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ADVANCING U.S. INTERESTS IN A TROUBLED WORLD: THE FY 2016 FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET

HEARING

BEFORE THE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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ADVANCING U.S. INTERESTS IN A TROUBLED WORLD: THE FY 2016 FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2015

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ed Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This committee will come to order. Committee will come to order, if all members will take their seats.

Today we hear from Secretary of State John Kerry. The Secretary is just off yet another overseas trip dealing with issues that we will discuss here today.

And, Mr. Secretary, your dedication is clear to all.

Secretary Kerry comes to present his Department's budget request. Needless to say, given Washington's chronic budget deficit, wasteful spending is intolerable. Even good programs may be unsupportable at levels we would want. But we must also appreciate the many serious challenges we as a Nation, and the Department in particular, faces worldwide.

These challenges seem to grow by the day. Iran and North Korea are pursuing nuclear weapons; Russia is gobbling up neighboring Ukraine; we see beheadings, crucifixions, and immolation by ISIS; cartoonists and Jewish shoppers are targeted and killed on Paris streets. Indeed, some days it feels as if the world itself is coming off of its axis.

Regarding Iran, Mr. Secretary, all of us want to see you get a meaningful lasting agreement. But the committee, as you know, has real concerns about the direction of these talks. I am hearing less about dismantlement and more about the permanence of Iran's nuclear program.

That is particularly disturbing when you consider that international inspectors report that Iran has still not revealed its past bomb work. This should be treated as a fundamental test of the Ayatollah's intention to uphold any agreement. Iran is failing that test. Also, it is still illicitly procuring nuclear technology. Recently Iran was caught testing a new generation of supersonic centrifuges. To be frank, as this committee reads about us being on the brink of a "historic agreement," you have a challenge in terms of Congressional buy-in. Meanwhile, Iran and its proxies are wreaking havoc throughout the region.

And in Eastern Europe, Russia's military aggression is matched only by the size of its propaganda. Russia is spending more than $½ billion annually to mislead audiences, to sow divisions, to push conspiracy theories out over RT television. Yet, the agency charged with leading our response, the Broadcasting Board of Governors—is, as your predecessor testified to us—dysfunctional. Last Congress the House passed legislation authored by Ranking Member Eliot Engel and me to fix the BBG, the Broadcasting Board of Governors. We hope to have the administration's active backing as we again push this reform.

And in the Middle East, ISIS is on the march. The administration was tragically slow to react to ISIS's rise, missing the chance to devastate them with airstrikes. During the first 7 months, 8 months of ISIS moving from Syria into Iraq, town by town, taking these cities, air power was not used to devastate these columns out on the open road as it should have been applied. Today the Kurds are still severely outgunned. Our training of the Syrian opposition isn't off the ground, and Arab allies complain they don't have the weapons needed.

And while the administration is focused on the fight against ISIS in Iraq today, it is still unclear what its plans are for Syria tomorrow. As the committee considers the President's request for a military authorization against ISIS, members need to hear a better articulation of the administration's strategy and see a strong commitment from the Commander-in-Chief.

As terrorism from Islamist terrorist groups spread, the committee knows that that puts more of our diplomats out there at risk. In the past half year, the Department has had to evacuate staff from two U.S. Embassies, Libya and Yemen.

On this note, the committee stands ready to assist the Department on Embassy security. We passed a State Department Authorization and Embassy Security bill last Congress and look forward to working with you to get our next bill signed into law. And as the Department works to finalize its second Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, know that we are ready to assist the Department to be more effective and efficient to meet the demands of the 21st century's diplomacy. We have policy differences, but these should never compromise the day-to-day operation of your Department and certainly not the safety of its personnel.

Mr. Secretary, our Nation faces great challenges. Through it all, though, we must work together to ensure that America maintains its positive and essential role in the world. That is our challenge.

And I will now turn to our ranking member, Mr. Eliot Engel of New York, for his opening statement.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back. We are fortunate to have you as our top diplomat as we face so many challenges around the world. Whether it is violent extremism or nuclear proliferation, health epidemics or climate change, these are challenges that threaten our security and values, and that demands robust investment in international affairs. That is why the President has put forward a strong international affairs budget, and that is why his proposal deserves the support of Congress.

The President's budget would end sequestration, something long overdue, including a 7.7 percent increase in international affairs spending. Why is this increase so important? The Kaiser Family Foundation reported recently that many Americans believe we spend much more on foreign assistance than we actually do.

Here are the facts: International affairs totals just over 1 percent of our Federal budget, and foreign aid accounts for less than 1 percent. With that narrow sliver of the pie, we are keeping Americans safe, strengthening ties around the world, and promoting American leadership abroad.

We are getting a pretty good bang for our buck. Still, we can always be more effective, more efficient, and more focused. And I would like to mention a few of my questions and concerns.

Let me start with institutional and bureaucratic challenges of the State Department. We need a Department that can adapt to evolving foreign policy and national security issues. We need diplomats equipped to deal with constantly changing demands.

Are we recruiting the best talent? Do our diplomats have the tools and training they need to do their jobs right? I am curious about how the Department will implement the forthcoming recommendations of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.

On our response to the Ebola outbreak, Mr. Secretary, I want to applaud you, the State Department, USAID, and the thousands of heroic Americans who have played such an important role. This crisis has required tremendous resources, and our strategy is working. The situation in West Africa continues to improve, but we must remain vigilant until this scourge has been eliminated.

This crisis underscores the need for global health funding. Preventing future epidemics requires investment in research, infrastructure, and personnel. So I am disappointed by proposed cuts to global health programs dealing with tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases, and other dangerous illnesses. I would like to find a way to avoid these cuts and keep giving these programs the resources they need.

Turning to Ukraine, I have serious doubts that the Minsk agreement will end this crisis. We have taken a handful of incremental steps, but they have not been enough to get ahead of the crisis or deter further Russian aggression. The United States has a major interest in Europe's stability and security. Decades of American investment is on the line. I know dealing with the Kremlin is delicate, but we must not allow Ukraine to lose more territory or to fail economically.

In the Middle East, more than 11 million people have been driven from their homes in Syria and more than 200,000 have been killed. This crisis has spilled across borders. It has created large-scale vulnerability to sexual assault, child marriage, hunger, and other kinds of abuse and exploitation. The budget prioritizes this humanitarian disaster, but much more needs to be done by both the United States and regional partners.

This crisis has been fueled by political instability in Iraq and Syria. The new Iraqi Prime Minister has taken some steps to make Iraq's political system more inclusive, but we remain far from the

point at which Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds feel like they have a stake in Iraq's future.

The way forward in Syria is even less clear, but we know one thing for certain. That country's future should not include Assad. As you have said, Mr. Secretary, he is a one-man super magnet for terrorism. So while we are going after ISIS or the Islamic state, we should not forget that Assad must go. He cannot be part of a Syria for the future.

On that note, I welcome the President's decision to send Congress a request for a new authorization to use military force, AUMF, against ISIS. The President's proposal is a reasonable starting point, and this committee will continue our efforts to review the language and the overall strategy to defeat ISIS. I look forward to working with you and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure we get this right.

Briefly, on Iran, I have said many times that my preference is a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis. However, we are hearing troubling reports on the scale and duration of the program, that Iran may be allowed as part of a deal. As you have said many times, Mr. Secretary, no deal is better than a bad deal. And so we must ensure that Iran has no pathway to a nuclear weapon, and that's any deal we sign is a good deal.

And, finally, I want to commend the proposed $1.1 billion in funding to address root causes of child migration from Central America. We need to ensure that these resources are targeted toward the most vulnerable communities that the children are coming from across this sub-region.

And, finally, getting back to Europe and Ukraine and Russia, I really believe that NATO hangs in the balance. I think, if Putin continues to push Ukraine around and threaten other countries and NATO is not a sufficient deterrent, we are sort of sending the word to Putin that we are really a paper tiger.

So I wish you would talk about that a little bit because I really do believe the future of NATO hangs in the balance. Four countries give 2 percent of their budget to defense as is required, and that is very, very troubling in terms of NATO.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to the Secretary's testimony.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

This morning we are pleased to be joined by Mr. John Kerry, the 68th Secretary of State.

And, Mr. Secretary, welcome again here to the committee.

Without objection, the witness's full prepared statement will be made part of the record and the members here—each of you will have 5 calendar days to submit any statements, questions or extraneous material for the record you may wish to submit.

So, Mr. Secretary, if you'll open for 5 minutes, then we will go to the members for their questions.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Engel, ranking member, all the members of this committee.

In respect of your time, I will try to summarize my comments, Mr. Chairman. I hope I can do it in 5 minutes. Thereis a lot to talk about. And your questions will, needless to say, elicit an enormous amount of dialogue, which I really welcome.

I can't think of a moment where more is happening, more challenges exist, there's more transformation taking place, some of it with great turmoil, a lot of it with enormous opportunity that doesn't get daily discussion, but all of it with big choices for you, for us, you representing the American people, all of us in positions of major responsibility at this important time.

We rose to the occasion, obviously, and we would like to extol it. We all talk about it. I did certainly as a Senator. I do as Secretary of State. And that is the extraordinary contribution of the greatest generation and what they did to help us and our leaders did, Republican and Democrat alike, to put us on a course to win the battle against tyranny, dictatorship, and to win the battle for democracy and human rights and freedom for a lot of people.

And no country on the face of this planet has expended as much blood, put as many people on the line, lost as much of our human treasure, to offer other people an opportunity to embrace their future, not tell them what it has to be. It is really a remarkable story.

And now we find ourselves in a moment where we have to make some similar kinds of choices, frankly. I don't want to overblow it. I am not trying to. But this is a big moment of transformation where there are literally hundreds of millions of people emerging on this planet, young people. Count the numbers of countries where the population is 65 percent under the age of 30, 60 percent 30 and under, 50 percent under the age of 21. I mean, it is all over the place.

