent visit to Washington. Despite its gains, underlying economic and security challenges pose substantial threats to Tunisia's stability.

Our bilateral request of $66 million provides resources that will enable us to support Tunisia's democratic transition, bolster security and promote economic growth. We have requested $1.5 billion in military and economic assistance to Egypt to sustain our longstanding partnership in pursuit of mutual goals.

As circumstances in Egypt have changed, we have reevaluated how assistance best supports our objectives, including a desire to work directly with the Egyptian people. For example, we are supporting a higher education initiative to help students, especially women and girls, earn degrees in the fields that provide the 21st century skills urgently needed to rekindle Egypt's economy.

Continuing instability in Libya is undermining the government's ability to function effectively or to get the country's oil production back online. To support Libya's fragile transition, we are bolstering our assistance efforts to strengthen internal security, advance the transition, develop governance capacity to provide services and create opportunities for economic growth.

The United States has a long-term and enduring commitment to support Israel's security and to seek a comprehensive and lasting Middle East peace between Israel and its neighbors.

We remain deeply engaged with Israel and the Palestinians, who now are facing some very difficult decisions. They need to step back and reflect on how to proceed.

But there is no change in our commitment to remain engaged. Our $3.1 billion bilateral request will help Israel to maintain its qualitative military edge, a cornerstone of our policy.

Our foreign assistance of $441 million for the West Bank and Gaza will support the Palestinian Authority's capacity to deliver services and improve security conditions while reinforcing Palestinian respect for the rule of law and fostering the conditions for a strong private sector economy.

We have increased our bilateral assistance to Lebanon to meet challenges posed by the spillover effects of the Syrian civil war.

The $155 million Lebanon request will be used to build the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the internal security forces, improve public services, expand growth and build the capacity of local government and civil society.

Along with our loan guarantee programs, the $671 million Jordan bilateral request supports the government's political and economic reform efforts while helping address challenges from regional unrest and the large numbers of refugees from Syria.

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch, the United States continues to face paramount national security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa. The resources you provide will play a critical role in assuring success and a better future both for the people of the region and the interests of the United States.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Patterson follows:]

Statement for the Record
Ambassador Anne W. Patterson
Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
April 29, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting us to appear before you today to discuss our FY 2015 Budget request.

For generations, Americans have worked across the Middle East and North Africa region to build the foundations for peace and stability in support of our paramount national security interests. The United States long urged regional leaders to promote evolutionary changes and launch economic reforms to prevent the kinds of convulsive change we have seen in recent years. But the ground, as we knew it would, is shifting.

People across the Middle East and North Africa demand action. For the past three years, the region's young people – nearly 50 percent of the region's population is under age 30 – have been demanding changes in their societies and a greater say in determining their destinies. The result has been unrest, revolution and, in the case of Syria, civil war. While many who have risen up aspire to democratic governments and universal rights, for many others, their concerns come down to the basic issues of jobs and opportunities. After the experiences of the past three years, regional leaders are paying attention – and so must we. Although events and the pace of change are unpredictable, we believe that consistent and strong diplomatic engagement and the strategic deployment of assistance by the United States to support the transitions underway will assure a longer term trajectory that will be better for us all.

Our $7.6 billion FY 2015 budget request for both diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance funding reflects our view that U.S. national security interests require us to be an engaged partner with the governments and people in the region – providing support for political and economic reforms, as well as promoting security and stability in the region. The United States needs to associate itself with the people of the region's aspirations for the future, including economic opportunities and core democratic principles.

This ongoing process of transition will continue for some time. As a result, large numbers of people across the region share a deep sense of frustration. In countries that have experienced revolutions we have seen that years of authoritarian government have left people with high expectations, but few institutions to sustain change or leaders with the political skills to shape it or the managerial skills to run reforming governments. In some parts of the region, instability has festered in geographic areas that governments cannot effectively control. It is in such places that opportunistic, violent extremists seek to establish safe havens.

Fundamental U.S. interests in the region have not changed – but in this continuously evolving region, our challenges are significantly different. The United States continues to combat the spread of terrorism, violent extremism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; promote the free flow of commerce and ensure global energy security; and support good governance and engaged civil society. To address these interests, U.S. diplomatic priorities will be to preserve Israel's security; support negotiations that will assure Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon; promote a political transition in Syria and eliminate its chemical weapons; bolster key regional partners; and seek a comprehensive and lasting Middle East Peace between Israel and its neighbors.

This will be hard work; it will require all of the tools at our disposal, including diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy and exchanges, and assistance resources. We need to have dedicated diplomats in the field who can operate from secure facilities, yet also get out and meet with citizens and officials across the region. My staff and I pay very close attention to threats to our people, but we also know that we work in some high threat environments. Our targeted assistance programs do much to provide for critical humanitarian and security needs across the region; to support governments struggling with health, agriculture and critical infrastructure issues; and to strengthen governance and support democratic values. Going forward, the most important contributions we make will be to help regional partners counter the threat of violent extremism, strengthen their economies, expand education, and provide jobs – especially while expanding business and trade with the United States. Our engagement now, during this critical period of change, will form the strongest basis for our partnership with countries of the region, focusing on lasting growth, prosperity and peace.

What We Have Done

Last summer, in response to our diplomatic efforts, Israelis and Palestinians agreed to pursue final status talks, an essential step toward ultimate resolution of the long-

standing Arab-Israeli conflict, though it is no surprise that these negotiations have been difficult. As the President said on Friday, "It is still in America's interest as well as Israel's interest and the interest of the Palestinian people to see if we can resolve a conflict that is combustible. And so far, at least, what we've seen is some movement on both sides to acknowledge that this is a crisis long running that needs to be solved. What we haven't seen is, frankly, the kind of political will to actually make tough decisions. And that's been true on both sides." Meanwhile, our ironclad support for Israel's security, including our commitment to Israel's qualitative military edge, foreign military financing, and joint training and exercises, is unwavering. We have maintained our support for Jordan and for Jordan's cooperative relationship with Israel. Similarly, Egypt's commitment to its peace treaty with Israel has remained strong despite the changing political landscape in Cairo.

The United States, working with our P5+1 partners, has been engaged with Iran in negotiations to resolve our concerns about its nuclear program. In January, we began implementing the Joint Plan of Action, which for the first time in a decade halts and rolls back key aspects of Iran's nuclear program in exchange for temporary, limited, and reversible sanctions relief. While we have pursued diplomacy, we have maintained, in coordination with international partners, economic and political pressure on Iran. The vast majority of our sanctions remain in place, and we continue to enforce them vigorously. In February, we began negotiations with Iran on a comprehensive solution to ensure that it cannot acquire a nuclear weapon and that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. Of course, the outcome of these negotiations remains to be seen.

The three-year Syrian civil war, which began only after the Asad regime brutally attacked Syrians seeking reforms through peaceful protests, has cost 150,000 lives and created millions of refugees and internally-displaced persons. The U.S. government is providing over $1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance to support conflict-affected populations in Syria and refugees from Syria in neighboring countries along with the affected host communities. In addition, we are providing $260 million to assist the moderate opposition and provide nonlethal support to the Supreme Military Command (SMC) in support of finding a political resolution to the crisis. We have increased bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian aid to strengthen Lebanon's ability to mitigate spillover effects from the Syria crisis in refugee-hosting communities. Cash transfers beyond our regular bilateral assistance and loan guarantees have supported Jordan's economy in this time of need as it struggles with the influx of Syrian refugees.

In response to the Asad regime's brutal use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people, we have mobilized the international community to ensure the verifiable elimination of the regime's chemical weapons program. To date, international inspectors have verified the functional destruction of the regime's chemical weapons production, mixing, and filling equipment, and the international community has removed over 90 percent of the regime's declared chemical weapons materials.

Concerned by the growing extremist threat created by the situation in Syria, the U.S. government has bolstered regional counterterrorism partnerships, sustained regional counterterrorism operations, and enhanced our partners' abilities to conduct counterterrorism operations. Ultimately, we believe that the counterterrorism threat in Syria cannot be resolved until a political transition occurs in which Bashar al Asad is removed from power. He serves as a magnet for terrorists from around the world.

Across the region, the United States supports political and economic reforms in response to fast-moving events. We have supported national dialogues between citizens and their governments and new political processes in transitioning countries. We supported the Tunisian economy through a sovereign loan guarantee and cash transfer and promoted private sector development; we are continuing to help Tunisia build its economy and create jobs, reform its criminal justice sector, and prepare for the next round of parliamentary and presidential elections. In Yemen, we continue to support the Gulf Cooperation Council-brokered transition initiative, including robust U.S. government support for the outcomes of Yemen's National Dialogue and upcoming elections; the transition to date has been an important success inaugurating a more inclusive, representative political process. We have also partnered with the Yemeni government to support Yemeni military and security forces' reorganization and its efforts to extend security and counter the shared threat we face from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. We signed a $1.25 billion loan guarantee agreement with Jordan in 2013 and plan to sign a second loan guarantee for Jordan for $1 billion at the end of April, pending consultations with and notification to Congress, which will reinforce Jordan's economic reform program, support its continued access to international capital markets, and provide external financing at affordable rates.

Our Request

It is very likely that FY 2015 will continue to be a period of significant challenges to peace and stability in the NEA region, where U.S. engagement on behalf of our national security interests will be essential. I am particularly concerned that our

State Department field officers have the facilities, tools, and skilled workforce to advance our national security policies effectively.

Our FY 2015 Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) budget request of $7.6 billion is comprised of $631.3 million for Diplomatic Engagement ($321.5 million in Enduring funds and $309.8 million in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds) and $7 billion for foreign assistance. For Diplomatic Engagement, our request for Enduring funds is an increase of $44.4 million above the FY 2014 enacted level for American and Locally Employed Staff salaries, to reflect the ongoing security realignment initiative, new domestic and overseas positions, and the continuing transition of contingency operations in Iraq to a more traditional diplomatic presence. OCO funds increase by $129 million over FY 2014 enacted levels, including $82.1 million for the ongoing transition in Iraq and $46.9 million to transition to operations on the ground in Syria while continuing some efforts in Turkey. The foreign assistance request is $113 million, or 1.6 percent, above the estimated FY 2014 allocation. The increase would provide funding to support reforms and transitions in response to continuing regional transitions and instability, and significant resources for Syria.

New Priorities

The Department is seeking $1.5 billion in the FY 2015 foreign assistance request in response to Syria-related needs, regional contingencies, and to support economic and political reform initiatives across the region. The structure of this request is informed by more than three years of experience in not only what assistance is needed and is most effective, but also by our regular consultations with the Congress. The FY 2014 request for the MENA Incentive Fund proposed the creation of a new account. In contrast, the FY 2015 request for a MENA Initiative includes requests for funds within existing accounts, utilizing the authorities available in the Foreign Assistance Act and annual appropriations bills to meet evolving needs.

Specifically, the overall FY 2015 request includes $1.1 billion in the humanitarian assistance accounts for ongoing Syria-related humanitarian needs. Approximately 11 million people are projected to be displaced or in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the conflict, and these numbers continue to grow. We are seeking $155 million to continue support to the moderate opposition or to support a potential Syrian transition. These resources remain a high priority for the United States as we continue to support those working towards Syria's future. We will continue to support moderate local councils and civil society organizations in Syria, as they have shown success in directly helping Syrians affected by the

conflict and stand in the way of violent extremists seeking the support of the unemployed and desperate young men caught up in the conflict.

Over the past three years, we have made adjustments to many of our bilateral programs in order to better meet the changing needs on the ground. The FY 2015 bilateral request reflects our continuing effort to make those adjustments, particularly for Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia. At the same time, we see opportunities to support reforms on a regional basis that complement our bilateral efforts but are difficult to support out of bilateral budgets. Moreover, the pace of change in the region has shown the need for committed but flexible funds that will enable the United States to respond rapidly to critical needs and take advantage of opportunities as they emerge. Therefore, this request includes $225 million to support reforms throughout the region to promote broad-based economic growth, stability and democratic change.