And if they live in a place where thereis bad governance or corruption or tyranny in this world where everybody knows how to be in touch with everybody else all the time, you have a clash of aspirations, a clash of possibilities and opportunities. And to some degree, that is what we are seeing today. That certainly was the beginning of the Arab Spring, which is now being infused with a sectarianism and confusions of religious overtones and other things that make it much more complicated than anything that has preceded this.

By the way, the Cold War was simple compared to this. Bipolar, pretty straightforward conversations. Yeah. We had to make big commitments, but it wasn't half as complicated in the context of dealing country to country and with tribes, with culture, with a lot of old history, and it is a very different set of choices.

In addition, that is complicated by the fact that many other countries today are growing in their economic power, growing in their own sense of independence, and not as willing to just take at face value what a larger G7 or G20 country tells them or what some particular alliance dictates. So that is what we are facing.

And I heard the chairman say, you know, we shouldn't compromise the day-to-day operations of the Department, but let me say to you the day-to-day operations of the Department are not confined to making an Embassy secure. We need to do that. But if that is all we do, folks, we are in trouble. We are not going to

be able to protect ourselves adequately against these challenges that we face that we will talk about today.

The United States—you know, we get 1 percent of the entire budget of the United States of America. Everything we do abroad within the State Department and USAID is within that 1 percent. Everything. All the businesses we try to help to marry to economic opportunities in a country, all the visas, the consulate work, the diplomacy, the coordination of DHS, FBI, ATF—I mean, all the efforts that we have to engage in to work with other countries' intelligence organizations and so forth to help do the diplomacy around that is less than 1 percent.

I guarantee you more than 50 percent of the history of this era is going to be written out of that 1 percent and the issues we confront in that 1 percent. And I ask you to think about that as you contemplate the budgets because we have been robbing Peter to pay Paul and we have been stripping away our ability to help a country deal with those kids who may be ripe for becoming part of ISIL. We have been diminishing our capacity to be able to have the kind of impact we ought to be having in this more complicated world.

Now, I am not going to go into all of the detail because I promised I would summarize. But I believe the United States is leading extraordinarily on the basis of that 1 percent. We have led on ISIL, putting together a coalition for the first time in history that has five Arab nations engaged in military activity in another Arab country in the region against—you know, Sunni against Sunni.

I don't want to turn this into that sectarian, but it is an important part of what is happening. We helped to lead in the effort to transition in Iraq a Government that we could work with. Part of the problem in Iraq was the sectarianism that the former Prime Minister had embraced, which was dividing his nation and creating a military that was incompetent, and we saw that in the context of Mosul.

So we wanted to make sure that we had a Government that really represented people and was going to reform and move in a different direction, and we worked at it and we got it. We have it today. Is it perfect? No. But is it moving in the right direction? You bet it is.

In Afghanistan, we rescued a flawed election, brought together the parties, were able to negotiate to get a unified unity Government, which has both of the Presidential candidates working together to hold Afghanistan and define its future and negotiate a BSA that defines our future going forward and give Afghanistan a chance to make good on the sacrifices of 14 years of our troops and our contributions and so forth.

On Ebola, we led that fight. President Obama made a brave decision to send 4,000 young American troops there in order to set up the structure so we had a capacity to be able to try to deal with it. One million deaths were predicted by last Christmas at the time that we did that.

And not all the answers were there for questions that were real, but the President sent those people in. We have made the difference. And now there's a huge reduction in the cases in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and we are not finished, but we are getting

to a place where you are not seeing it on the nightly news every day and people aren't living in fear here that they are about to be infected.

On AIDS, we are facing the first AIDS-free generation in history because of the work that we have done.

On the Ukraine, we have held together Europe and the United States in unity to put in place sanctions. The ruble is down 50 percent. Therehas been $151 billion of capital flight from Russia. There has been a very significant impact on day-to-day life, on food, product availability. The economy is predicted in Russia to go into recession this year. And we are poised yet to do another round, potentially, depending on what happens with Minsk in these next few days.

On Iran, we have taken the risk of sitting down, of trying to figure out is there a diplomatic path to solve this problem. I can't sit here today and tell you I know the answer to that, but I can tell you it is worth trying before you go to more extreme measures that may result in asking young Americans yet again to put themselves in harm's way.

We are pursuing the two most significant trade agreements of recent memory, the TPP in Asia, Pacific, and the TTIP in Europe, both of which represent about 40 percent of GDP of the world, in order to have a race to the top, not a race to the bottom. And if we can achieve that, we will be achieving a major new structure with respect to trade rules on a global basis.

In Africa, we held the African Leaders Summit, an historic summit with more than 40 African leaders coming to Washington, out of which has come a series of events that will help, we hope, to meet our obligation to help transform Africa.

And, finally, on climate—there are other things, incidentally. I am just skimming the surface of some of the most important. I know not everybody here is a believer in taking steps to deal with climate. I regret that. But the science keeps coming in stronger and stronger and stronger.

On the front page of today's newspapers are stories about an Alaskan village that will have to be given up because of what is happening with climate change. There is evidence of it everywhere in the world. And we cut a deal with China, improbable as that was a year ago.

The biggest opponent of our efforts has now stood up and joined us because they see the problem and they need to respond to it. And so they have agreed to target for lowering their reliance on fossil fuel and a target for alternative renewable energy by a certain period of time, and we have set targets. And that has encouraged other countries to start to come forward and try to take part in this effort.

So I will adamantly put forward the way in which this administration is leading. I know not everybody agrees with every choice. Are there places where we need to do more? Yes. And we will talk about those, I'm sure, today. But we need to work together.

I will end by saying that, historically, that 1 percent has produced more than its monetary value precisely because your predecessors were willing to let foreign policy debate and fight become

bipartisan. Let politics stop at the water's edge and find what is in the common interest of our country.

That is what brings me here today. That is why I am so privileged to serve as Secretary of State at this difficult time, because I believe America is helping to define our way through some very difficult choices.

And last thing. This is counterintuitive, but it is true. Our citizens, our world today, is actually—despite ISIL, despite the visible killings that you see and how horrific they are, we are actually living in a period of less daily threat to Americans and to people in the world than normally—less deaths—less violent deaths today than through the last century.

And so even the concept of state war has changed in many people's minds, and we are seeing now more asymmetrical kinds of struggles. So I would say to you that I see encouragement when I travel the world. I see people wanting to grow their economies. I see vast new numbers of middle class, people who are traveling. I see unbelievable embrace of new technologies. I see more democracy in places where it was nonexistent or troubled. Big changes in Sri Lanka and other countries. We can run the list.

But I hope you will sense that it is not all doom and gloom that we are looking at. Tough issues? Yes. But enormous opportunities for transformation if we will do our job and continue to be steady and put on the table the resourcesnecessary to take advantage of this moment of transformation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kerry follows:]

Secretary of State John Kerry
Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee; thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding America's international leadership and the Administration's budget request for the State Department and related agencies for the 2016 fiscal year.

Last month, in his State of the Union Address, President Obama said that we "lead best when we combine military power with strong diplomacy; when we leverage our power with coalition building; [and] when we don't let our fears blind us to the opportunities that this new century presents."

It is with that guidance in mind that we submit our budget to you this year and ask for its fair consideration and approval. We do so at a time and in a world that is marked both by stark tragedy and by great promise, a world where America's role is critical as are the resources that only Congress can provide. So we ask for your help. America must lead, but cannot do so on the cheap. The money we devote to the entire range of foreign policy programming, everything from embassy security to our counter-terrorism and nonproliferation initiatives, amounts to only about one percent of the federal budget, yet it may impact fifty percent of the history that will be written about this era. So we all have a job – to do everything we can, working together, to shape that history in ways that advance our nation's interests and uphold the values of the people we represent.

Mr. Chairman, within the FY 2016 President's budget request, the Department of State and USAID are seeking a total of $50.3 billion in discretionary funding, including $7.0 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations. Our requests for all accounts include:

- $3.5 billion to counter the terrorist network known as ISIL, address the crisis in Syria, bolster regional security, and respond to the humanitarian catastrophe brought on by the crises in Syria and Iraq;
- $3.1 billion in continued support for our democratic partner, Israel;

- $639 million to help our friends in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova as they seek to strengthen their democracies, withstand pressure from Russia, and to integrate more closely into Europe;
- $1.4 billion to support our activities in and to implement the President's strategy to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region;
- $1 billion to address the root causes of illegal migration from Central America to the United States, including the inhumane and perilous migration of unaccompanied children;
- $5.4 billion to finance our leadership and support for international organizations and peacekeeping efforts and thereby ensure that other nations will share the costs and burdens of maintaining global stability and strengthening consensus principles and norms;
- $3.4 billion to reinforce our partnerships and diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan and Pakistan;
- $4.8 billion for Embassy Security that will enable the Department to support overseas security requirements for our personnel and facilities, and continue implementing the recommendations of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board. These critical investments make possible the work of our diplomats to advance American interests worldwide, assist our citizens, and promote our ideals;
- $1.2 billion to support public diplomacy and exchanges;
- $8.2 billion for global health, including programs to end preventable child and maternal deaths; combat infectious disease through the Global Health Security Agenda; and create an AIDS-free generation;
- $808 million to invest in clean energy, sustainable growth, and measures to curb the harmful impacts of global climate change; and
- $978 million for the President's Feed the Future initiative to promote agriculture-led development and help reduce poverty and hunger.
- $390 million for the President's Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund to support counterterrorism activities, countering violent extremism, and crisis response, as well as provide enabling support to partners engaged on the front lines against terrorism.
- Over $2 billion for democracy, human rights, and governance programs that support governments and citizens to build societies where people can address

legitimate grievances through the democratic process and express themselves through strong civil societies.

Mr. Chairman, decades ago, in the aftermath of World War II, Dean Acheson wrote that the problems that bedevil American foreign policy are not like headaches that can be cured by taking an aspirin and getting a good night's sleep. "They will," he asserted, "stay with us until death. We have got to understand that all our lives the danger, the uncertainty, the need for alertness, for effort, for discipline will be upon us. This is new to us. It will be hard for us. But we are in for it and the only real question is whether we shall know it soon enough."