Included in this amount are funds to promote a regional economic architecture and strengthen economic ties between nations; for programs to strengthen governance, civil society, and openness in societies in the region; and to promote human rights and the rule of law focused on transitional justice, countering violent extremism, and security sector reform. In addition, we are developing programs that aim to create jobs and spur private investment throughout the region by mobilizing financing for growth-oriented start-up and early-stage companies, and that will foster partnerships in water resource science and management across the region, which has less than 1.5 percent of the world's renewable freshwater resources at its disposal.

Finally, because so many of the urgent resource needs emerging over the past three years have been the unexpected consequences of rapidly changing events, we are requesting $50 million for other regional contingencies to be placed in specific accounts, that will enable us to respond to short-term needs as they arise.

Resource Shifts

Our Syria-related and regional contingencies request, in addition to our Yemen and Iraq bilateral requests, are the most important changes from our previous budget request.

Even as Iraq prepares for national elections, its first since the withdrawal of U.S. troops, the country's armed forces are in a horrific fight against our mutual enemy – violent extremists who are exploiting the Syrian civil war to expand their influence across the region. By the end of 2013, suicide and vehicle-borne attacks

initiated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, returned to levels not seen since the height of the Iraq war in 2007. Additionally, over the past four months, over 70,000 families have been displaced by the violence in Anbar, which is spreading to other parts of Iraq. The United States is providing targeted security and development assistance to assist Iraq in its fight and to further U.S. strategic interests in Iraq, while reflecting our normalized relationship with Iraq. The FY 2015 total bilateral foreign assistance request for Iraq, at $308.8 million, will focus on U.S. priorities such as programs for counterterrorism, vulnerable populations, democracy and governance, and commercial development, especially in the energy sector. This request, which represents a significant decrease from FY 2014 levels, balances our national security priorities while recognizing that assistance for Iraq must be considered within the context of ever-increasing worldwide requirements and the realities of a fiscally constrained budget environment.

Yemen's political transition is progressing, achieving an important milestone through the broadly inclusive National Dialogue that set forth recommendations for the country's political future. With active U.S. engagement, Yemen's transitional government has made some gains extending security in the country, both through military operations against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and its affiliates, and through a challenging reorganization of both the Defense and Interior ministries. The Yemeni people continue to face significant humanitarian and economic challenges, including very high malnutrition and unemployment rates; young men with few alternatives are fodder for recruitment by violent extremist organizations. Our proposed enhanced Yemen bilateral budget of $106. 5 million will help to continue the fight against violent extremists, consolidate the gains of the democratic transition and address critical economic challenges, in addition to humanitarian assistance to help vulnerable Yemenis. Out of the $64.5 million in ESF that we are requesting for Yemen, $20 million will strengthen local Yemeni government institutions and civil society organizations that will hold them accountable.

Elsewhere in the region, Tunisia has made great strides since the revolution: establishing an independent elections commission; adopting a new constitution that respects universal rights; and installing a new, independent government that will lead the country to elections. Some of you may have heard about this directly from Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa during his recent visit to Washington. Despite these gains, underlying economic and security challenges pose substantial threats to Tunisia's stability, including high unemployment and an evolving terrorist threat. Our FY 2015 bilateral request of $66 million provides resources that will enable

the United States to support Tunisia's democratic transition, bolster security, and promote economic growth. Tunisia remains one of the region's best hopes for a successful transition to democracy and it will set the example for other countries in the region.

U.S. military and economic assistance to Egypt, which we have requested at $1.5 billion in FY 2015, will sustain our long-standing partnership with Egypt in pursuit of mutual goals. As circumstances in Egypt have changed, we have reevaluated how our assistance best supports our objectives, including fostering long-term security and stability in Egypt and directly supporting the Egyptian people's aspirations for economic opportunity and universal rights. For example, to help prepare Egyptian young people for the workforce, we are supporting a higher education initiative to help students, especially women, earn degrees in the fields that provide the 21st century science, technology, business and management skills urgently needed to rekindle Egypt's economy. As a result of reorienting our economic assistance to work more directly with the Egyptian people, we are seeking $200 million bilateral ESF for Egypt in FY 2015, the same planned allocation in FY 2014, but a decline from FY 2013. Existing prior year and FY 2015 resources will be sufficient to support our objectives.

The stability and security of the strategically significant Maghreb-Sahel region depends, in large part, on Libya's ability to consolidate its political transition and build effective governance and security institutions. Libya is a country with enormous oil resources, but its instability continues to undermine the government's ability to raise revenue and spend its money effectively. To support Libya's fragile transition, we are bolstering our assistance efforts to strengthen internal security, advance the political transition, develop governance capacity to provide basic services, and create opportunities for diversified economic growth.

Enduring Commitments to the Region

The United States will continue to support Israel's security and seek a comprehensive and lasting Middle East Peace between Israel and its neighbors. The FY 2015 bilateral request for Israel, at $3.1 billion, will help Israel to maintain its qualitative military edge, which continues to be a cornerstone of U.S. policy in the Middle East. The U.S. government also pursues comprehensive Middle East Peace by supporting Palestinian institution-building so that a future Palestinian state will possess the capacity to govern, provide services, and ensure security and stability within its borders and also with its neighbors. To bolster this policy approach, our foreign assistance request of $441 million for the West Bank and Gaza will support the development of Palestinian Authority institutional capacity

to deliver quality services, improve security conditions on the ground while reinforcing Palestinian respect for the rule of law, and foster the conditions for a strong private-sector driven economy. I want to address last week's agreement between Hamas and the PLO to form a provisional government of technocrats to plan for elections. We share Congress' commitment to ensuring no U.S. assistance goes to a Palestinian government that includes any terror group that denies Israel's right to exist, is pledged to Israel's destruction, and does not accept the Quartet principles, and we will continue to ensure full and vigorous compliance with all provisions of law governing assistance to the Palestinians. To date, there have been no changes in the make-up of the Palestinian Authority government. Despite Prime Minister Hamdallah's recent offer of resignation, his government – and all of its ministers – remains in place and is expected to unless/until an interim government of independent technocrats is formed following up to five weeks of consultations.

Demonstrating our strong commitment to Lebanon, we have increased our bilateral assistance to Lebanon to meet the challenges to stability posed by the spillover effects of the Syrian civil war, which are likely to remain. The $155 million FY 2015 total bilateral request for Lebanon will be used to build the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces in part to help them control Lebanon's borders and assert sovereignty, improve the delivery of public services, expand economic growth, and build the capacity of local government and civil society.

U.S. foreign assistance to Jordan supports the government's political and economic reform efforts while helping address development and economic challenges brought on by external economic shocks, regional unrest, and hosting large numbers of refuges from Syria. United States assistance also supports efforts to deepen our partnership with Jordan to promote comprehensive regional peace and combat terrorism. The $671 million FY 2015 bilateral request continues current MOU commitment levels of $360 million in ESF and $300 million in FMF, and includes our requests for IMET and NADR funding. Combined with the access to international capital that our loan guarantees last year and this year provide, our assistance will support Jordan's capacity to promote security and stability in the region; advance political, economic, and social reform; and help mitigate Syria-related economic and security strains to the extent possible.

Conclusion

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch, the United States will continue to face paramount national security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa

region for some time. While the region's citizens are going through a very difficult period, we will use all the tools at our disposal –our diplomatic presence, economic and trade policy, military-to-military relations, public diplomacy and exchanges – to advance U.S. interests and values. The resources you provide will play a critical role in assuring success and a better future for the people of the region and the security interests of the United States.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador. Ms. Romanowski.

STATEMENT OF MS. ALINA L. ROMANOWSKI, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch and members of the subcommittee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year 2015 budget request for USAID for the Middle East and North Africa.

The U.S. will remain engaged with the governments and the people of the region to support their transitions and their economic and political reforms. The President's request of $7 billion for the Middle East supports our continued engagement.

One point three billion dollars of that request will enable USAID to implement targeted programs in the region. The 2015 request includes $1.5 billion for the proposed MENA initiative, which will give us the tools and flexibility to respond to Syria-related and regional contingency needs and support the political and economic reforms.

As part of this initiative, USAID will launch two initiatives to tackle some of the region's most pressing development challenges.

USAID's new MENA investment initiative will aim to create jobs in the region, spur private investment by targeting promising start-up businesses that struggle to access financing. It will leverage U.S. funding to catalyze resources from others.

The second initiative, the MENA water security initiative, will engage the public and private sector to help entrepreneurs and researchers develop water smart technologies which, combined with economic opportunities, will improve long-term sustainable access to water for 20 million people across the region.

To grow the private sectors in Tunisia and Egypt, we have established enterprise funds which we will continue to fund in 2015. We are also working to create business-enabling environments that reduce barriers to starting businesses and trade.

In Egypt and the West Bank, for example, we are investing in one-stop shops. In Egypt, these shops have reduced the time it takes to register a business from over a week to about an hour, and in the West Bank I witnessed Palestinians using similar shops to receive services from their local government quickly, transparently and hassle free.

We are also focusing on economic empowerment of small and medium entrepreneurs. In Libya, we have trained 177 entrepreneurial women on fundamental business skills. This is the first program of its kind to focus on Libyan women.

In Jordan, USAID has prepared hundreds of thousands of students for the job market through a nationwide entrepreneurship program, vocational training in the tourism and hospitality sectors and internships and job fairs for recent graduates. Turning to democratic governance, USAID is committed to helping build participatory democracies.

In Egypt, we have helped thousands of women in rural governorates exercise their political and economic rights including helping 48,000 women get government IDs. In Yemen, USAID

helped youth and women take an active role in the national dialogue conference and in Tunisia we worked with civil society and the government on a consultation process that led to adopting some of the most progressive NGO laws in the region.

I would also like to highlight two of our key bilateral programs—West Bank Gaza and Egypt. The U.S. Government pursues comprehensive Middle East peace by supporting Palestinian institution-building so that a future Palestinian state will possess the capacity to govern, provide services and ensure security and stability within its borders and with its neighbors.

Our 2015 request will continue to build the capacity of institutions necessary for a future Palestinian state. In Egypt, we have reoriented our assistance to more directly support the Egyptian people.

Our assistance will focus on growing jobs in high unemployment sectors, building job skills of young Egyptians through a higher education initiative and helping Egyptians advocate for improved rights in governance. Finally, I would like to turn to Syria, which is a regional challenge of daunting proportions.

AID will continue to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance inside Syria and to Syrian refugees in five neighboring countries. In Lebanon, where Syrians now make up close to 25 percent of the total population, our assistance focusses on water, education and small-scale agriculture. For example, USAID has rehabilitated 183 public schools throughout the country.

We will continue to support the Government of Jordan, a key partner in the region, by providing critical support to host countries—excuse me, host communities to alleviate increased demand for services such as primary education and access to water.

In addition to our annual assistance, we are preparing a second loan guarantee in 2014. And, in conclusion, the President's 2015 budget request ensures USAID programs will continue to support the needs and aspirations of the region's people during this critical period of change.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and I am happy to answer your questions. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Romanowski follows:]

Statement of Alina L. Romanowski
Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for the Middle East
U.S. Agency for International Development
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee

"The Middle East and North Africa FY 2015 Budget: Priorities and Challenges"

April 29, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, and Members of the Subcommittee: thank you for the opportunity to discuss the FY2015 budget for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and our continued efforts to respond to the development needs of the Middle East and North Africa as the region continues to transition. With the Administration's proposed FY 2015 budget for the region, USAID will continue to effectively deliver the United States' international development mission as part of America's strategic security, economic and political interests in the Middle East and North Africa.

For the past three years, calls for transition and change have reverberated across the region. The people of the Middle East and North Africa are faced with similar challenges – weak democratic institutions and processes, high unemployment, underperforming economies, and water scarcity. USAID programs will continue to respond to the needs and aspirations of the people in the region, by facilitating more inclusive economic growth, supporting democratic processes, strengthening civil society, and addressing other key challenges, such as the impact of the Syria crisis. As my colleague Ambassador Patterson said, the United States must remain an engaged partner with the governments and people of the region to provide support for economic and political reforms and to promote security and stability in the region.

This continued engagement is in our U.S. national security interest and it will be supported by the President's FY 2015 $7.0 billion foreign assistance request for the Middle East and North Africa, of which approximately $1.3 billion will enable USAID to implement comprehensive and targeted programs that help us achieve these goals.

MENA Initiative Request

This region is evolving, and as such, the President's FY 2015 request includes $1.5 billion for the MENA Initiative, which will give us the tools and flexibility to respond to Syria-related and regional contingency needs, and support political and economic reform initiatives across the region. Specifically, the MENA Initiative request includes $1.1 billion to enable the United States to continue to respond to ongoing humanitarian needs in Syria and neighboring countries. An additional $225 million will help us spur economic growth, strengthen democratic governance and civil society, and support human rights and rule of law initiatives in the region. With part of this $225 million, USAID will specifically be launching two initiatives—the MENA Investment Initiative (MENA-II) and the MENA Water Security Initiative—to tackle issues that are evident across borders and present some of the region's most pressing development challenges.

USAID's new MENA Investment Initiative will aim to create jobs in the region and spur private investment, by targeting start-up and early-stage businesses that struggle to access financing, working through incubators, accelerators and angel investor groups. The MENA-II will leverage U.S. funding to catalyze resources from others and to target promising start-ups. This will involve creating networks of investment partners, including the private sector, other donors, philanthropic organizations, governments and NGOs.

The Middle East and North Africa contains 12 of the world's 15 most water scarce countries. To respond to this, a USAID-led regional MENA Water Security Initiative will provide the opportunity for public and private sectors, civil society, and other organizations to support entrepreneurs, researchers and consumers with opportunities to develop, test and scale up "water-smart" technologies. The MENA Water Security Initiative aims to combine the development of new "water-smart" technologies with economic opportunities to improve long-term, sustainable access to water for 20 million people in the region. This program will target the cross-border issues that hinder efficient and equitable management of shared resources, and it builds on efforts currently supported by USAID bilateral missions and the Middle East Regional program's smaller-scale water programming. The MENA Water Security Initiative will also support public education on the role of citizens as responsible stewards of dwindling water supplies, helping to mitigate potential conflict.

In FY 2015, in addition to the funding requested for the MENA Initiative, USAID will continue to support the transitions going on in the region through our bilateral programs, with a particular focus on economic growth and prosperity and democratic governance. USAID will also continue to support the Syrian people and Syria's neighbors.

Economic Growth and Prosperity

Today, throughout the Middle East and North Africa, tepid or stagnant economic growth and high unemployment among young people remain major challenges. The region has the highest rate of youth unemployment in the world, with 24 percent of young people out of work and just 26 percent of women of all ages participating in the workforce. Education systems and job skills training fail to prepare young people for the workforce, reducing the region's ability to compete in a global economy. Further, the traditional route to employment has narrowed over the past decade as fiscally strained governments have shed public sector positions.

USAID programs work to address these challenges through a multi-pronged approach. We have established Enterprise Funds in Tunisia and Egypt to provide investment in the economy and develop the private sectors in both countries, by expanding access to financing and creating opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises. Additional support to the Enterprise Funds is planned in FY 2015.

USAID is also working with regional governments and local partners to create business-enabling environments that reduce barriers to starting a business and support them once they are operational. For example, in Egypt and the West Bank, we are investing in "one-stop shops." In Egypt, these shops have reduced the time it takes to register a business from over a week to

about an hour. I witnessed citizens in the West Bank using these "shops" to engage with, apply for, and receive services from their local governments quickly, transparently and hassle-free.

Our economic empowerment programs offer small and medium enterprises seed capital, training in business skills, mentorship and regional networking opportunities for entrepreneurs running small and medium enterprises, especially those managed by women. Earlier this month, during the Morocco Strategic Dialogue, I met with local early-stage entrepreneurs who are working with USAID to expand their businesses and improve the business-enabling environment in Morocco. In Libya, USAID's Women's Economic Empowerment program has trained 177 entrepreneurial women on fundamental business skills. The program is among the first of its kind in Libya to offer training for entrepreneurs, and it is the first to systematically focus on women. The women are developing their business plans and strengthening their business networks as a result of the training program.

USAID is also targeting job training and workforce skills development for growing economic sectors, preparing the region's young people for employment. In Jordan, USAID has prepared hundreds of thousands of students—nearly 110,000 last year alone—for the job market through a nationwide entrepreneurship program, vocational training in the tourism-hospitality sectors, and internships and regional job fairs for recent graduates. In Tunisia, USAID is encouraging job creation in high-impact sectors of the economy, like information communications technology (ICT), where our work with this sector has generated over 2,600 new jobs and connected thousands more with potential employers. In Iraq, USAID support to private sector workforce development has helped Iraqi jobseekers to fill more than 5,300 positions in over 550 businesses operating in Iraq. We did this by providing training modules to over 10,000 jobseekers to bridge skills gaps and by supporting an online jobs portal in partnership with Microsoft.

Keeping young people in school and reducing dropout rates are key to regional economic growth and stability. Throughout the region, USAID is partnering with ministries of education and schools to roll out early grade reading programs to increase literacy rates, encourage retention and expand girls' access to education and a brighter future. In Yemen, USAID developed the Early Grade Reading workshop, which is encouraging teachers to engage with students by moving from rote memorization to interactive classrooms. By the end of the initiative, we expect that 10,000 teachers and 300,000 children throughout Yemen will be involved in the program. The Yemeni Ministry of Education now plans to replicate the program throughout the country. In Morocco, our early grade reading program aims to increase the recruitment of female teachers and improve the retention rate. This program aims to increase opportunities outside of school to promote reading by engaging with and supporting community based groups.

Democratic Governance

For the region to truly be stable and prosperous, citizens' demands for inclusive, responsive governance need to be addressed. USAID is committed to helping the region build participatory democracies, improve transparency and accountability of governments and engage civil society, youth, minorities and women on issues like improving human rights and increasing political participation. For example, in Egypt we've assisted thousands of women in rural governorates to exercise their political and economic rights, including helping 48,000 women receive

government IDs. In Libya, USAID is working to ensure that minority group voices are included in the drafting process of that country's constitution. Similarly, in Yemen, USAID helped minority ethnic and religious groups, youth and women weigh in on the future of their country through contributing to the National Dialogue Conference. We will continue our focus on inclusive development with our FY 2015 request.

USAID continues to work with and help build the capacity of civil society organizations to promote indigenous democratic reform and to fully empower women and youth. In Tunisia, Iraq and Libya we have been able to take advantage of political openings to encourage early reformers to adopt consultative government-civil society processes that have led to improved civil society legislation, which in turn will pave the way for further political openings. For example, in Tunisia, we worked with civil society and the government to foster a consultation process that led to the implementation some of the most progressive NGO laws in the region. This process is now being used as a model throughout the region. For example, the new Libyan draft civil society organization law is based on peer consultations with Tunisians on their law.

In FY 2015, the State Department and USAID will utilize the requested MENA Initiative to work with citizen groups and all levels of government to help bridge gaps, increase openness and access to information, improve governance and ultimately increase trust between governments and their citizens. These funds would focus on connecting officials and civil society in many countries, while bilateral programs focus on ongoing planned efforts at the country level.

Impact of the Syria Crisis

The crisis in Syria has become a regional challenge of daunting proportions, with 6.5 million people displaced inside Syria, 9.3 million in need of humanitarian assistance and over 2.6 million refugees spilling over into neighboring countries. USAID is providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations who are affected by the ongoing conflict in Syria. USAID is providing more than $669 million to help over 4.2 million people inside Syria and more than $232 million to help Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. USAID has responded to needs of the most vulnerable in all 14 Syrian governorates and Syrian refugees in five neighboring countries—Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. In addition to humanitarian aid, USAID is also providing $77 million in assistance to help the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC), local councils and others provide essential services to their communities, improve governance and women's participation and enhance the credibility of moderate voices inside Syria.

In FY 2015, USAID will continue to respond to the critical needs of internally displaced persons in Syria, and conflict-affected communities by providing food and other life-saving humanitarian assistance to all those in need no matter where they reside. USAID will also continue to address critical food assistance needs of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. We will continue to prioritize food assistance, emergency and basic healthcare, relief supplies, water and sanitation services and protection programs.

USAID is committed to a comprehensive response to the conflict in Syria—combining humanitarian, transitional and development interventions to address the needs of conflict-affected Syrians and host communities both within Syria, and regionally. Supporting neighboring

countries as they cope with both the short- and long-term effects of the Syria crisis is a top priority for USAID.

Jordan

In Jordan, approximately 80 percent of the close to 600,000 Syrian refugees live not in refugee camps but within Jordanian host communities. USAID is helping address the tremendous challenges caused by the ongoing influx of refugees. Since FY 2012, in addition to the annual budget support to the Government of Jordan, the U.S. Government has provided another $300 million in direct budget support. In 2013, we provided a $1.25 billion loan guarantee, and we are preparing an additional $1 billion guarantee in FY 2014.

USAID has provided critical assistance to communities including hospital renovations and water infrastructure repair and maintenance to alleviate increased demand for services. We added additional funds to fast-track the expansion of 20 schools in northern Jordan serving over 11,000 students, and we have helped train teachers for crowded classrooms and students who have lived through trauma. A USAID community engagement project is in place to alleviate community tensions by promoting dialogue and addressing stressors including trash removal, small infrastructure projects, such as bridges and parks, and improvements to schools and community centers. The influx of Syrians into local communities has increased the pressure on limited and already strained water availability in Jordan. A Complex Crises Fund project is helping these communities to manage their precious water resources and mitigate the potential for conflict. That project has set up a revolving credit fund so families can access loans to install cisterns for harvesting rainwater. Half of the borrowers are women, repayment rates are extremely high and—most importantly—this effort has helped tens of thousands of people secure access to water.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, where Syrians now make up more than 25 percent of the total population, USAID has reoriented its ongoing development assistance to focus on heavily affected areas like the Bekaa Valley. Our assistance focuses on water and education as well as a value-chain development to advance small-scale agriculture. USAID helped equip 12 schools across the Bekaa Valley with desks, whiteboards, tables, printers, photocopiers, closets, and generators. We have also rehabilitated 183 public schools throughout the country, providing better educational environments for thousands of Lebanese and Syrian students. Efforts like this are helping address community tensions and reduce the strain on the education system, while ensuring high-quality education for both Lebanese and Syrian students. Since January 2013, USAID has rehabilitated thousands of Lebanese-owned residential units for refugees, increased access to water or other municipal services for over 125,000 people, reached nearly 100,000 children and at-risk youth through supplemental education activities and implemented over 280 community cohesion activities and social improvement projects. In FY 2015, USAID will continue to identify programming opportunities that help alleviate the strains on Lebanese communities hosting Syrian refugees.

Other Regional Priorities

I would also like to highlight some key bilateral programs—West Bank and Gaza, Egypt, and Yemen.

West Bank and Gaza

The U.S. Government pursues comprehensive Middle East Peace by supporting Palestinian institution-building so that a future Palestinian state will possess the capacity to govern, provide services and ensure security and stability within its borders and also with its neighbors. Through our Fiscal Year 2015 request of $370 million, USAID will continue to support peace efforts by building the capacity of institutions necessary for a future Palestinian state through assistance in the areas of democracy and governance, education, health and humanitarian assistance, private enterprise, water resources and infrastructure. USAID budget support will ensure the continued viability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its ability to both actively support peace efforts and respond to the needs of the Palestinian people. We are following closely the latest reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas. If a new Palestinian government is formed, we will assess it based on its policies and actions and will determine the implications for our assistance based on U.S. law.