Secretary Acheson's words remind us that we long ago entered into an era of virtually nonstop danger, whether in one part of the world or another or regarding one type of challenge or another. The test for our leadership has never been to entirely eliminate those risks, because that is not possible; the test has been whether we can manage them decisively over time in ways that reduce the peril and strengthen the forces of democracy, humanity, justice, and law.

That is precisely the task that confronts us today just as it has confronted earlier administrations and generations. And I believe that, once again, our country is answering the call. We can see that leadership in the brave service of our fighting men and women on duty in strategic outposts and waterways across the planet. We can see it in our citizens who contribute to international civil society and who work hard every day to address and ease global challenges from extreme poverty to women's rights and the protection of religious liberty and other precious freedoms. We can see it in the work of our development professionals who are helping millions of people overseas to build strong communities, expand markets, and contribute to shared prosperity. We can see it in the Members of Congress from both parties who devote countless hours to meeting with international partners and to thinking about how best to harness our resources and relationships to address shared problems. And we can see it in the daily efforts of our diplomats to defend America's interests, advocate our principles, and strengthen our country's position in the world.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, there can be no question that our diplomatic engagement around the globe today is as deep and as strong as it has ever been. Let me point to just a few examples of where our leadership backed by our resources is making an important difference.

To begin, our country's leadership is on display in mobilizing actions across the globe to counter and prevent violent extremism. Just last week, the White House convened a landmark conference to build solidarity and identify concrete plans to address both the immediate and long term challenges. The United States is committed to helping countries in vulnerable regions to enhance their capacity to defeat terrorist networks and to rebut the radical ideologies that drive those networks. We have also taken the lead in a robust international effort to combat the terrorist group known as ISIL. Frankly, coalition building is a natural fit for the State Department – we're in the business of bringing other countries to the table to support mutual interests. And because ISIL is a threat to us all, this menace has galvanized a Coalition with more than 60 members, a Coalition that is as diverse as it is dedicated.

Already, nine countries are contributing to air strike operations in Iraq and a dozen have committed to train security forces there. Coalition partner pilots are also flying strike missions in Syria, and hosting the train and equip program for the moderate opposition. Meanwhile, we're pooling information and resources to cut ISIL's profits from smuggling and to block access to banks. Our air strikes have reduced ISIL's ability to profit from oil sales. To slow recruiting of foreign terrorist fighters, we're engaged in capacity building in the Balkans, criminal justice reform in North Africa, helping high-risk communities in the Middle East, and tightening security at airports. These efforts are in addition to the humanitarian aid that the United States and many other countries have contributed to care for refugees and displaced persons in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere in the region.

We are doing much; but we're still in the early stages of a multi-year campaign. Going forward, we must turn up the heat. Thus far, whenever our local partners have engaged the enemy on the ground with Coalition support from the air, we have prevailed. And the fact is that ISIL's momentum – which some called

unstoppable just a few months ago – has dissipated. A key supply line has been severed. Terrorist fighters can no longer mass and maneuver in large convoys due to Coalition airstrikes.

Throughout, the Coalition has been working closely with the government of Iraq and with moderate elements of the Syrian opposition. Success on the ground will depend on strong and legitimate local partners. That's why this year's request includes $355 million to support critical governance and security reforms in Iraq. Nothing will contribute more to the defeat of ISIL than an Iraqi government that governs inclusively, respects the rights of and protects all of its citizens with the help of a professional security force, and as a result enjoys the full support of its people.

Success will also be more likely if America is able to speak with one voice in our determination to defeat ISIL. Earlier this month, the President transmitted to Congress a draft Authorization to Use Military Force that provides just such an opportunity. As someone who served on Capitol Hill for almost thirty years, I welcome this step and look forward to discussing all aspects of this very important proposal with you. The approval of this authorization would provide a clear and powerful signal of American unity and resolve.

The fight against violent extremism also continues in Central and South Asia.

This year, Afghanistan will exercise full responsibility for its security forces, making possible a significant reduction in the U.S. military presence. We will, however, continue to consult with Kabul on security matters, and to administer a robust train, advise, and assist mission. We are also requesting $1.5 billion to support the new Afghan unity government as it strives to implement reforms and improve economic performance. This aid will be targeted at helping Afghanistan to move ahead through better governance, investments in health, education, and infrastructure, and the equitable treatment of women and girls.

In Pakistan, the United States is working with the government to counter terrorist groups that threaten our shared security. Last month, I met with the country's leadership for our annual Strategic Dialogue and found – in the wake of the

December 16 terrorist attack on the military school that murdered 132 children – a vigorous commitment to take on and defeat violent extremist groups. In recognition of our long-term engagement with the Pakistani people, we're also helping to promote development, energy security, health, and education.

At the same time, through constant diplomacy and the exchange of historic visits by our heads of government, we've strengthened our ties with India, the world's largest democracy, on economic issues, security cooperation, science, and clean energy.

Closer to home, in Europe, we have been steadfast in supporting Ukraine's recently-elected government against illegal intervention by Moscow and violence from the armed separatists that Moscow backs. Working closely with our international partners, we have approved targeted sanctions – including against Russia's financial, energy, and defense sectors – that have imposed a clear cost on the Russian economy and brought Kremlin leaders back to the bargaining table. The package of measures signed earlier this month to implement the September 2014 Minsk Protocol mandated a ceasefire and the pullback of heavy weapons. We have called for full implementation of the Minsk documents, including the withdrawal of all foreign equipment and troops from Eastern Ukraine, the full restoration of Ukrainian control of the international border, and the release of all hostages. To date, neither Russia nor the forces it is supporting have come close to complying with their commitments. If that failure continues, there will be further consequences – consequences that would place added strains on Russia's weakened economy.

Meanwhile, the United States is backing Ukraine's economic reforms through a $1 billion loan guarantee (and the possibility of another if reforms continue) and support for a $17.5 billion financial package from the IMF. Although the situation in eastern Ukraine remains very difficult, we are working to help the country emerge from this crisis united, and with the chance to decide its own future in a Europe where NATO is reinvigorated and leaders in the Kremlin are judged solely by their actions, not their words.

Mr. Chairman, President Obama has made it clear that Iran will not obtain a nuclear weapon. Since late 2013, we have been testing whether that goal can be achieved through determined multilateral diplomacy. The so-called P5+1 talks have made considerable progress but have not yet reached a satisfactory consensus on all critical questions. During our deliberations, for the first time in a decade, we've halted the progress of Tehran's nuclear program and even rolled it back in key respects. We will know soon whether we will be able to reach a verifiable and comprehensive plan to ensure that Iran's nuclear program is wholly peaceful. We will continue to consult closely with you as our efforts progress. Although I cannot predict the outcome, I do believe that an agreement of the type we seek would advance America's interests and that of our allies in the Middle East, strengthen the global nonproliferation regime, and serve the cause of international stability and peace.

In our own hemisphere, we are requesting $1 billion to help our friends in Central America make the difficult reforms required to address the region's interlocking security, governance and economic problems. In recent years, the combination of limited educational and employment opportunities, epic levels of violence, a lack of sufficient investment, and corruption have held these countries back while also spurring attempts at illegal migration to the United States. An estimated six million young Central Americans will enter the work force in the next decade. If opportunity isn't there, our entire hemisphere will feel the consequences.

Last December, President Obama announced a change in U.S. policy to increase communications, commerce, and travel between our country and Cuba and to initiate the process – supported by this budget – of normalizing diplomatic relations with Havana for the first time since 1961. In January, Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson went to the island for a first round of meetings with government officials and representatives of independent civil society. She conveyed the message – reinforced before and since by many Members of Congress – that America's support for democratic reforms, human rights, Internet freedom, and the release of political prisoners is absolutely firm. We believe very strongly that the time is right to deprive Cuban authorities of their longstanding crutch – so that they can no longer blame U.S. policy rather than their own failures for the hardships faced by the brave people of Cuba.

This budget also supports the President's rebalance to the dynamic region of East Asia and the Pacific. Based on President Obama's strategic commitment, we have modernized our alliances with Japan and South Korea, strengthened our partnerships with other regional powers, and supported democratic progress and respect for human rights in Thailand and Burma. A key element of our policy has been to build a comprehensive relationship with China that supports its rise in a manner compatible with international law and respectful of the concerns and rights of its neighbors. The United States remains committed to the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and will continue – in close consultation with our allies – to bring pressure to bear on North Korea in support of that goal.

Last August, President Obama hosted a summit attended by some 50 African leaders, during which we discussed plans for future cooperation and progress. U.S. policy toward the region reflects the continent's diversity and includes the promotion of investment and trade, energy access, youth leadership, and the economic participation of women.

Mr. Chairman, American leadership has also been evident in the fight to halt the deadly spread of Ebola – and it was a team effort. The State Department, the U.S. military, USAID, the Department of Health and Human Services(including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps), state and city governments, civil society, citizen volunteers, and Members of Congress all contributed. Together, we worked with international partners and with the brave communities and caregivers of West Africa to confront and contain this virus. The struggle won't be over until new infections are reduced to zero. But consider that five months ago, experts predicted that the number of active cases in West Africa would be 1.4 million. The actual level is less than two percent of that number. This is still a terrible human tragedy – but it is also an impressive demonstration of what international partnerships can accomplish. We have committed over the next three years to build on these partnerships, through the Global Health Security Agenda, to strengthen health systems in these vulnerable countries to prevent a tragedy of this scale from happening again.

We also serve our interests when we exercise leadership within the UN and other international organizations. The United States isn't everywhere and we shouldn't be everywhere, and so it's a great help to us when the UN is able to contribute to international security and stability through its peacekeeping and political missions, conflict-resolution, development, and humanitarian activities. As we continue to press for reforms within the UN system, it is essential that we meet our own obligations to pay our bills in full and on time. We demand that of others; we should be consistent in meeting that standard ourselves.