In FY 2015, USAID will continue supporting the ICT industry, which is creating sustained job growth by supporting partnerships between multinational and Palestinian ICT companies. USAID has facilitated partnerships between Palestinian software development companies and U.S. companies, including Cisco, Microsoft, Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and Oracle. For example, USAID worked with Intel to sign three deals with Palestinian software development firms. Intel now employs 40 Palestinians to work on projects for Intel Israel.

USAID and the U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv are also supporting programs promoting peaceful coexistence among Israelis and Palestinians. Since 2004, 69 Conflict Management and Mitigation grants have supported people-to-people activities in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza that improve mutual understanding between communities.

Egypt

In the wake of the events of last year, we have reoriented our assistance to Egypt to more directly support the Egyptian people. We will continue this support with our FY 2015 request of $200 million. A targeted approach, when combined with prior year funds available for Egypt, is sufficient to meet these goals. In Egypt, we are focusing resources on programs that provide tangible results for Egyptians and lead to increased economic productivity in the long term. Our assistance will focus on growing jobs in high employment sectors like agriculture and tourism, especially for young people and women, building the skills of young Egyptians to meet private sector job demands through higher education and helping Egyptians advocate for improved rights and governance and strengthen the democratic process.

Yemen

Yemen's National Dialogue Conference concluded in January 2014, marking a major milestone in the Gulf Coordination Council (GCC) initiative. Diverse actors in Yemen were able to come together through the National Dialogue Conference to choose dialogue over civil war and lay out their collective hopes for the country's future. Going forward, it will be critical for the Government of Yemen to demonstrate meaningful progress both on the broader reforms laid out in the dialogue and forthcoming constitution. President Hadi named a National Organization to oversee implementation of dialogue recommendations, and an inclusive drafting committee is preparing a draft constitution based on dialogue outcomes. Once a constitution is in place, a new round of elections will mark the completion of the GCC initiative milestones.

USAID's FY 2015 request is $74 million, a level appropriate to the significant needs and opportunities that Yemen will face when the GCC timeline comes to an end and that are likely to occur in the FY 2015 timeline. Our request will provide funds to support Yemen as it moves from the completion of the transition and begins the long term work of building more responsive institutions that better meet basic citizen needs, while promoting free market economic growth and supporting the delivery of essential services.

Conclusion

Alongside the investments the United States has already made in the Middle East and North Africa, the President's FY 2015 budget request ensures USAID programs will continue to support the needs and aspirations of the region's people during this critical period of change. Our continued engagement with the people of the region serves as the foundation of our partnership with the countries of the region and will allow us to contribute to lasting growth, prosperity and peace.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today, and I am happy to answer your questions.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Ms. Romanowski.

Ambassador Patterson, on Syria in your testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last month, after describing our efforts to resupply the Supreme Military Command, SMC, when its warehouse was taken over by extremists, you stated that when the SMC regained control we began sending supplies again, this time directly to trusted commanders.

But this is a bit disconcerting. What changes have been made to U.S. assistance programs since the extremist takeover to the warehouse to ensure proper oversight and implementation of these programs to Syria?

And moving to Egypt, one of my major concerns in this political transition that is taking place is the government's respect for the rule of law. Right now, we are seeing those mass trials and other negative trends that point to a country that may be slipping on the path toward democracy.

Next month, as we know, Egypt will hold these Presidential elections. This could very well determine who will lead the country into democracy or whether the country will fall back into its old failed patterns.

The new government can demonstrate its true respect for the rule of law by pardoning the conviction of the 43 NGO workers wrongly sentenced last year. Do you think that the Egyptian President will be able and willing to do so? In our meeting yesterday afternoon it seemed to indicate that they are not going to do that. They are asking for the NGOs to come back.

What are we doing to ensure that the pardon is issued for all 43 quickly and ensure that the NGO law is passed to help bolster civil society in Egypt?

And lastly, PA funding. I have concerns over the PA funding request especially in light of recent developments. We know that the PA continues to pay the salaries to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars to Palestinians who have been in Israeli prisons for committing or assisting in acts of terror.

We also know that money is fungible so the PA could very well be using our U.S. taxpayer dollars to support these convicted terrorists and their families. What is State and USAID doing to ensure that our funds are not being used to fund these terrorist payouts and to get more oversight and transparency over how the PA uses our funds?

Why do we continue to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to this corrupt PA without leveraging or conditioning our aid upon implementation of drastically needed reforms?

So to summarize: Syria, what changes have been made to U.S. assistance programs, Egypt, the immediate pardon of the 43 NGOs and PA funds going to pay terrorists and the need to get transparency to avoid corruption under the PA structure? Thank you, Madam Ambassador, Ms. Romanowski.

Ms. PATTERSON. Thank you. Let me take those in order, Madam Chairman.

On Syria, we have resumed assistance across the border into Syria to the opposition. No system is foolproof, Madam Chairman, but we have a very experienced team in Turkey and now in Jordan that monitor these. I have met personally with many of the com-

manders and talk to them regularly and have a whole range of contacts in the region.

So we are reasonably confident that this material—more than reasonably confident, quite confident, that this is going into the proper hands. Again, it is an area of very considerable turmoil so no system is perfect. But we are reasonably confident we can monitor this and audit this and that we know to whom we are giving the supplies.

Let me also mention that we have a program of building up local councils and we pay police and teachers in some of these areas in anticipation that there is a structure that can deliver public services to the Syrian people when a political settlement is reached.

Madam Chairman, in Egypt, let me say that we too are extremely concerned about recent developments—the death sentences against activists, many of whom are not even involved or not even brought to trial.

The NGO issue has been a longstanding one between our governments and Egypt and I think the Embassy when I was there had something like 43 meetings with the government on the NGO law—the various governments.

Of course, we have had three of them in the past 2 years. It has been an exceedingly high priority for us. I can assure you that Secretary Hagel has raised it. Secretary Kerry has raised it on many opportunities.

He is meeting today with the foreign minister, Nabil Fahmi. We have pushed repeatedly for a pardon for the NGO workers and for others and it will continue to be a priority going forward.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And if I could interrupt you. In our meeting yesterday with the minister he did not indicate that there would be any movement on that issue.

Ms. PATTERSON. Madam Chairman, I too have discussed this with the foreign minister and with General el-Sisi before he was a Presidential candidate. I want to tell you I think it will be a hard sell.

I think there is little appetite for NGOs, which they accuse of foreign interference, and but all I can say is we will continue to press the point. We also—the good news, however, is there are a number of NGOs in Egypt that do want to work with us and that we have been able to work with throughout this period.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. On the PA issue?

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes. Madam Chairman, let me say that we made a request of $440 million for the Palestinian Authority and I think—but I want to ask Alina to answer this question—I think there is a extraordinarily complex auditing process.

I think I saw something like 16 steps to audit where this money goes and to ensure that it goes into the proper hands. I believe the GAO just did a study and found out that while there were some paperwork snafus they were confident that the money was going into the right hands and not, as you say, into hands of terrorists or otherwise. We support——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And with what the law is saying, if there is a unity government and they have signed such a deal not implemented yet but signed.

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes. Madam Chairman, let me assure you of the administration's position on that. This is the—because this is the seventh unity discussion and announcement and chit chat since 2011 and we have got to see what evolves here.

I saw this frequently in Egypt, that they would issue statements and nothing would come of it. But let me be utterly clear about our policy toward Hamas. No U.S. Government money will go into any government that includes Hamas until Hamas accepts the quartet conditions and that is renouncing violence, recognizing previous agreements and, most explicitly, recognizing Israel's right to exist.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, and my time is up and so I am sorry, Ms. Romanowski, but maybe the others will ask those questions and give you an opportunity to respond. Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador. So pleased to yield to my friend, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Ambassador Patterson, I will just continue with where the chairman left off. I understand that there have been discussions of unity government in the past.

But I just wanted to touch on a few things that you said. You just said that the principles renouncing violence, recognizing that Israel agree to past agreements are requirements.

But you said we have got to see what evolves. You said that Israel and the Palestinians need to step back and consider how to proceed. You said in your written testimony that what we haven't seen, frankly, is the kind of political will to actually make tough decisions, and that has been true on both sides.

I understand that there has been talk of unity governments in the past. But why should any discussion of a unity government with a terrorist group be treated with any less alarm and concern and outrage, frankly, just because these talks have taken place in the past and the governments have never formed?

I mean, to suggest that both sides simply need to take a step back and see if they are serious about peace without expressing what I think would be necessary outrage at the decision by President Abbas to turn to a terrorist group to form a government to me shows what I think should be a real concern about the commitment to peace.

And it is just—it is frustrating, frankly, that because there has been—there have been conversations like this in the past that haven't gone anywhere that somehow in some quarters it seems that we don't take it as seriously as I would suggest we need to when one of the partners that we need for peace has announced that they are willing to throw in with a terrorist group that we and our allies recognize as a terrorist group.

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Deutch, I certainly appreciate that point. Let me say that relations between President Abbas and the leadership of Hamas are—well, they hate each other.

They are not positive at the slightest and there is some thought that one way to get rid of Hamas is to hold an election because that is how they entered the political process and that is how Abu Mazen—President Abbas should get rid of them. But they are a terrorist group. They are a terrorist group under U.S. law.

But I wouldn't want to throw out the entire Palestinian Authority over a discussion with Hamas that historically has not gone anywhere.

The Palestinian Authority needs our support and some elements of this, particularly the security forces, have been an enormous success over the past several years—the ability to protect 2.5 million Palestinians, to have a professional security force. So I take your point and I agree with you. But I don't think we should essentially throw out the baby with the bath water.

Mr. DEUTCH. I have—Ambassador Patterson, as you know, as I stated earlier and as I stated many times, I have been fully supportive of those efforts. I think they have been vitally important to enhancing security in the West Bank, security in Israel and throughout the region.

But to suggest that we are somehow throwing out the baby with the bath water because—let me put it this way. I don't think it should be up to us to remind President Abbas that they need our support when it has been clear—it has been the position of the United States Congress that any decision that they make to align themselves with a terrorist group will mean the end of the funding.

It is not—I don't think it is up for us—it is necessary for us to remind them. That is something that should be very clear to them. But I appreciate the point.

I just wanted to quickly turn, if I may, to Iran, Ambassador Patterson, and the administration had pledged to strictly enforce existing sanctions. The President had said he would come down on sanctions violators like a ton of bricks and to his credit and to the administration's great credit sanctions have been imposed numerous times throughout the interim agreement.

Under the joint plan of action the U.S. committed not to seek further reductions in Iranian oil exports below the million-barrel-per-day mark and the IAEA reports that Iran's exports reached 1.65 million barrels per day in February and that their exports exceeded the million-barrel mark in every month during the agreement thus far.

I just—I would like to know if the numbers are accurate, if you could make available the department's country by country estimates on Iranian oil imports and then ultimately where does that lead, and if it is true that they are in excess of a million barrels per day and countries are violating will sanctions then follow.

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Deutch, let me assure you that sanctions will continue to be imposed vigorously on violators. I think our policy on that has been quite clear. On the oil shipments per se, some of those statistics are seasonally adjusted. In other words, there are seasonal fluctuations and some of them include condensate so they are not entirely——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. They include—what was that?

Ms. PATTERSON. Condensate.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Okay. If you can move it up a little bit closer.

Ms. PATTERSON. They are not entirely—they are not entirely crude oil. But let me say——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Can you move the microphone just a little bit closer?

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes. Let me say that we think over time, over the next few months, that there won't be a net change.

Mr. DEUTCH. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Mr. Chabot is recognized.

Mr. CHABOT. My colleagues have already emphasized our concern about the involvement of Hamas and a unity agreement and all that so I don't want to beat a dead horse but I guess I will.

I think we all feel very strongly about this on both sides of the aisle so I would just like to reiterate everything that they said relative to that matter and I agree with them completely.

And we have great concern and great frustration and we think there ought to be no circumstances under which any tax dollars should in any way go to support a terrorist organisation like Hamas. You have been very clear in your early statement that that will be the case.

But these discussions have gone on and apparently haven't gone anywhere in the past and I certainly understand your point about that. But we feel very strongly about this. Just let me leave it there. You can respond or not.

Ms. PATTERSON. No. Just let me restate our assurances. No more money will go to Hamas unless essentially it stops being Hamas.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. Let me shift over to Lebanon for just a minute here.

As we know, Presidential elections will be happening in a few weeks and parliamentary elections, I believe, in the fall, and Hezbollah, of course, I think we can count on them to intimidate and coerce and to some degree disrupt and try to enforce their will on the people of Lebanon.

And one of the conditions that we would like to see in the next government—there are a number of them but I think one of the most important is the disbanding of the militias, particularly Hezbollah, and could you touch on the administration's view on that and what, if anything, we are doing on that and what we expect from the next government and how realistic it is that they actually follow through and disband the militias, especially Hezbollah?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, our policy, Mr. Chabot, toward Hezbollah has been well known over many years and the subject of very extensive sanctions and I know there is a bill from this committee that will intensify those sanctions, too.

But let me say that, again, I want to be realistic with the committee. I think the possibility of eliminating Hezbollah from essentially Lebanese political life in the short run is remote. But let me say that we urge them to exclude Hezbollah. We do not deal with the two ministers from Hezbollah.

We are very specific about that. We have no relation about that and we have certainly encouraged the Lebanese Government to move forward with elections on time and a free parliamentary system.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. Let me just ask one final question here. I am concerned about what ill effects there might be from this Hamas Fatah even talking of a possibility of an agreement—the

role that that might play on the U.S. security coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

I had the opportunity to visit their training facility during General Moeller's tenure and was impressed with the work being done there and the professionalism of our team. Can you give us an update on how it is going and can you speculate as to what would happen if there—if this unity agreement might go forward?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, this program has been very successful. They have trained over 4,500 regular policemen and 2,000 of the presidential guard, and the $70 million that we requested in this budget is for essentially refresher and advanced training to improve the capacity of the Palestinian security forces in things like forensics and criminal investigations.

Again, it would be—it would be a disaster, of course, if Hamas would somehow be integrated into the security forces. But I think the chances of that are remote and, again, we would not support that. But the project itself has been going very well.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. I yield back, Madame Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. And I thank Mr. Schneider for being sweet enough to allow Mr. Connolly to go first. Thank you, Mr. Schneider. Mr. Connolly is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair and I thank my colleague, Mr. Schneider. Secretary or Ambassador Patterson, going back to Egypt, the chairman laid out some of the enormous challenges to any semblance of democracy in Egypt.

We have a military government that overthrew what your colleague testified before this committee a few months ago was a freely and fairly elected government. It has mowed down hundreds of citizens in the streets.

It has condemned to death at least 700 Egyptians and, by the way, their political affiliation certainly is not justification for being sentenced to death. How in the world do we continue to justify decisions such as that made recently by Secretary Kerry nonetheless to go forward with the delivery of Apache helicopters to that military?

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Connolly, you are entirely correct in the issues that you have outlined and the extremely dire human rights situation that is taking place in Egypt, and this is of enormous concern to us and it is the reason that we did not proceed with the certification on governing democratically. So the two certifications essentially allow us to keep the contracts alive.

But let me also stress, Mr. Connolly, that we have serious national security interests in Egypt as well based on geography, based on the situation in the Sinai. Egypt, like other countries in North Africa, is essentially caught between the enormous weapons flows out of Libya and the jihadi flow out of Syria and the situation in the Sinai has flared up.

Egypt has been a good partner even with this very problematic human rights situation. Egypt has been a good partner to Israel and has closed down many of the tunnels in the Sinai.

So this is really a situation in which we have a range of objectives in Egypt and they don't always coincide. We decided to release the Apaches because the Egyptian Government has 33 Apaches of which only a few were operational and functional at

this time so they needed these Apaches to use in the Sinai and we have held back the other major weapons systems.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Ms. Romanowski testified about—in fact, cited as an exemplar democracy-building projects in Egypt that USAID is supporting. But, clearly, Egypt is headed in the wrong direction with respect to building democracy. At what point do you reevaluate the efficacy of our aid investments despite our noble intentions?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. Mr. Connolly, we have had over the years tremendous success in our programs to support—that directly support Egyptians in building their economic growth and in the higher education and bringing skills to Egyptian people.

We are reorienting our program to do more and more directly with the Egyptian people. We do have and we do know that there are many NGOs in Egypt that still would like to work with us and benefit from the expertise and the technical assistance that we do provide them. It will be a very long process.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Aren't they at risk? The chairman pointed out the still unresolved NGO situation in terms of 40 something people with trials pending haven't been accused of being foreign agents when they are guilty of nothing other than having cooperated with us excepting in some cases funding from us in the democratization process, and that was several governments ago and yet this current government persists in that persecution.

At what point do we determine on a bilateral basis we are putting people at risk seeking NGO cooperation?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. Mr. Connolly, I agree with you and we are constantly reevaluating our ability to conduct and continue those programs. But we do feel that it is important to look at those programs and to the extent to which that these NGOs do want to work with us and can safely work with us.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, it just seems to me that at some point the fiction that we are helping to build democracy in Egypt has to be addressed and at some point that balancing act, Ambassador Patterson, that you talked about, which one can understand, we do have vital security interests.

Egypt is not just any other country in the region. They are a vital part of the Camp David process. But we need to be true to our own ideals about it.

At some point, it seems to me, we are going to have to face the moment of truth about where this government is headed and what investments we are willing to continue to make in it. Otherwise, we make a mockery of the word democracy and the idea of building democratic society.

No such thing is occurring in Egypt. Quite the opposite. And that doesn't mean we abandon all of our investments but at some point, it seems to me, we have to take a cold hard look at their efficacy despite our good intentions.

A lot of money is going into that. Madam Chairman, I don't know if I have any——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Well put. Thank you so much.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you very much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I appreciate, Mr. Schneider, your courtesy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And just for the information of the members, this is the order in which you will be recognized—Mr. Meadows, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Kinzinger, Mr. Weber, Mr. Cicilline, Dr. Yoho and Mr. Cotton. And so we will now turn to Mr. Meadows.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you both for your testimony.

Ambassador Patterson, I would like to go to you with regards to the Palestinian issue. You talked about four tenets. You talked about, I guess, the auditing of moneys that assured us that our money is not going to support terrorist families.

It is still difficult to go home and talk about aid to the Palestinians, you know, and $400 million plus when we have their minister of prisons saying that the people in prison—terrorists—are heroes. How can we do a better job of making sure that indeed—because money is fungible—I mean, it gets moved around.

If we are supporting economic activities in Gaza or wherever it is and yet they are still building terror tunnels daily how do we hold them accountable for the American people so the moneys that we give them do not come back to provide terrorist activities to our greatest ally in the Middle East—Israel? How do we do that?

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Meadows, let me assure you that we have this conversation with them often. I personally had it with a Palestinian official just last week and let me also assure you that I think there is some very considerable soul searching going on in the Palestinian Authority about this if only because it is fiscally irresponsible and very expensive to maintain these stipends. So I am hopeful we will see some change in this.

Mr. MEADOWS. Can we send a very clear message? And I understand it is a delicate thing. I don't want to get in the middle of negotiations. However, can we send a very clear message that unless this stops the money will stop? Because, I mean, it is impossible for us to look at it so let us look at incitement.

You know, in the last omnibus there was a provision in there that said the Palestinians had to do more than what they were doing in terms of to make sure that incitement was not taking place, that Secretary Kerry has to basically say that that is not happening.

And yet our own Ambassador to Israel says that incitement is taking place with regards to the Palestinian Authority. So how do we as people of—you know, the State Department have two conflicting messages. One says incitement is not happening. The other says it is. How do we make sure that that stops as well?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, at least I am not aware that we have said incitement doesn't happen. I think what we are trying to say at least is that there have been some improvements and that we work vigorously with the Palestinian Authority, particularly on issues like textbooks where there has been some progress in recent years, to reduce the incitement and sort of the anti-Israel bias.

So I don't think we would say that there—I think we would say that we are working on this. Vis-à-vis the message, I think, Mr. Meadows, you can rest assured that very stiff messages about this are conveyed to the Palestinian Authority on a regular basis.

Mr. MEADOWS. Well, but making progress and stopping it and saying that it has stopped are two different things. The language

in the omnibus appropriations was very clear and it didn't say that we had to make progress.

It said that we had to certify that they—that it was not being done, and yet we are not seeing that. So I guess are you saying that you and Secretary Kerry are willing to say that the Palestinian Authority is doing all that they can do to stop incitement at this point? You are willing to certify that?

Ms. PATTERSON. I don't know. I can't answer that question, Mr. Meadows. I can't answer that question now. I would have to go back and review the record on this and see exactly what the Palestinians have done.

But what I can assure you is that we do everything we possibly can to reduce this and to engage with them on this issue.

Mr. MEADOWS. All right. At what point, when we continue to just send money and send money and send money and never take it away, does the leverage of the money that we send them stop being a leverage?

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Meadows, providing money for the Palestinian Authority is in our interest, in many cases.

Mr. MEADOWS. I agree and——

Ms. PATTERSON. It provides——

Mr. MEADOWS [continuing]. I am a student of the Middle East——

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes.

Mr. MEADOWS [continuing]. And so I follow it and I understand that there are but at some point when our words become meaningless the leverage of those dollars they cease to exist. Would you not agree with that?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, yes. I would think that that is probably true all—you know, across any foreign assistance account that you don't want to make statements that then—about which you then don't deliver.

Mr. MEADOWS. Right.

Ms. PATTERSON. No, I entirely agree with that. But we have made progress with the Palestinian Authority and sort of to back up and take a broader look at this, I think the secretary's view on the peace process right now is that we are in a pause and I think he would say that both sides recognize that they have to get back to negotiations and that even Prime Minister Netanyahu used the word suspend and not cease.

Mr. MEADOWS. Right.

Ms. PATTERSON. So the idea is to work with the parties to get back to the negotiating table because I think people on all sides realize the two-state solution is the only way forward.

Mr. MEADOWS. All right. Let me follow it with one last question and then I will throw one to you and I will yield back. You mentioned in your tenets—your quartet you said the Palestinian and—we say now Palestinian/Hamas, if that is what it becomes, the recognition of Israel's right to exist.

Ms. PATTERSON. Absolutely.

Mr. MEADOWS. At what point does that become the recognition of a Jewish state? Because that is something that they have never—you know, Israel is willing to recognize a Palestinian state

but yet Jewish state is different than recognizing Israel. So at what point do we change our rhetoric to say a Jewish state?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well——

Mr. MEADOWS. Or do we?

Ms. PATTERSON. I can't answer that, Mr. Meadows. The broad scope of international law and quartet principles and U.S.—and U.N. resolutions on this says to recognize Israel's right to exist and before they take that fairly fundamental and elementary step I think it is highly premature to get in any further discussion. That would be a quite momentous step to recognize Israel's right to exist by Hamas.

Mr. MEADOWS. All right. Ms. Romanowski, let me go back. What matrix do we look at in terms of USAID, in terms of the effectiveness? You read off a litany of things that we have spent millions of dollars on in terms of what—in terms of training—additional training and yet what we see is the per capita GDP in many of those countries actually going down, not increasing.