These are just some of the issues that we're focused on each and every day. But they're not the only ones. Programs to support democratic governance contribute to the development of societies that are peaceful, more prosperous and stable, and better partners for the United States. As more people around the world stand up for their fundamental freedoms, demands for U.S. support grow. Unfortunately, this has coincided with declining funding in recent years. This year, to meet the growing needs and advance our interests, the President has requested over $2 billion, a significant increase in democracy and governance funding.

Our military training and education enhances our security relationships while exposing students from friendly nations to U.S. values and respect for internationally-recognized human rights. Training foreign law enforcement and counterterrorism officials in American investigative techniques increases their capability and our security. Implementing stricter export controls, training weapons inspectors, improving global nuclear, biological and chemical security, and securing our borders allows us to guard against the most pernicious of threats: the possibility that terrorists might one day attack our homeland or our allies with a weapon of mass destruction.

Our global presence does something else: it creates jobs. Through our contributions to international financial institutions like the World Bank, we don't just lift the economies of low-income countries; we open markets for American businesses. Foreign policy is economic policy, and so the State Department is fully geared toward helping American entrepreneurs to build prosperity at home and across the globe. To that end, we're pursuing ambitious, 21st century trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the

Trans-Pacific Partnership that will establish landmark labor and environmental standards and help our manufacturers, farmers, ranchers, and service providers to increase what they are able to sell abroad.

We're also leading on the environment, on the oceans and marine sanctuaries, and in addressing the potentially devastating consequences of climate change. In November, the leaders of the United States and China, the world's two largest emitters of greenhouse gases, came together to announce ambitious targets to limit carbon emissions in the post-2020 period. Our budget and our diplomacy are focused on helping nations to grow in sustainable ways, and to mobilize countries everywhere to achieve a truly meaningful agreement on climate change in Paris this December. And here I want to stress the connection between climate change and other goals. For example, our investments to protect global food and water supplies are critical. But none of those efforts will succeed over time if we don't also concern ourselves with what we put in the air; food security simply will not happen if we fail to curb the harmful effects of climate change.

All this speaks to why our budget proposals aren't just a collection of numbers – they're the embodiment of our values and priorities. After serving in public life for over three decades, I am aware that there are few more reliable – or damaging – applause lines than promising to slash the budgets of the State Department and USAID. President Reagan once lamented that, "Foreign aid suffers from a lack of domestic constituency." And it's true that, in Washington, long-term goals can often lose out to more visible short-term projects. But that's exactly why we need your help – to take the long view and to recognize how the relatively modest investments we make now can improve the world and enhance our own security for generations to come.

As we have learned through history, the success or failure of America's international leadership is not only relevant; it will be a determining factor in the quality of the lives of our citizens. Foreign policy can help our workers to find a job or lose one; it can start a war or forge a peace; it can safeguard our families or expose them to grave risk; it can enable us to look forward with confidence or it can place a shadow over the future in which our children and their children will grow up.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, even though the globe seems at times to be awash in difficulties, the truth is that many international vital signs today are positive. Worldwide, extreme poverty is down and so is child mortality. More babies are being born healthy; more boys – and girls – are attending and staying in school; and with U.S. contributions leading the way, we are making welcome progress in protecting the vulnerable from HIV/AIDS and other infectious disease.

Meanwhile, each day in diplomatic outposts across the globe, America's representatives make known the high value our people place on democratic institutions, human rights, religious liberty, and the freedoms of speech and press.

So make no mistake, America is leading – with partners when possible, but alone when necessary. Leading against terror and proliferation. Leading in support of embattled friends from Ukraine and Afghanistan to Central America and Somalia. Leading to promote peace in the Middle East and Africa. Leading to create jobs domestically and protect the environment globally. Leading against the axis of suffering – hunger, ignorance, and disease. Leading to build a more free, just, and humane world. We are leading as one country, including the administration, Congress, our armed forces, our businesspeople, our citizen activists, and our volunteers.

Scanning the horizon, we are under no illusions about how difficult the demands of leadership are. Like Secretary Acheson, we have had our share of headaches. Setbacks along the way are inevitable. Engagement on all fronts will be required. But we draw strength from our democratic ideals, inspiration from the example of our predecessors, and courage from the conviction that the values guiding us are the right ones. In an era of uncertainty, one thing remains sure: America will continue to answer the call.

Thank you and now I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Secretary, you are certainly right. It is not all gloom and doom. But the reality for us is that, even as we discuss these issues, there are still rallies going on in Iran in which the refrain is, "Death to America. Death to Israel."

Even as we attempt to engage—and we hope that we get a verifiable agreement—but even as we attempt this, we still have the Ayatollah and we still have the cadres that come out and say: "Death to the Great Satan. Death to the Little Satan." And that is a reality that we have to face because sometimes, when people communicate those types of threats, they mean it.

And I mentioned my concern about the direction of the Iran talks. And, of course, we understand we are still negotiating in this, and I understand you have cautioned not to judge a deal we haven't yet seen. But it is important that the administration know the committee's concerns as you negotiate.

And one thing we do know is that Iran has continued to stonewall international inspectors concerning its past bomb work. And as you have acknowledged, this is a critical part of these negotiations and it is a fundamental test of Iran's commitment. And it has been well over a year, I think.

And I have talked to the Secretary General of the IAEA about this. You know, I saw press this morning. I don't know if this is correct or not—and we could go into closed session at some point to discuss it—about the concern of a secret facility.

But the concern I have at the moment is what the Secretary General says, and he indicates that he is concerned about signs of military-related activities, including a—including Iran designing a nuclear payload for a missile.

Inspectors in Iran, you know, they—or the IAE inspectors have amassed over 1,000 pages which showed research, development, and testing activities on technologies needed to develop a nuclear weapon. And of the 12 sets of questions that the IAEA has been seeking since 2011, Iran answered part of one of those.

And so I would like to ask you for a response on the concerns on the part of the IAEA and us on the committee.

Secretary KERRY. Well, they are legitimate. And the questions have to be answered, and they will be, if they want to have an agreement.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, we had 350 members write you expressing deep concern about this lack of cooperation. And, of course, from our standpoint, unless we have a full understanding of Iran's program, we are not going to be able to judge a year's breakout time with certainty.

That is the conundrum we face here. And they are withholding that information. And without going into detail again—but, as you know, I have concerns about the fact they were caught with that supersonic centrifuge, testing that, and the whole procurement issue.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just say, on that centrifuge, when you say "supersonic," they have some advanced centrifuges that do more than the centrifuges they have today. We are well aware of that. We have been tracking all of that.

And, really, there was a misunderstanding of the language in the interim agreement which did allow current testing. There was a

question about whether that had been current. We raised it, and immediately, within 24 hours, it ceased. There was no question. And therehas been no further effort on that.

In fact, the IAEA has signed off that Iran has complied with every single component of the interim agreement.

Chairman ROYCE. And let me——

Secretary KERRY. We raised these questions regarding the IAEA, Mr. Chairman. And, as I said, they are going to have to be answered. So that is part of the discussion right now.

Chairman ROYCE. There is a piece today in the New York Times: "Inspectors say Iran is evading questions as nuclear talks enter a crucial stage." Per my conversations with the IAEA, I know those concerns are there.

I want to just turn to broadcasting reform to discuss that with you because I know, in an exchange you had yesterday in the Senate, you expressed your frustration that our effort to confront Russian propaganda is simply nowhere near where it ought to be.

It is an area where Mr. Engel and I also share frustration. We know that Putin is dominating the essential information battle on the ground. But this isn't just about resources. It is also about what we can do with an initiative for the Broadcasting Board of Governors to overhaul that institution and make it effective.

Myself and Mr. Engel put that bill into the Senate last year. We were not able to get it up and passed. And the question I wanted to ask was for your assistance on the Senate side in getting our legislation through this year so that we can get the reform that this troubled agency needs and get up and running with the type of broadcasting that you and I, I think, want to see to offset what President Putin is doing right now.

Secretary KERRY. All I can say is, Mr. Chairman, I am with you 100 percent on this. I look forward to working with you further. I appreciate your leadership on this issue. You have been a champion of reform on the BBG.

I am absolutely committed to the reform of the BBG. And our next meeting is on April 29. I have had long conversations with our Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Rick Stengel, who is very seized with some things we need to try to achieve.

Now, there are two issues here. One is sort of the reform of the BBG, and the second is what we ought to be doing on a global basis with respect to the propaganda that is coming out of Russia.

On the BBG, we have had a slight difference with you on the issue of whether it is improved to have a situation where you have two boards and two CEOs. I think you know I raised that. And, also, I think State, given our engagement with it, needs to be part of that process. I am confident we can find a way to drive this more effectively.

The bigger issue is: What is Congress prepared to do in terms of putting some resources on the line to help us do this? I have found, when I have traveled to the Baltic region or to Poland or to Bulgaria recently and elsewhere, they are just getting flooded with propaganda. And propaganda is exactly that. It is propaganda. It has the ability to affect the minds of those who hear it if they don't hear alternatives.

Chairman ROYCE. Yeah. Well, Mr. Secretary, we are on the same page with you. I think your request was 1.3 million to confront Russian propaganda in this budget.

Secretary KERRY. Correct.

Chairman ROYCE. We are on the same wavelength—Mr. Engel and I and the committee—with you on this.

If I could just turn to one other issue that is going to be a topic here——

Secretary KERRY. Sure.

Chairman ROYCE [continuing]. Of this hearing today, and that is the question that is on our mind in terms of AUMF to ensure that the Commander in Chief has the authority needed to decisively defeat the enemy. And that will be part of our dialogue here with you this morning.

I will turn now to Mr. Engel for his opening questions.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, again, welcome, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, I mentioned to you just before the hearing began my concern about a report that was in yesterday's New York Times that says, "Negotiators weigh plan to phase out nuclear limits on Iran."

And, essentially, it is saying that we would possibly accept a fudging, so to speak, of how many years Iran would be prohibited from these various moves to have a nuclear weapon, whether it would be 10 years, 15 years, so on and so forth.

But it essentially would ease limits on Iran's production during the later years of an accord and saying that, by doing that, it would be an attempt to bridge the differences between the two sides over how long an agreement should last.