So at what matrix do we look at to say that these dollars are being effective and not just providing a training? I am your biggest advocate when it comes to really putting dollars to make a difference.

I am your worst nightmare when it comes to spending dollars when all we are doing is filling out and saying well, we have trained 1,000 people and yet GDP goes the other way. What matrix is out there?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. Mr. Meadows, that is a very important question and it is a very important question for us and we are constantly looking at setting up those very detailed metrics to measure against our programs.

I think one very broad metric is not just have we trained these young people or trained women but have they also then been able to secure jobs in the areas that they were trained. And we know that in many of our programs—for example, the ICT program in Tunisia—we have been able to see Tunisians—2,600 Tunisians actually get jobs and begin to expand the ICT sector in Tunisia. I will go back——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Meadows, I know you have a very inquisitive mind and Ms. Romanowski——

Mr. MEADOWS. I will yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. Is a wonderful witness but we are going to move on out of there. Thank you so much. Mr. Schneider, thank you for being kind enough to yield to Mr. Connolly.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. My pleasure, and thank you, Madame Chair. I guess I am going to start—well, let me take a step back.

In my opening remarks, I commented about the dynamics taking place throughout the Middle East and the work that you all do. Thank you again for being here. And so many of the areas are—you know, these states are keystones in a way.

Egypt, surrounded by Libya, Sudan, the Sinai is a keystone and what happens there is going to affect the region. Syria, obviously, with Lebanon and Turkey and Jordan and Israel is a keystone—what is happening in Yemen.

And it is important that we, as was said before, maintain a focus. As the U.S. increases engagement in other areas of the world we need to make sure the U.S. stays engaged here.

But I want to come back and, as others have talked about, talk about the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Ambassador, you said there are a number of U.N. resolutions. On November 29th, 1947, in Resolution 181 the U.N. was clear. There would be a Jewish state and an Arab state, and the Jewish state that came into existence on May 14th, which will celebrate its 65th birthday on Monday, is the Jewish state of Israel with equal rights for all citizens regardless of religion.

But that is a clear and defined and stated fact and it is not up for the Palestinians to define it. It is only up for the Palestinians to accept that and recognize it.

I am grateful that there is full support and funding for Israel in this budget of $3.1 billion and Israel is in a position that it has to make a lot of choices and its choices are existential choices.

You talked a bit about the qualitative military edge. Israel doesn't have the numbers but it has to have an edge, an advantage technologically that the United States is committed to supporting and I am grateful for the support of my colleague from Georgia, Doug Collins.

We introduced a bill to move the assessment from 4 years to 2 years and that passed the House unanimously. I would like to see it move in the Senate.

Israel has as a keystone state threats on all of its borders including on the north from Hezbollah. I am grateful for my colleague, Mr. Meadows, who has introduced a bill with me to sanction Hezbollah.

But Israel's choices are does it deploy its iron dome in the north or the south and it can't do it all every day because the threats are so overwhelming. The Palestinians, on the other hand, also have choices and they are making very different choices.

They can choose whether or not to continue its incitement or move back and they have continued to in their textbooks, in their rhetoric, incite and promote conflict with the Israelis. Abbas can make a choice. Does he work toward peace and negotiations, true negotiations with the Israelis, or does he turn to Hamas and he made that choice, and he made that choice before the deadline, as we said today, when the negotiations came to an end.

The Palestinians have a choice. Do they seek statehood through negotiations with Israel and mutually agreed definitions of what that means or do they go to the United Nations and go ways that trigger actions by the United States? And thank you, Madam Chairman, for your leadership on this issue.

And they continue to make that choice of going to the U.N. and seeking acceptance in those bodies. And they can make a choice whether to engage Israel legitimately or to continue to seek Israel's delegitimization around the world and they continue to choose the others.

Yet we continue to send funds to the Palestinians because, as you said, we need to work on development aid. We need to work on services, rule of law and a private sector because those institutions become paramount. But the question is what partner do we

have to work within—in the Palestinian territories—what partner does Israel have.

Who is building these institutions and how do we make sure that those institutions and the money we send are happening as opposed to money going to fund terrorists in jail for the actions they took at a time in the past.

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Schneider, this is an enormously complex issue and let me give you an example of how we are trying to work with the Palestinians.

I have been to two conferences. I am very interested in the economic and job creation side of this so I have been to two conferences recently with the super impressive young businessmen from Palestine. And you know, I might hazard to say that if you can be an entrepreneur in the West Bank you can pretty much do it anywhere.

So those are the kind of people that we are trying to promote within Palestine. These will be a basis for a two-state solution.

The other night the secretary had a dinner. He had major American investors who are looking at Palestine as a future investment if and when a two-state solution is reached and peace breaks out. We have programs underway to promote mortgages—pretty fundamental issue—in the Palestinian Authority to try and build a base for this.

So it is not a perfect situation by any means and, my goodness, the Palestinians have done a lot of stupid things over the years but we need to work with those people we can work with to try and, one, moderate the government and build a grassroots movement and then build some kind of economic system going forward so we won't have to provide all this assistance in the future.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. So I had the privilege of being in Israel exactly a year ago. I went to Ramallah. Ramallah is a booming town. Buildings are—there are cranes all around the city. They are building roads. They are building roads with medians, with flowers in the center. They are investing in their future.

We drove through Jericho. Jericho is a bustling city with development and malls and all the things you are talking about. It is possible for Palestinians—entrepreneurial Palestinians to work toward their economy.

Yet the leadership and the leadership we seem to be engaged with continues to make choices, continues to turn to Hamas, continues to turn to the U.N. and we continue to fund them.

When do we—to echo the point made earlier, when do we say we need to hold the Palestinian leadership accountable and we need to have expectations that they will adhere to the agreements they are making to us?

Ms. PATTERSON. I think we do hold them accountable and I think—I think we do hold them accountable. Much of our resources, much of our assistance goes—in the cash transfer goes into repaying Israel for goods and services provided. But we do have to work with this other element in the Palestinian Authority.

The Palestinian leadership, these are older fellows. At some point they are going to move on. There are going to be openings for these younger individuals to move up and you probably met some of them in Jericho and Ramallah too.

So we just have to keep—we just sort of have to keep at it in the Palestinian territory and, frankly, in many other countries in our region and work with the people we can work with.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. All right. Well, I agree it is the whole region. Israel faces a lot of threats. We face a lot of threats. We need to have success in Egypt that there is the rule of law and that there is the opportunity for their economy to grow.

As was mentioned earlier, we met with the foreign minister and he talked about needing to have 8 percent to 10 percent growth. Jordan is of grave concern. The fourth largest city in Jordan is a refugee camp, and Ms. Romanowski, maybe I will turn to you.

How are we making sure that as we see these refugee camps grow—and I think it is several hundred thousand people now living on the border of Jordan and Syria, you have 1 million refugees in Lebanon—that we are providing services in a way that provides for extended care of these people that don't become permanent cities and permanent burdens on the states where they are.

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. We are actually doing a lot of that in our programs—bilateral programs both in Lebanon and in Jordan where we have, as soon as the refugees started coming over, we began to adjust a lot of the programs that we were doing in Jordan anyway and in Lebanon to accommodate the Syrians who came into the host communities.

As you know, the refugee camps' issue is the purview of the State Department's PRM bureau. But USAID has—because we had extensive programs already working on expanding schools, improving schools, improving water management, improving private sector development, as soon as the stresses of the Syrian refugees came in both from Lebanon and in Jordan particularly we shifted and we made sure that what we were doing included and took into account the pressures of those Syrian refugees, largely, first of all, to accommodate them but also not to create enormous tensions within Jordan and Lebanon.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr.——

Mr. SCHNEIDER. We could speak for 5 hours or 5 days we would scratch the surface. I have 5 minutes so I will yield back.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr. Schneider, and we will go to Mr. Kinzinger.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again thank you all for being here. We will have our disagreements on some of the issues but I appreciate your service to your country and for spending the time with us this morning.

I am a pilot in the military and one of the first things you learn in dealing with emergencies is that the first thing you have to do is maintain aircraft control and then you analyze what is going on and then you take the appropriate actions.

But the first thing you have to do is fly the aircraft because if you get, you know, focused on all the problems before maintaining aircraft control you are going to find yourself buying the farm pretty quickly.

So I see a Middle East that is on fire. I see Jordan that has the amount of refugees moving into it without jobs as would be the equivalent of Canada moving into the United States without work. So that is a pretty serious situation for Jordan's stability.

As I mentioned in my opening, I see Iraq where you have ISIS and al-Qaeda-linked elements that now have where the Marines fought the hardest—they fought, frankly, since Vietnam in Fallujah, including a colleague of mine, Duncan Hunter, who is a veteran of Fallujah.

I look at Iran and I think it is pretty much a foregone conclusion that whatever our final deal is it will have some right to enrich uranium for the Iranians despite the fact that UAE and South Korea we don't give the right to enrich uranium—some of our best allies.

Concerns with Turkey, I see Egypt—you know, frankly, I am glad the Muslim Brotherhood is out of Egypt. I haven't heard the administration's position necessarily on that. I see a Russia that is moving into Ukraine and a big situation in North Korea that has artillery fire drills, on the south an emboldened China.

And where I have been concerned is that our focus has been this Israel-Palestinian thing. And I think, look, in the '90s this was a big issue and it was a huge issue because it was, frankly, a relatively stable Middle East. But as the Middle East has caught on fire and problems have arisen and we have the problem with jihadism and instability all over the place, the importance of Israel-Palestinian conflict has stayed the same but all these other issues—this maintaining of aircraft control—have gotten big, and I get concerned that all of our energy is being sucked in by this.

It is a noble cause—I mean, trying to create peace between these two folks is a noble cause. But we have huge, huge burning issues in the Middle East. Today, I want to drill down a little bit on the issue of Syria and I want to say to the Ambassador how will the administration's ongoing strategy review for Syria shape the use of Fiscal Year 2015 funds requested for Syria and could you actually briefly explain what our policy and what our strategy is in Syria, if you had to put it in a few sentences or a paragraph, I guess?

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes, Mr. Kinzinger, and maybe we could come back to some of these other issues. But let me explain. Our policy is to work toward a negotiated solution. We do not believe there is a military solution available in Syria and, secondly, or policy is to curtail and you are absolutely correct in your description of the spread of ISIS.

Particularly in eastern Syria and western Iraq it is an exceedingly serious issue right now and they have made very significant inroads into western Iraq to contain the terrorist threat.

I think DNI Clapper testified before the full committee on this and he talked about the presence of foreign extremists in Syria, some of whom have come from the tribal areas of Pakistan and some of the whom are looking at targets outside the region.

So yes, it is a very serious problem and I certainly do not want to convey that we see the Israeli-Palestinian issue as the only issue in the Middle East. So we are trying to contain it.

We are a major donor to Lebanon and Jordan. Ms. Romanowski has outlined some of the projects we have done. It is about $1.7 billion equally divided between activities inside Syria and activities on the ground.

Mr. KINZINGER. How much was that again? I am sorry.

Ms. PATTERSON. One point seven billion dollars and that is—we are asking for additional funds because the humanitarian crisis is quite severe.

We provide assistance inside of Syria so people will hopefully not flee the country. We are feeding enormous numbers of people there and we are resuming—we have rushed to provide Iraq with small arms, Hellfire missiles, surveillance and advice.

Mr. KINZINGER. And I—and I think that is great. I mean, we can revisit whether we should have left Iraq or not. I believe we shouldn't have. But, you know, it is done and we can't reintroduce troops there nor should we.

But I think it is important that we understand that this is a fight that a lot of Americans died for. Whether you agree with the beginning of the war or not, it is what it is. You talked about a negotiated solution in Syria. How?