Can you talk about this. Because it is very disturbing. Obviously, I believe and others believe and I know you believe that the longest amount of time preventing Iran from gearing up to have a nuclear weapon is preferable. And if we are sort of fudging it, if those reports are true, at the end, it is very concerning.

You know, no one here, certainly not you, needs to be told about the threat of Iran and that Iran having a nuclear weapon would be a game-changer. We need to support our ally Israel. Iran is an existential threat to them.

And so, when I hear that the end portion of this agreement is sort of nebulous or we are going to be a little cloudy about it, it is very disturbing. So I would like your response to the report in the New York Times.

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely. Couldn't be a more important topic, and I absolutely welcome the chance to talk about it.

I regrettably can't talk about it as much as I would love to talk about it because we don't have a deal yet. And so I am not going to go into great lengths and detail here for that reason. And I would caution others not to be running around combating a deal that hasn't been made.

Secondly, I will say, Ranking Member, you just said—the language you used was we don't want to see a reduction of these measures that might then permit Iran to go build a nuclear weapon.

Please understand there is no reduction at any time that permits Iran to build a nuclear weapon. Iran is forbidden from building a nuclear weapon. That is the nature of membership in the Nonproliferation Treaty, which they are a member of, and that is the nature of certain responsibilities that you accept in the context of verification and transparency.

Now, I am not going to go into all of that here today except to say to you that, obviously, that has got to be adequate. Unlike North Korea, which is not a member of the NPT, Iran has certain obligations that go forever.

So don't get lured into believing that because something might change or be reduced with respect to, you know, some component they are allowed to do or install, et cetera. Countries that live by the NPT are permitted to have a peaceful nuclear program. That means they can produce power for their nation with a nuclear plant.

Japan has very intrusive inspection, and they enrich and they are engaged in producing fuel and doing their capacity. Now, Iran has already mastered the fuel cycle, folks. They did that a number of years ago.

When President George W. Bush was President in 2003, the Bush administration policy was no enrichment. And Iran went from 164 centrifuges to 19,000 that are installed. And thereis claims of some others being out there, which we are going out. So, you know, they have learned how to enrich. By the way, a different administration had an opportunity to stop them or do something, and they didn't.

So we are where we are today. They know how to do the fuel cycle. And the question is going to be: What restraints can you put on that now in a way that guarantees you that you know they are not going to build a nuclear weapon?

We have said there are four pathways to that nuclear weapon. One is through Fordow. Another is through Iraq. The other is through Natanz. And the fourth is through covert. Covertis hard. That is the hardest.

So we are now negotiating the methods by which we can show that the four paths are cut off and that they are not cut off, folks, for 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, 5 years. They are cut off forever, for as long as they are living up to the NPT. And you have to build some process of a knowledge base and of a system that gets you there over a period of time. That is what we are trying to do.

So, Mr. Chairman, today I don't want to jeopardize these talks. I don't want to mischaracterize them in any way. They are tough. They are hard. There are some very big issues yet to be resolved. We are not there. But we are not going to evade in on a piecemeal basis, and we certainly don't think it is appropriate to condemn it before everybody knows what it, in fact, is, if there is an is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Secretary, I want to ask you a final question about Ukraine. I believe that the United States should provide Ukraine with defensive weapons. I know that Germany and France have resisted it. I really think that whathas happened with Ukraine—under the 1994, as you well know, Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine gave up their nuclear weapons with assurances

from the U.S., the U.K., China, and Russia that they would be protected.

We haven't, in my opinion, lived up to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum at all. And, as I said in my opening remark, I think that the credibility of NATO is hanging in the balance with Putin bullying all the countries around Ukraine.

I am wondering if you could—you can comment on the defensive weapons to Ukraine to help them repel Putin's aggression.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we have sent a lot of different items to Ukraine, actually, over a period of time. We are one of the more significant donors. We have been sending counter-battery radars. We have been sending night vision. We have been sending communications gear, MRAPs. I mean, thereis a long list of items that we have sent.

And, in addition, we have been—let me just run through—we have got about 118 million we have given in training and equipment; 52 million including body armor, helmets, advanced radios, explosive ordnance, disposal robots, rations, first aid kit supplies; 47 million in protective gear for state border guard service, vehicles, up-armored SUV, heavy engineering equipment, thermal imaging, monitoring equipment, patrol boats, uniforms, generators.

And we provided training and equipment to six companies and headquarters elements—that is about 600 personnel—and Ukrainian National Guard, and thereis more. So we have been doing a lot.

I think everybody understands that we are not going to be able to do enough under any circumstance, that, if Russia decides to match it and surpass it, they are going to be able to do it. Everybody knows that, including President Poroshenko.

The debate is whether or not there are some weapons that could be given to them that give them a greater ability to defend themselves in order to prevent the creeping land-grabbing that has been taking place or at least raise the cost. That is a very legitimate discussion.

President Obama has not yet made that decision partly because even yesterday there was a meeting in Paris of the Russian Foreign Minister, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, and the French and German Foreign Ministers to measure the implementation of Minsk and to see if they can move further. Some weapons have been pulled back. Some troops have been pulled back. Obviously, Debaltseve was the site of a continued battle. That is a violation. There have been many violations of the Minsk cease-fire since then.

So the measurement now is: Are we on a downward track to actually seeing an implementation or is there now a Mariupol or some other effort that may be taking place which would immediately merit a much more significant response, which is teed up? And that could be very serious, next level of sanctions, coupled with other choices the President may or may not make.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chair of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Secretary.

I will ask about Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and the Palestinians.

You testified in the Senate yesterday that, "The policy is Iran will not get a nuclear weapon." However, last month your deputy, Tony Blinken, testified that the deal being negotiated is meant only to constrain Iran's breakout capabilities. So which one is it? Constraining or eliminating?

And if the deal is to truly prevent Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon, then why are we allowing Iran to enrich, to keep some of their stockpiles and centrifuges?

Your agreement is based on the assumption that we can verify if Iran cheats, but the Defense Science Board and former CIA Director, General Hayden, have stated that our capability to detect Iran's undeclared or covert nuclear sites is either inadequate or does not exist. So can we catch when Iran cheats? And when they do cheat—not if, but when—what consequences will Iran suffer?

And a report surfaced yesterday, as the chairman said, of an undeclared Iranian enrichment site. What information can you share about this new site? And how will this development impact the negotiations?

On Cuba, Mr. Secretary, yesterday in the Senate you said, "The change that we are making we believe actually assists the United States to be able to promote the democracy and the rights that we want for the people of Cuba."

However, a Cuban spy, Josefina Vidal, who is leading the Castro delegation, this week said that Havana will not accept a U.S. Embassy that will assist Cuba's civil society and said that, "Change in Cuba isn't negotiable."

Now, the regime has arrested over 300 opposition members in just the last 2 weeks. Berta Soler was among them. Only 3 weeks ago, Mr. Secretary, she was sitting in your chair, testifying before our committee on the gross human rights abuses going on in Cuba today. She returned to Cuba on a Saturday. She was arrested Sunday.

Yet, the U.S.-Castro talks are still scheduled to go on here at the State Department on Friday, but the U.S. didn't even get one cosmetic commitment to democratic reform from the Castro regime and the regime keeps demanding more from us: "Give back GTMO," "Pay us billions of dollars from the losses we suffered from the embargo." Utterly ridiculous.

And just yesterday, Mr. Secretary, Raul Castro bestowed medals on those whom your administration pardoned, including Gerardo Hernandez, who was responsible for killing U.S. citizens. On the very anniversary of the killing of our citizens, Castro gave a medal to his killer, a killer who was pardoned by this administration.

Of all the bad deals that we have seen—Bergdahl, et cetera—isn't this Cuba deal the weakest one yet?

And on Venezuela, Mr. Secretary, just a few days ago, a 14-year-old child was killed by police thugs—actually, just yesterday, 14 years old. He was shot in the head during a peaceful protest.

Now, we in Congress passed a sanctions law to punish such acts, but you have not fully implemented our law. State's decision to deny some visas to some people is only a small slap on the wrist. People are dying in Venezuela, and all we are hearing is excuses. Enough is enough.

Why have you not fully implemented every one of the sanctions laws that we passed against human rights violators in Venezuela? How many more peaceful demonstrators must die before you sanction them.

And, lastly, on the Palestinians, our courts just a few days ago, as you know, ordered the Palestinian Authority and the PLO to pay for terror. And, yet, the PA has hired a DC lobbying firm. We all know that money is fungible.

So isn't our money to the Palestinians actually paying for their court-ordered terror penalties and their lobbying efforts here in Congress?

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me answer the last two very quickly, and then I will talk about the others.

The answer is no. That money is not paying for it. In fact, that moneyis not flowing right now because of the ICC and what is going on. And the PA is nearly bankrupt at this moment. It is in nobody's interest, Madam Chair, for the PA to fall apart. That is not——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And on Cuba?

Secretary KERRY. So we don't want that to happen.

And I will come to Cuba in a minute.

On the 14-year-old Venezuelan, that is horrendous. Venezuela keeps moving in the wrong direction and making the wrong choices. And the answer is the sanctions are being implemented right now as fast as possible. We are working with the National Security Council. We are working with the Department of the Treasury and other agencies to implement the provisions of the law as rapidly as we can.

So we have no disagreement whatsoever on the egregious behavior, the repression of people, the arrests, the false accusations against us that are emanating out of Venezuela. We invite frequently President Maduro to realize that thereis a completely alternative set of options available to him. We hope he will take them.

On Cuba——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But he can commit these acts with impunity because nothing happens. We really aren't implementing those sanctions.

Secretary KERRY. Well, no. The law is being implemented. It is being implemented. Sanctions—you know, everybody thinks you just sort of slap them on day one. Thereis a very specific set of requirements in the law for what you have to do to prepare in order to——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. How about the killer of this 14-year-old? We know who did it. Why didn't we sanction him yesterday? We have the video.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going to have to keep moving. And I am just going to suggest——

Secretary KERRY. Let me just say that sanctions are being applied.

And Cuba—don't measure it by where it is today. Measure it by what begins to happen as this process of normalization takes place and we have an opportunity to be able to press those issues and shed more light on them and create the change we hope will take

place. And I could go on at some length about that, but I want to get to the other things you mentioned very quickly.

On Iran, there is no equivalency between—you know, with what Secretary Blinken was talking about with respect to preventing them from getting a weapon and the question of what happens with respect to their compliance with respect to their nuclear program.

If you have a year of breakout time—by the way, everybody, I think it is a publicly known number that has been bantered around in the press that, prior to our joint agreement, the breakout time was about 2 months, maybe 3 max, but somewhere around 2 months.

We have already extended that, and our effort in this agreement is to get a period of time—I am not going to say how long—but a period of time during which they have got to live by a 1-year breakout.

Now, a 1-year breakout does not mean time it takes to get a bomb. A 1-year breakout is time it takes to get enough fissile material for one nuclear weapon, which they haven't yet designed or been able to test or put on a warhead or explode or anything. So that is many more years it takes to get there.

We don't lose one option that we have today, not one option, during that period of time. Slap back on the sanctions. Make them worse than they are today or, of course, if you have to, you always have a military option. So we don't take away any option. We actually expand the period of time during which we can determine what is going on.

Now, I will tell you, Israel is safer today with the added time we have given and the stoppage of the advances in the Iranian nuclear program than they were before we got that agreement, which, by the way, the Prime Minister opposed. He was wrong. And today heis saying, "Oh, we should extend that interim agreement."

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Will you share the agreement with Netanyahu?

Secretary KERRY. Of course. Of course. We continue—I think even today our Department is on the phone to the National Security Advisor and we are having calls. I have——

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Secretary, I am going to make a suggestion to the members here.

Members, if you use the 5 minutes to ask your questions, we are just going to go on to the next member, and then we will do the response in writing.

Secretary KERRY. Fair enough.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going to go right now to Mr. Brad Sherman of California. Thank you.

Mr. SHERMAN. I have a lot of questions for which I would just like a response in writing, and then I will end with one that I would like an oral response from.

First, I want to commend the——

Chairman ROYCE. I had actually hoped to encourage dialogue, if the gentleman——

Secretary KERRY. Had the opposite effect, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHERMAN. I am responding to the chairman's policies.

Secretary KERRY. I am happy listen to an hour's worth of questions and will respond.

Mr. SHERMAN. I want to commend you for the action regarding Ebola. I want to be one of the first to commend you for the administration's approach to Iraq and Syria.

We got chemical weapons out of the area. Otherwise, theywould be in ISIS's hands. And we repelled attacks on the Haditha Dam, the Mosul Dam, and, most importantly, Baghdad, all without any U.S. combat casualties.

Now, a lot of people throw out other ideas: You should have done this. You should have done that. Maybe they would have made things better. Maybe things would be worse.

But I will tell you this: Every one of those other strategies would have resulted in an awful lot of American combat casualties. Your strategy has done more without casualties to Americans in the service than any other strategy could have.

As to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, you say it shouldn't be a race to the bottom, but Vietnam is 30 cents an hour. That is the bottom. And we are told that we are going to get free access to the markets of Vietnam, but they don't have freedom and they don't have markets.

They were told that there is going to be labor rights for Vietnamese workers. They don't dare assert them because the human rights situation is such that they risk their own lives. So, I mean, 30 cents an hour is the bottom, and that is what we are racing to.

Also, as to China in this Trans-Pacific agreement, with the rules of origin in our other agreements, goods that are 50, 60, 80 percent made in China can then go to another country, get slapped with a tag, and come into the United States duty free.

The chairman raised the Broadcasting Board of Governors issue. I just want to raise one small part of that, and that is how important it is that we broadcast in the Sindhi language. I think I mentioned this to you before.

This committeehas voted to spend $1.5 million a year to do that. And thereis no population in the world more important to world stability than that of Pakistan. There is no place where there are more crazy ideas than Pakistan. And if you are trying to reach a population, you can't just do it in Urdu.

Senator Kerry, you championed recognition of the Armenian genocide. We now are about to have the 100th anniversary, and I would hope that you would show the courage that you are personally known for and, on April 24, use the world "genocide" to describe what happened in Anatolia 100 years ago.

In your earlier testimony, you said that Iran is not permitted to have a nuclear weapon ever because they are members of the NPT, unlike North Korea. North Korea was a member of the NPT. They withdrew in 2003.

And I would hope you would clarify for the record that North Korea is not entitled to have a nuclear weapon and that Iran does not become permitted to have a nuclear weapon should they at some future time decide to withdraw from the NPT.

I hope that you would furnish for the record a statement that our position is, once you are in the NPT, you cannot get out. Otherwise,

every country is just one letter away from being permitted to develop nuclear weapons.

You have talked about 1 year to breakout. What I am concerned about is how long to sneak out. The MEK sometimes gives us accurate information. They are the ones that told the world about the Iranian nuclear program. They now say that there is a secret facility at Lavizan-3.

One approach is that—well, what I would like to know is: Are you willing to accept an agreement in which the IAEA does not have the right to go anywhere on short notice to look at undeclared or potentially undeclared or credibly believed to be undeclared nuclear sites or are we going to settle for the cat and mouse game in which you can tell us it is a year to breakout and the Iranians have undisclosed facilities and we can't even check them out?

I would ask that he be allowed to answer that for the record.

Secretary KERRY. Do we have time left?

Mr. SHERMAN. I hope you have time for that one last question.

Chairman ROYCE. We will do the last question, but we will need to keep moving. We only have 5 minutes for each member, and we want to get as many as possible.

So go ahead with the last question.

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me just say, clearly, Iran does not have a right to step out of the NPT and then go. And if they began to do that, we will hopefully—and this is part of what is being negotiated—have the ability to know immediately ifthere is any movement in that direction. And then we have all our options, as I said, that are available to us.

Going a step further, on this secret facility, we are well aware of the accusation—or the allegations regarding that facility. It will obviously have to be—any questions would have to be answered to have any kind of an agreement, and I think people should rest assured that will take place.

And on the IAEA, we are negotiating for the appropriate standards and process that the IAEA needs in order to be able to answer appropriate questions. That is a critical part of compliance with any NPT country. There is a process, as you know, that is required in order to achieve that. So that is obviously part of the negotiations.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Chris Smith of New Jersey, chairman of the subcommittee on Africa and Global Health.

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

I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your service and for your leadership. I certainly like the use of your phrase "race to the top." If only that were true when it comes to respect for human rights among many countries around the world, including in China and Cuba.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen—we cochaired that hearing just 3 weeks ago, and Berta Soler sat right where you sit. We were all concerned about her welfare and well-being going back. And of course she was arrested when she went back for speaking the truth. On Friday her case and that of all the dissidents hopefully will be front and center. It has to be.

I also a couple of years chaired one of 49 hearings on human rights abuses in China I have held. I can't even get a visa to go

there anymore. We had five daughters who testified, all of whose fathers are political prisoners. All of them in unison as the hearing went on asked to meet with President Obama. They said, "He has two daughters. He will understand."

I tried for months to arrange that meeting, 5, 10 minutes with these unbelievably wonderful five daughters speaking out for their dads in prison in China. We couldn't get it. I respectfully ask perhaps you can help make that happen. Gao Zhisheng's daughter is one of those. I know you know about Gao's case. And perhaps you might even meet with them as well.

Let me ask you, on Nigeria, Mr. Secretary, will you immediately seek to restart and significantly expand critical military training of human rights-vetted Nigerian Armed Forces to combat the existential threat posed by Boko Haram?

On Iran, the status of Pastor Abedini, Robert Levinson, Amir Hekmati, and Jason Rezaian from the Washington Post, do you expect that they will be free soon?

And then, on the issue of child abduction, several deadlines have arrived, or are imminent, pursuant to the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act.

And I want to thank you publicly again for your strong personal support for the new law, including the process to develop and to enter appropriate procedures, including MOUs with non-Hague countries with unresolved child abduction cases like India. Japan—as you know, has signed the Hague Convention—has been breathtakingly unresponsive especially to abductions that occurred prior to the ratification of the Hague Convention.

Iraq war veteran Michael Elias from northern New Jersey and numerous parents from the NGO BACHome have been utterly, utterly, frustrated even to meet with their children, much less get them back.

And then there is the issue of India. Bindu Philips is a New Jersey mother of twin boys abducted to India 6 years ago. Bindu got full custody in a New Jersey court, testified before my subcommittee 2 years ago, and this past Monday I met with her in my office in New Jersey and she pleaded for you, Mr. Secretary, to help her to get her kids back.

I just want to ask you because I know you have a heart for this: Did President Obama raise child abduction cases with Prime Minister Modi when they met in late January? Did you raise it on your trip earlier that month? And, if so, what was Mr. Modi's response?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we have raised those cases. We raise them in every conversation that we have. In fact, all of our missing citizens—we have a number of them in various parts of the world and we raise them on a consistent basis not only through our Embassies, but anytime that I visit either here or go somewhere and we meet at high levels, we raise these issues by name.

We have raised the names of the folks, Mr. Abedini, Mr. Hekmati, Mr. Levinson, Mr. Rezaian, most recently when I was in Geneva just a couple of days ago. And we consistently—and we are working—we actually have a process now in place where we are working quietly, trying to see what can be arranged.

With respect to the parent child abduction, I have worked on that very, very hard when I was here. I worked on that as the Sec-

retary and had a very tragic case in my State of Massachusetts, a gentleman whose kids were stolen and taken back to Egypt and we have been trying to get access back and so forth.

We have a caseload of about 1,000 international parental abduction cases, and we are trying to expand The Hague abduction convention to efforts throughout the world. We have approximately 75 professionals who are full-time assisting parents with respect to this horrendous plight that they face. I mean, there is nothing worse, obviously.

I applaud and thank you for your constant focus on these issues, Congressman. You are really the primary focus of the entire Congress on this, and we appreciate it enormously.