I mean, what you have right now is an extremist opposition. You have a moderate opposition who we should be supporting and building up and you have a very evil dictator that has killed almost 200,000 of his own people including now with this new thing called chlorine gas, which I can't imagine—has got to be one of the most terrible ways to die or choke to death.

How do you negotiate a solution when we have made Assad a partner in getting rid of his gas? We are not really very intensely going after al-Qaeda-linked elements in Syria even though I always thought our country had a policy of al-Qaeda shall not live peacefully anywhere. And then the moderate opposition that we may be giving some humanitarian assistance—we are probably not giving a lot of arms or command and control ability.

So if you could answer that. And then also why is it that our allies in the Middle East keep telling me we are not doing anything in Syria? Where is that disconnect happening? Because I have talked to some very good allies in the Middle East that say the United States has not taken a leadership role and every administration official that comes before me says we are doing the best thing we have ever done in the Middle East—this is great—this is amazing.

Our allies are saying no. Where is that disconnect and how do we get our allies to believe we actually care about what is happening in Syria?

Mr. MEADOWS. Ambassador, if you can summarize quickly. Thank you.

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes, quickly. Let me talk about the chemical weapons. We have got 92 percent of the chemical weapons out right now. I guess I would disagree with you, Mr. Kinzinger, that that has emboldened Bashar al-Assad. That was the biggest threat to the Syrian people and to Syria's neighbors.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, I think Assad was the biggest threat to the Syrian people.

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes, but this is the biggest short-term threat. Now, Assad is a huge threat and I don't want to downplay and, of course, our policy is to go after al-Qaeda anywhere they are.

Let us not be under any illusions about that. And regarding our allies, I think if you spoke to them, and I don't know how recently you have, but I think you would find there have been very signifi-

cant cooperation in some areas of some areas, particularly with Saudi Arabia and Qatar in recent months that I think will make a difference.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you very much.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you. We will go to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Weber.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Patterson, do you have a dollar figure on the amount of stipends—I forget what they call it—going to the terrorists in prison—kind of the salaries?

Ms. PATTERSON. No, I don't have a figure. This is—they pay families whose relatives are imprisoned and then they do pay some of these people after they are released, and I don't have that figure.

Mr. WEBER. I mean, there have been figures reported in the media and, forgive me, I don't remember exactly what those figures were. Do you remember any estimates?

Ms. PATTERSON. No, sir. I don't.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Well, let me ask the question this way then.

Ms. PATTERSON. I will try and provide you with some figures on that.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Well——

Ms. PATTERSON. I think—I know it is available because I——

Mr. WEBER. Forty million dollars maybe. Is that $20 million a year? Is that—don't know?

Ms. PATTERSON. Just don't know.

Mr. WEBER. What do you think about the idea of reducing any moneys that we give to the PA by twice that amount and saying when they clean up that process, that procedure, when it halts the reward of terrorism then we will talk about getting their money back to them?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, I think we have scrubbed this request, Mr. Weber, as significantly as we can and I think—and it is in great detail. We can provide the details to you.

I think all this money goes into worthwhile projects and the cash transfer goes, as I say, into reimbursing others for goods and services. I think the projects and particularly on the security side are very well thought out and I would hate to see any of it reduced.

Mr. WEBER. Well, I mean the revelation that they were paying terrorists who had Israeli blood on their hands and some American blood on their hands as well and others, is just incomprehensible to me.

I am going to go back to your statement earlier that Mr. Meadows asked about the PA being willing to accept the fact that Israel has not only the right to exist, and Brad Schneider alluded to the resolution and the date, but actually needs to recognize the fact that they have the right to exist as a Jewish state, and you said you thought that was too much of a stretch.

Ms. PATTERSON. I was talking about Hamas, Mr. Weber. I was talking about Hamas. What I tried to say was I think to get Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist and renounce violence would be a very significant step forward.

Mr. WEBER. Well, then in my opinion they shouldn't be allowed to participate in the government over there if they want any of our

money. If they—I mean, they want all of our money but not all of our ideas. How does that work?

Ms. PATTERSON. Sir, we would never support and we will certainly not support a Palestinian Government that includes Hamas because of those reasons, because they have not accepted those principles.

Mr. WEBER. So you are in favor of reducing any type of foreign aid that we send them if there is a Hamas connection there?

Ms. PATTERSON. Absolutely.

Mr. WEBER. And what percentage would you reduce that?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, I mean——

Mr. WEBER. Would you shut it all down?

Ms. PATTERSON. Hamas is a designated terrorist organization and it is illegal for Americans or American funding to engage in that.

Mr. WEBER. I get that. So you would be willing to deny all foreign aid to the PA if they form a government with Hamas?

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes, if—yes. If Hamas is——

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Now, we are—now we are getting somewhere. Now we need to negotiate the dollar amount. So that if the PA is paying for terrorists in prison we ought to also be willing to hit them with some economic sanctions of that sort. Don't you agree?

Ms. PATTERSON. Sir, I think—I think this, obviously, is a difficult problem and when they pay the families of people that are imprisoned and they pay stipends I would say that is a political prisoner and I, frankly, know that they are going to try and phase that out and we should give them an opportunity to do so.

Mr. WEBER. But we could help them phase that out.

Ms. PATTERSON. I would be hard pressed, Mr. Weber——

Mr. WEBER. We could give them some encouragement.

Ms. PATTERSON [continuing]. Hard pressed to say which of the programs for the Palestinian Authority we should cut. I would be very hard pressed to say that.

Mr. WEBER. Well, I think if we made it clear that we were cutting that dollar amount because of that practice and we had to—and then the next question I have right behind that is how do we verify that. What does that look like?

Ms. PATTERSON. We can provide those details to you but it is very extensively audited and reviewed. When I looked at these I was—frankly, having been the deputy IG, it is a 16—I think a 16-stage auditing and review process. It looked to me like the most extensive reviewed foreign assistance program that we have on the planet.

Mr. WEBER. Who initially sounded that alarm that this money was going to those terrorists? Do you know?

Ms. PATTERSON. I am sorry. The terrorists——

Mr. WEBER. Who brought this to light that they were paying terrorists in prison or the families of terrorists—PA was? Do you know?

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, that has been the case for some time.

Mr. WEBER. And who brought that to light?

Ms. PATTERSON. I don't know.

Mr. WEBER. Why do you think we haven't acted on it to date?

Ms. PATTERSON. Because I think—I think, one, that it is a political issue for the Palestinians—that these people are in jail, they have to provide for the families and, again, I think that they plan to phase it out.

Mr. WEBER. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MEADOWS. I thank the gentleman from Texas. I go to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies, I appreciate your testimony and I know you are getting tired of this and I hate to bring it up one more time.

Certainly, you hear the contention here, the anxiety over the Palestinian Authority and the foreign aid going there. Without beating it too hard, they have got Resolution 21 and 23 on their books that says they pay the stipends.

I propose that all foreign aid is cut to the Palestinian Authority until they remove those two resolutions. What would you think would happen with that?

If we are serious we are serious, and if not—I mean, it is like you said. They have been doing this. We have known about it for years. We have addressed it. You talked and you said there were stiff messages sent. But if we just said, you know, fine—we are stopping all aid until you remove those resolutions that say we pay these people.

Ms. PATTERSON. I think—I think fundamentally the support for the Palestinian Authority is in our interest. To have a peaceful area, now quite peaceful, adjacent to Israel, patrolled by well-trained Palestinian police and, again, there are 70 million in the—Israel will have to take over those security duties, sir.

Mr. YOHO. I hear what you are saying. But if we were just to say we have talked about this for year after year after year, I have got to go back to my district and tell people that we are giving money to an area that promotes terrorism.

If we are serious we need to be serious and say until you remove those resolutions from your—I am not telling you how to live—I am just saying take those resolutions off your book if you want our assistance, and if you want the assistance in the name of peace we will help you, and that is even a hard sell in my district.

But if you want it get rid of those resolutions. I mean, what do you think would happen if we did that? Do you think they would come to the table, say you know what, we get it—we are done? Do you think they would do that?

Ms. PATTERSON. I don't—I don't know, Congressman. But what I think is removing assistance from the Palestinian Authority would, frankly, be a disaster because you would have——

Mr. YOHO. How do you view it now? I mean, we have been doing that and it is—it is not going real well. Ms. Romanowski——

Ms. PATTERSON. No, that is—I would disagree with that. Actually, there have been huge improvements over the past few years. Certainly in the security side there have been enormous improvements in the Palestinian——

Mr. YOHO. But if you look at the missile attacks over the last year I have seen an increase, have we not?

Ms. PATTERSON. Congressman, those, at least as far as I know, mostly come from Gaza, which is under the control of Hamas. So

we are not talking about Gaza. We are talking—or the Hamas—we are talking about the Palestinian Authority run by President Abbas and——

Mr. YOHO. I get that, but again, it is sending a signal that we—what we say we mean and they need to pay attention if they want our assistance. Ms. Romanowski.

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. Let me see if I can get a few very important points out in terms of how we monitor and ensure that the funds are going to where we believe they are.

First of all, as my colleague said, it is one of the most heavily monitored and evaluated assistance programs that we have. All the programs are monitored every year. When it comes to the cash transfer it is something that is done very precisely.

When we do the budget support we do a single transfer treasury account, which actually we beforehand approve and review all of the debts that will be paid and all the bills that we pay, and when the transfer actually occurs we have someone who is sitting actually there ensuring that the funds are transferred and then the bank account closes.

Mr. YOHO. I understand that whole concept but yet those resolutions are still on their books—21 and 23. All I am saying is get rid of those resolutions and you can have the foreign assistance back. That is all I am asking.

You know, we can monitor it and we can watch it. But as long as those are on the books they are still promoting that. Let me move on to something else because you were talking about the aid that we give——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. We will make that—Dr. Yoho, we will do that.

Mr. YOHO. Yes, ma'am. I appreciate it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Good. Thank you. Why don't you just bring it to their attention?

Mr. YOHO. Okay. The U.S. aid that we give you were saying to Jordan that we have invested in a lot of jobs or business development—economic development. What is their unemployment rate right now?

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. The last——

Mr. YOHO. Egypt—in Egypt.

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. In Egypt or in Jordan?

Mr. YOHO. I am sorry. Egypt.

Ms. ROMANOWSKI. In Egypt?

Ms. PATTERSON. It is about 22 percent, about that.

Mr. YOHO. What was their unemployment rate 10 years ago? Any idea?

Ms. PATTERSON. I don't know. But unemployment—let me be clear—unemployment in most Middle East countries has gone up because of a huge youth bulge. There is a—this is true across every single country in the Middle East because of the—with the exception of Israel, because of the unemployment of—very severe unemployment of mostly young men. With young women it is even worse.

Mr. YOHO. Well, that is kind of what I am—I am sorry.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Go ahead. But we will wrap it up.

Mr. YOHO. Well, what I was—we are investing in development—economic development and educating the students but if there is no jobs there is nowhere for them to go.

What is being done as far as industry or business development in that area and are we focussing on that? And again, it goes back to trade, not aid.

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr.—can I answer?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Good questions to ponder. But thank you, Madam Ambassador. We are going to move on, if we could. And Mr. Collins is recognized.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for being here. Just a few quick questions and we can go through unless they——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. A little closer to your——

Mr. COLLINS. Here we go. All right. We are here. Welcome to Congress Radio, playing all the hits and asking all the questions that some like to answer and some don't. But this has been a good day so far.

Seventy million dollars security assistance for Palestinian Authority was requested in the President's budget for training, equipment, infrastructure for Palestinian security forces. I know it has been discussed a little bit today. How will this program be affected by the recent unity government agreement, especially with Hamas?

Ms. PATTERSON. It won't be affected because there isn't an agreement yet and we would plan to proceed because this is one of the highlights——

Mr. COLLINS. Do you plan to proceed even if Hamas—if the agreement is made?

Ms. PATTERSON. No. Certainly not, sir. Certainly not.

Mr. COLLINS. Okay. So then it would be suspended completely?

Ms. PATTERSON. Let me be clear on this. But the Palestinian security forces are a very considerable success. They are well trained.

The $70 million that we have asked for in the budget is essentially for advanced and refresher training to teach the Palestinian police skills like forensics and advanced criminal investigation and to bring back their leadership's middle management and refresh their skills. But it has turned into quite a professional police force.

Mr. COLLINS. Okay. And that is—you know, I guess it concerned—you know, good to hear on one point. What are we spending now currently to help them?

Ms. PATTERSON. The police?

Mr. COLLINS. Are we giving any money to support—and I am asking a question. I am not—I don't have an answer.

Ms. PATTERSON. I beg your pardon. I am sorry. I didn't hear you.

Mr. COLLINS. How much are we spending now to provide training and equipment and support to the security forces?

Ms. PATTERSON. I can't remember the figure but I will get that for you. But this is a reduction.

Mr. COLLINS. This is a reduction? Okay.

Ms. PATTERSON. This is a reduction. Over the past few years we spent more because we were basically training hundreds if not thousands of them in Jordan at this police institute in Jordan.

Mr. COLLINS. Okay. Let us just follow up on that just from a policy perspective for just a moment. Let us just assume, which I be-

lieve many do, including myself, that there is a good probability that this Hamas agreement is going to go through. Okay.

It does stop this but what—with the money that we have already spent with the highlighted area here the concern that I have in this region, especially when we are spending money and we sort of, now, frankly there is—you only can beat this horse so long.

But with Hamas coming back in here with a relatively well trained, in your words, security forces does that not present at least a policy issue as we go forward? I know it is not a budget question per se but it is a policy question going forward.

Ms. PATTERSON. Mr. Collins, I would doubt that this agreement would go forward and, yes, if it did of course it would be an issue. But I mentioned earlier that there have been seven similar discussions—agreements since 2011. Many of them took place in Egypt so I saw this firsthand and they have political reasons for doing this but none of them so far have materialized.

Mr. COLLINS. Do you think there is political reasons for going about it now?

Ms. PATTERSON. Yes. I think maybe some of them would actually be of considerable reassurance to this committee. But maybe we can discuss that later. But I do not——

Mr. COLLINS. Okay. Let me—let me stop right there. I want to just say considerable reassurance—hold on.

Ms. PATTERSON. Well, I think—I think—I think relations with——

Mr. COLLINS. Reclaiming my time. Considering this committee and its concern, in my personal opinion, for Israel I am not sure how you can reassure me that the Palestinian Authority, teaming with Hamas or entertaining that thought, again, with Hamas is helpful to me or this committee or Israel.

Ms. PATTERSON. Excuse me, sir. But what I was trying to say was that I think the relations between Fatah and Hamas are not good, and I think one reason that President Abbas enters into these discussions is to try and limit Hamas and essentially clip their wings in Gaza.

So I think that would be perhaps of some modest reassurance because it would have long-term security implications from Israel because as I mentioned most of the rockets that attack Israel, and there was quite a spate a year and a half ago, come from Gaza.

Mr. COLLINS. So you—again, I think we just probably will just have to, you know, kindly agree to disagree here. I mean, I am not really sure how it is clipping their wings. Hamas still does what they do. They continue to do what they do.

I think that, frankly, is more of an issue of the actual peace agreement in and of itself and I am not sure there is actually a want to continue here and I think they use it as a way to push away from the table when they don't want to deal with certain issues and then when they want to come back they come back to the table.

So I think taking a very rosy approach to that is, frankly, disturbing. Moving on to another question, funds have been used in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq dealing with Syria. Again, not dealing with the numbers issue here but I do want to look long term here.

Given the state of Syria as we know it today, how long do you believe that these enhanced funds are going to have to be there to help with different issues—varying issues, humanitarian issues and other things—in these, you know, surrounding countries? Is there hope that we can start beginning to cull that back or is this just going to become, frankly, a long-term request?

Ms. PATTERSON. I don't know, Mr. Collins, what the long term would be. But I would say that for several years we are going to—you could probably anticipate requests of this magnitude——

Mr. COLLINS. Okay.

Ms. PATTERSON [continuing]. Because the humanitarian situation is quite serious.

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Chair, I know my time is up. Just some of this just really disturbs me and I think really—and I appreciate the ability just to agree to disagree sometimes.

But this—I think for those of us who watch this, for those of us who actually look at Israel as a preeminent ally and friend in the region, to consider anything that an outreach from the Palestinian organization to Hamas is anything of clipping wings or anything else I think very seriously undermines what is actually going on and I am very disturbed by that, even from a budget perspective.

And I respect your opinion. We are just going to disagree on this one. Madam Chairman, I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I agree. Thank you so much. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Thank you, Ms. Romanowski, and thank you to all of our members for being here and the audience.

And with that, the subcommittee has concluded.

[Whereupon, at 11:42 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

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

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

April 22, 2014

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, in Room 2200 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Tuesday, April 29, 2014

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: The Administration's FY 2015 MENA Budget Request: Priorities, Objectives and Challenges

WITNESSES: The Honorable Anne W. Patterson
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Ms. Alina L. Romanowski
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Bureau for the Middle East
U.S. Agency for International Development

By Direction of the Chairman

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *the Middle East and North Africa* HEARING

Day *Tuesday* **Date** *04/28/14* **Room** *2172*

Starting Time *10:00 a.m.* **Ending Time** *11:42 a.m.*

Recesses *0* (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Meadows

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Administration's FY 2015 MENA Budget Request: Priorities, Objectives and Challenges

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

(See attendance sheet)

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

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

SFR - Rep. Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *11:42 a.m.*

Subcommittee Staff Director

Hearing Attendance

Hearing Title: The Administration's FY2015 MENA Budget Request: Priorities, Objectives and Challenges

Date: 04/29/2014

Noncommittee Members

Member	Present
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana (FL)	X
Chabot, Steve (OH)	X
Wilson, Joe (SC)	
Kinzinger, Adam (IL)	X
Cotton, Tom (AR)	X
Weber, Randy (TX)	X
Desantis, Ron (FL)	
Collins, Doug (GA)	X
Meadows, Mark (NC)	X
Yoho, Ted (FL)	X
Messer, Luke (IN)	X

Member	Present
Deutch, Ted (FL)	X
Connolly, Gerald (VA)	X
Higgins, Brian (NY)	
Cicilline, David (RI)	X
Grayson, Alan (FL)	
Vargas, Juan (CA)	
Schneider, Bradley (IL)	X
Kennedy, Joseph (MA)	
Meng, Grace (NY)	X
Frankel, Lois (FL)	

Statement for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Gerald E. Connolly

The MENA Foreign Affairs Budget for FY2015 must communicate to our partners abroad that we remain steadfast in our resolve to promote security and stability while upholding American values. It must also afford our foreign affairs apparatus the necessary flexibility to respond to situations in a region experiencing several democratic transitions and violent domestic upheavals.

EMBASSY SECURITY

Before we launch into a discussion about various foreign assistance accounts and bilateral aid efforts, I would like to touch on a topic that cuts to the heart of the United States' ability to carry out our diplomatic mission abroad.

Several of my colleagues and I have voiced concern about the protection of our diplomatic corps, and those concerns have come to the forefront since the 2012 attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. The fact is that diplomatic posts are sometimes dangerous jobs and not without risk. We have tasked these public servants with the mission of advancing America's economic and humanitarian interests in volatile regions. Along with several members of this committee, I cosponsored H.R. 2723 The Embassy Security and Enhancement Act of 2013, which seeks to strengthen security at diplomatic and consular posts.

The Pickering-Mullen Accountability Review Board (ARB) report concluded that the State Department could take a number of steps to strengthen security at foreign posts. The report included among other recommendations diminished reliance on host governments for security, third-party review of security measures, interagency collocation, more rigorous security training for staff, restoration of the Capital Security Cost Sharing Program, and an expansion the Marine Security Guard (MSG) Program.

The FY2015 request for Embassy Security, Construction and Maintenance is $2 billion, which includes $1.2 billion in worldwide security upgrades. I would ask that our witnesses discuss how this request ensures our public servants abroad have the security necessary to carry out their mission. Regional prioritization for security upgrades, best practices from new construction projects and any midcourse corrections since the publication of the ARB would be particularly enlightening.

SYRIAN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The crisis in Syria has displaced 6.5 million people internally and is bleeding into neighboring countries. By some estimates, there are 1,000,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 700,000 in Turkey, 600,000 in Jordan, and hundreds of thousands of additional refugees in other countries in the region. The refugee crisis is growing in scale so rapidly that the numbers we have today are most likely already outdated.

During refugee crises, neighboring countries must bear an unexpected and difficult burden providing assistance to people who have been forced to leave everything behind, often at a moment's notice and sometimes forever.

Ability and willingness to bear this burden varies country to country. Turkey, for one, has received plaudits for the way in which it has accommodated the steady stream of individuals and families fleeing the violence in Syria. Turkey opened six container camps in 2012, including one in Kilis, Turkey, with the purpose of setting a positive example for how to receive displaced

populations. Schools, sanitary living conditions and police enforcement exceed what is unfortunately a low bar set by the international standard.

The United States has an opportunity to reward good behavior and incentivize regional cooperation by supporting humanitarian assistance in countries providing a safe haven for Syrian refugees. The FY2015 request includes $1.1 billion within Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA-OCO) and International Disaster Assistance (IDA-OCO) for these purposes.

I am sure some affected countries have demonstrated a greater proficiency at humanitarian assistance than others. I think it would be helpful if our discussion today included an accounting of the total costs absorbed by countries receiving Syrian refugees as well as an examination of best practices in region. Hopefully, through this dialogue we can gain a better understanding of how aid can help promote the welfare of not only displaced Syrians, but refugees seeking safe harbor around the world.

EGYPT

The FY2015 request for Egypt is the second largest amount of funding of all Near East countries after Israel. The FY2015 request includes $1.3 billion from the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) account and $200 million from the Economic Support Fund (ESF).

Ostensibly, FMF funding and the recently announced military aid package of 10 Apache helicopters will help secure Egypt's borders, promote regional stability and in the case of the new helicopters, fight terrorism in the Sinai Peninsula. While Secretary of State John Kerry recently certified that Egypt is upholding its commitment outlined in the Camp David Accords, no such assurances could be made on Egypt's work towards a democratic transition, which has been of great concern to our committee and prompted the Administration to suspend such aid last fall.

To understand this final point, I believe some context is warranted. There have been troubling domestic developments in Egypt since the military intervention in July 2013 that lead some observers to doubt Egyptian leaders' dedication to an open and inclusive democratic process.

I would go a step further to certify that these developments confirm that the transition to a democratic state under civilian control has been put into reverse. The freedoms of assembly, association, religion and expression are in distress and the rule of law is being undermined. Constitutional reform efforts in the country have sought to enshrine power in the hands of the military and police force. This is especially cause for concern given that Egyptian Generals have led a crackdown against political activists, overseen the bloody suppression of dissent and extended its state of emergency law.

I hope our witnesses can provide further context that would not only justify the FY2015 requests, but explain the aid in terms of our broader efforts to encourage a democratic transition in Egypt. As Secretary Kerry stated in the FY2015 Congressional Budget Justification, "More than ever before, the decisions we make from our shores do not just ripple outward; they create a current right here in America."[1] This is a salient observation that demands a thoughtful discussion. The values we endorse abroad are an expression of our values at home, and I would hope that they are consistent with one another.

I know we will cover ground on several other important topics today including the recently halted Israel-Palestine peace talks and FY2015 funding levels for the Frontline countries

of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. I thank our witnesses today for their testimony, and look forward to continued collaboration regarding the mission and purpose of U.S. diplomacy.

○