With respect to Nigeria, I visited there recently in order to try to keep the election process from leading to violence. We knew there was a possibility of some delay. Now we are trying to make sure that this delay does not become an excuse for rigging the election, trying to steal it.

We are working hard to have a transparent election, which would then give us leadership one way or the other, prepared to move forward on the military training, on the efforts to coordinate on Boko Haram. And, as you've seen, the neighbors have come together—Chad, Cameroon, others—in an effort to try to put pressure on Boko Haram. I am confident that, over time, we will be able to.

We have done the proper Leahy vetting with respect to the units that we were training in Nigeria. I assure you that has not been the problem in our training program disruption. Unfortunately, equipment was not delivered to them internally that should have been given them. And, frankly, there have been some leadership challenges with respect to that.

So, hopefully, this election can clear the air and put us in a position to move on an effort against Boko Haram and to do some of the training that you have talked about.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

We go now to Mr. Gregory Meeks of New York.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you.

Let me first—you know, some have said that the United States no longer leads. I think they mean leading in a unilateral way. I want to compliment you on leading in this administration because I think leadership in today's world means leading in a multilateral way.

And what you and this administration have done was bring a lead by bringing countries together, whether it is bringing the country together on the P5+1, which those sanctions is what put Iran into the position that it currently is in, whether it is bringing countries together to fight Ebola, bringing countries together when we deal with the Ukrainian and Russian situation, bringing countries together to deal with ISIL.

That is leadership, and it is difficult leadership when everybody has their own competing interests. And I think that the leadership that we are doing today so that we can share this world that has shrunk by talking about, "We just can't do it our way, by ourselves, with no one else" is real leadership. It is hard work, and sometimes

it is not thankful. So I appreciate the work that you are doing in that regard.

It is difficult because, when I look at my constituents, for example, even going back to 2003, they have had a sense of both hope and skepticism when multilateral negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program initiated. And there have been many stops and starts since that time. And my constituency has expressed strong concern over the years about the prospects of an agreement with Iran. The current multilateral negotiations, of course, are no exception. And today we are at the precipice of a deadline set by the P5+1 under the Joint Plan of Action.

So my question simply is—and I want to ask three questions, and I am going to try to be quiet so you can answer them all—on this area, should my constituents that are so concerned—they tell me concerned and it is emotional for them because they are really concerned about the threat to Israel and about Iran having a nuclear weapon.

So should they be hopeful or skeptical at this point in the current negotiations? And what would you consider a comprehensive agreement, knowing that we are not there, if we can do that? And how does the administration's budget support that end? That is on Iran.

Quickly, I went to Asia just last week. I visited Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan. Clearly, there, being on the ground, was very helpful. Can you just tell us how important, when we look at TPP, for example, just on an economic side—but as I talked to some of those countries, they were looking at it also from a geopolitical aspect—how important it was for us to have a presence in the region.

So how important is TPP with reference to—geopolitically on top of the economics? And then when you talk about Vietnam, maybe even talking about capacity-building they are in.

Let me keep quiet and give you the few minutes I have. Because I just want to know whether we have any other tools because I—subcommittee on Europe——

Secretary KERRY. Can you just clarify the second part of your question, which was how do we support that end regarding your constituents. What was the——

Mr. MEEKS. Well, the question is—I wanted to know whether or not with my constituents, who are skeptical——

Secretary KERRY. All right. I got it, skeptical.

Look, I think it is fair to be skeptical until you see the agreement, and it is important to be hopeful. And that's the way I would put it. I am not sitting here expressing confidence. I am expressing hope because I think we are better off with a viable, acceptable, good, diplomatic agreement than with the other choices. But it remains to see whether or not we can get that kind of an agreement.

So I think it is healthy to approach something with a certain amount of skepticism until proven otherwise, but I wouldn't be damning it on the skepticism. I would just wait and be hopeful and see what we can produce. Give us a chance—I mean, look, remember how many people—I can remember sitting here—and I won't go into who said what, but there were plenty of folks in this committee who said, "Terrible agreement. You are giving away the store. This can't work. They won't live up to it." I sat and listened to all of that, and I said, "The proof is in the pudding."

Well, guess what, folks. They have lived up to every single piece of it. The 20 percent enriched uranium has been taken down to zero. That fuel has been shipped out. Stockpile is lowered. They have given us access to Fordow. They have given us access to the storage sites of centrifuges. They have given us access to the milling, the uranium, the mining. I mean, we have had—you know, they have stopped Iraq. They didn't do any further work on it. Everything they said, so that, in effect, they agreed to roll back their program and they rolled it back.

So we are beginning now with, frankly, a baseline of a year of measurement. And you can't just dismiss that and throw it out the window. So I think that is cause for hope, and that is all I would say about it at this point in time.

On TPP, of course there is a geopolitical component in this. If the rules of doing business are written by people who don't adhere to our standards of doing business, that is a race to the bottom.

And if we are not helping to bring countries together to create an understanding of how we are going to treat each other in business, of what kind of access we will have of non-tariff barriers being eliminated, of fair trade in certain products and so forth—if there aren't rules that raise the standards, we are in trouble.

Now, I will tell you right now labor standards, environment standards, business standards are all going to be written into this agreement in ways that they haven't been previously.

In a place like Vietnam—and I know Vietnam pretty well because I was involved in the effort to end the embargo with George H W. Bush and then, ultimately, the normalization, and I have seen the transformation that has taken place.

People are living a higher standard of living. People have the right to strike. They do strike. There are labor rights. It is not as uniform as in the United States, but a huge transformation is taking place.

And there is no question in my mind that being able to implement this will be a game-changer for people's attitudes and possibilities as we go forward in the future.

And China has actually said to us, "Could we join this ultimately?" And we have said, "Of course you can, if you are prepared to adopt the standards."

So this is geostrategic. It is vital to America's presence in the region. And I urge everybody to think of it in that context. And that is part of the reason why TPA is so important.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going now to Mr. Dana Rohrabacher of California, chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

And, again, though we ask pointed questions, we wish you the best of luck and are very proud of the hard work that you are doing, even though we may have some disagreements with specific policy.

It seems to me about your opening statement—when you talked about how complicated the world is right now as compared to what confronted the greatest generation, I just would like to respectfully disagree with you. The fact is that I believe what the difference

was is not that the world wasn't so complicated, but that the greatest generation knew how to set priorities.

And Reagan exemplified that in the Cold War when he said, "What is your goal with the Soviet Union?," who was our primary enemy at that time. He said, "We win. They lose." And he knew that that was his number one goal. By the end of his administration, we had eliminated the Cold War without a direct military confrontation with what we had been at war with in the Cold War.

I think that today we should set the priority, which is who is our primary enemy, who is the primary threat to the well-being and security of our people. And I think that we have to come to the realization that radical Islam is the primary threat to our safety.

And I know our President has a little bit of difficulty saying those words together, "radical Islamic terrorism," but I have no problem saying it. And that is the primary enemy for the security of our people. That includes, by the way, the Mullah regime in Iran.

Just right off the bat, when you mentioned that the Mullahs had actually went ahead and they have actually moved forward and accomplished the agreements that they had pledged to do about nuclear weapons, did the Mullah regime tell us about the existence of this new nuclear facility that our friends in the MEK who were permitted to sit out in the middle of the desert—did we know about that nuclear facility?

Secretary KERRY. Well, you are saying it is a nuclear facility. That has yet to be determined. But we know about the facility. Yes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. So had the Mullahs disclosed that facility to us?

Secretary KERRY. Well, it has not been revealed yet as a nuclear facility. It is a facility that we are aware of which is on a list of facilities we have. And I am not going to go into greater detail, but these things are obviously going to be have to be resolved as we go forward.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. Let me note that most of us have been somewhat upset because, again, the administration seems unable to prioritize the helping of our major friends. To me, a major friend is: Who is the greatest enemy of our enemy who can help bring down our enemy the most?

For example, we have left—and, again, this leads to a question—we have left the most heroic person in this effort, Dr. Afridi, the heroic individual who helped us bring to justice Osama bin Laden, Osama bin Laden, the man who helped plan the murder, the slaughter, of 3,000 Americans on 9/11.

Yet, the man who helped us bring him to justice has been sitting in a dungeon in Pakistan. And what do we get? I mentioned this to you last year. He's been sitting there the whole year. And, yet, the administration is still planning to give more than $500 million in aid to the Government that has basically committed the ultimate hostile act and slap in our face by putting Dr. Afridi in jail.

Are we going to hold back any of that $500 million until they let Dr. Afridi go?

Secretary KERRY. Are we what?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Are we going to withhold any of the $500 million in aid that we are proposing until they let Dr. Afridi go?

And what message does that give to our friends if we let Dr. Afridi sit in that prison?

And this is a message to the Kurds and anybody else. We are not going to help you. You may put yourselves on the line for us, but we are going to let you die a lingering death if that is what—rather than make some tough choices.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are not doing that, Congressman. We are actually—and I respect and appreciate your passion and concern for Dr. Afridi, which I share. And I have raised this. I raised it formerly with President Zardari and Prime Minister Sharif. We have raised it at the highest levels. We believe his incarceration is both unjust, unwarranted, unfair, counterproductive to our efforts, and we have made that case.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We have made the case.

Are we going to withhold the support, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary KERRY. We believe the best way to try to solve this problem is to do this through the diplomatic channels, through regular communication direct and high-level engagement, which has a chance of being successful.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That is where we disagree, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. I know.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I don't think you have been successful at it. And it is symbolic to our other—the Kurds——

Secretary KERRY. I can guarantee you——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We have war trying to placate the people who are not our best friends in Iraq at the expense of the Kurds. We want to put them secondary, make sure they are put down in a subservient role to Baghdad.

This whole idea that we can't prioritize and stand behind our friends is a problem. I think it is a strategic error on the part of administration.

Secretary KERRY. Well, nobody is condoning or allowing people to be "put down." In fact, we fought very hard for the arming which is taking place of the Peshmerga and of the Kurds for the oil deal that was made between Baghdad. In fact, it is thedirect contrary of what you just said. We are actually elevating the capacity——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. When you were here last year, it was one thing. We asked you about: Could we give weapons directly to the Kurds? Are we doing that now? Are we still saying it has to be approved by Baghdad?

Secretary KERRY. Some things have gone to them directly. Some things have gone through Baghdad. And that is appropriate and it is working. Baghdad has seen to it that they are getting what they need and has worked very effectively in coordination with them. That is one of the virtues of what Prime Minister Abadi is bringing to the table right now.

But I want to go back to your original comment, which I think really merits a moment, Mr. Chairman. When you say you disagree that there wasn't a greater simplicity to the choices of World War II, I am not diminishing it.

I am one of the greatest admirers in the world. I am in awe of what they did. I have been to the beaches of Normandy—I don't know—15, 20 times. To me, it is religious ground. It is an amazing place.

And everything that went on in that war is stunning in terms of the coordination of global effort to defeat fascism, tyranny, dictatorship. I don't simplify that. But I am telling you, in terms of a choice, it was communism, fascism, and tyranny versus democracy, freedom, and liberty.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. But it wasn't. We sided with the Soviet Union because we knew they were less priority. The Nazis and the Japanese had the highest priority.

Secretary KERRY. Because they were going to help us defeat that particular——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Correct.

Secretary KERRY. I just want to finish.

Chairman ROYCE. We understand both the gentlemen's points.

Secretary KERRY. What you have today, what has been released as a result of the fall of Berlin Wall and all of the things that have happened with the Arab Spring, you have complications of tribes all over the place with different agenda. You have Sunni versus Shiite. You have Arab versus Persian. You have culture and Middle East and modernity and religion, a host of things and different agenda by different countries that are part of different efforts.

For instance, the coalition to deal with ISIL is split on whether or not there ought to be a focus on Assad or not a focus on Assad. That is a complication. You begin to do one thing, you lose some. You do the other, you lose others. How do you hold them together?

That was not the problem with respect to the challenge of whether or not you had to beat the folks in the Pacific and win in Europe at the same time in World War II. So there is a huge difference in how states are behaving today and in what their economic power is and in what choices they have.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Sires of New Jersey, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here today.

Mr. Secretary, one of the things that I read was that the largest democracy in the Western Hemisphere encouraged us to get rid of our embargo with Cuba, that it would help the relationship.

I am just wondering why some of these countries are not speaking up against the abuses that go on in Cuba and in Venezuela. I mean, somebody pointed out before that a 14-year-old boy was shot yesterday. Places like Brazil, how come they don't say anything about the human right abuses? How come they don't say anything? If they encouraged us, it seems like we were left alone. I just think they are fearful of Cuba stirring up the university students in some of these countries.

Secretary KERRY. I don't know if that is the reason they don't do it, but I don't disagree with you. And not only, by the way, in this hemisphere. I think that there are a lot of countries in Europe and elsewhere that have been willing to do business without any kind of voice of accountability for those kinds of abuses.

I think one of the things that will happen with our diplomatic presence, frankly, is an ability to help mobilize that, and we ought to. We are not going to turn our backs on one notion of what is important with respect to human rights democracy, change, so forth, and we have made that clear.

Mr. SIRES. Well, we could go on, but I have a couple of other questions.

Secretary KERRY. I am sure you could.

Mr. SIRES. Well, that is what I'm here for.

Colombia. You know, I have a great deal of Colombian population in my district. Some of the Colombians are concerned about our decision of sending Harrison, our envoy, to participate in this treaty. They feel that, if things don't turn out well, you know, Santos has somebody to blame, which has always been the ugly American in South America, which is us.

I know that he asked. I know that we complied with his ask. But I was just wondering what do we really get out of this other than—if it doesn't go well and the Colombian people turn down this pact, we are going to wind up being the bad guys.

Secretary KERRY. Let me tell you why I don't think we will. But it is a good point, and it is an appropriate question to ask because, under the wrong circumstances, it is possible that could happen.

We are not at the table. We are not a negotiating partner in this.

Mr. SIRES. But the impression out there seems that we sent Harrison over——

Secretary KERRY. We are doing this in order to try to help facilitate, if it is possible, because they believe that the United States could be very helpful as a friend and a partner because we have existing assistance programs to Colombia that are helping to lay the groundwork for the implementation of a possible peace agreement and because we have been so committed through the years.

I mean, you all—certainly those you in the top daises here—were deeply involved in helping to do this, 1990s, Plan Colombia, highly controversial. We put a billion bucks and more on the line. We became deeply engaged. And together with the leadership of Colombians, a country that was near failed, certainly failing, turned itself around to become one of our most trade partners and allies in the region.

Mr. SIRES. Yeah. But they were pretty much outcasts, Colombia, because they were dealing so much with us. And that concern——

Secretary KERRY. Well, there were——

Mr. SIRES. And the last question I have is——

Secretary KERRY. Sure. But look at the success they are today. Measure their success today against countries that haven't chosen to do that.

I think Colombia is a leader as a result, and I think other countries are saying, "You know, maybe we are missing out. I think there is an effort we can make to do a better job of reaching out into Latin America."

We are trying to do that. That is part of what is in this budget, by the way, in the $1 billion we are trying to put——

Mr. SIRES. I am just concerned that we are going to wind up looking bad, as usual.

The last question I have is: Where is our progress with Joanne Chesimard as far as being sent back to the United States to face trial? Joanne Chesimard is the Black Liberation Movement woman that killed a state trooper in New Jersey. And I read where the Cuban Government said, "That is out of the question. We are not sending her back."

Secretary KERRY. We are continuing to seek the return from Cuba of fugitives from U.S. justice. We raised these cases. We have raised the case of Joanne Chesimard. We raised the case of William Guillermo Morales with the Cuban Government during the migration talks that just took place a few weeks ago. We raised those cases when we met in January. There is a meeting here Friday, and we will raise the cases again on Friday.

And we have had some limited success in recent years. There are four non-Cuban national, U.S. national fugitives who have been returned to the United States since 2011. We are going to continue these discussions in the context of this new relationship and, hopefully, it might open the door.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Steve Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here, Mr. Secretary.

Last week State Department Spokeswoman Marie Harf espoused the interesting proposition that we should create a jobs program for people who might be inclined to support groups like ISIS, jobs for Jihadists. She didn't call it that, but I will. And just where will these jobs come from? I guess not at the mall. It is apparently too dangerous to work there now.

Are these shovel-ready jobs or are they yet to be created, like Keystone Pipeline jobs? And, Mr. Secretary, did Ms. Harf consult with anyone else in the State Department—yourself or anyone—before announcing this new initiative? If not, who did she consult with?

I realize that, according to Ms. Harf, many of us are not nuanced enough to grasp the wisdom of such an enlightened proposal. And I am sure some of any colleagues would appreciate some insight just where in the heck this idea came from.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, let me make it absolutely clear. That is not what she was saying, if you take the full breadth of what Marie Harf was talking about.

In fact, what she was talking about is the notion that, if all we do is have a military approach to the problem of violent, religious extremism, whether it is Islamic or other, or whether there are violent extremists, we are going to fail. You will have the next Secretary of State or the one thereafter or a continuum of Presidents coming to you with new acronyms for new groups that are a threat.

And everything that came out of our White House summit on violent extremism underscored the fact that there is one component that you have to do for sure, which is the military. You have to take ISIS fighters off the battlefield the way we are, and that is for certain. But if you don't want them just replenished, like those three kids from Britain who just traveled ostensibly to Syria to join up——

Mr. CHABOT. Another very disturbing thing that happened. Absolutely.

Secretary KERRY. Okay. Well, let me just go further.

It is not just kids from Britain. There are several thousand people from Russia. There are multiple hundreds of people from France, from Germany, from Australia. The Australians are in the targets now. This is a spreading cancer and it is not going to be

eliminated by just shooting at people once they finally get to the battlefield.

Everything that came out of the conference we just had the other day pointed to the need to deal with prevention. And a very distinguished professor who testified there, Dr. Peter Neumann from King's College in London, specifically who has d1 years of research on this, talking about the nearly 4,000 people who have gone since 2012 from Berlin, London, Stockholm, and Paris—they are all young people, and you can find them on Facebook, on Twitter, on Instagram, Tumblr, social platforms. They are talking, schticking back and forth, and nothing is answering it.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I have limited time here. I think I gave you extensive time to answer the question.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I just want you to know—don't make fun of what she was talking about.

Mr. CHABOT. We have got an awful lot of young people that are unemployed in this country, and I think we ought to work on that.

Secretary KERRY. That is not what she was talking about.

Mr. CHABOT. It sure sounded like it. I know it was awfully nuanced. But let me move on.

Mr. Secretary, in mid-January, Taiwan's President Ma decided to release former President Chen Shui-bian on medical parole. As you may know, my Democrat colleague, Eni Faleomavaega, and I visited former President Chen in prison. He had a whole range of medical conditions: Multiple strokes, severe depression, Parkinson's disease, and on and on.

We besieged President Ma to issue a medical parole—or humanitarian parole. He ultimately did. I give him credit for that. But it was only for 30 days. And he will probably, unless there is some change, be taken back. His condition was just startling.

I would urge you to look at the case. I know it is an internal problem. I would like to say a country, Taiwan—you know, the PRC doesn't like that, but they are a de facto country. And I know that we, for the most part, consider that to be the case, although it is not necessarily our policy. You can't tell them what to do.

But I would urge the administration to look at that matter and, to the extent that we can exercise some reason on the Taiwanese Government, that that parole be made permanent so he can stay with his family.

Secretary KERRY. Will do.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Mr. Connolly of Fairfax, Virginia, Gerry Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, we had a hearing a few weeks ago, and the nuclear inspection model of South Africa came up. And the assertion was made that South Africa might be the ideal model for unannounced, unpredicted complete access. Anytime, anywhere—you name it—we get to inspect, and South Africa has agreed to that.

Have we thought about using the South Africa model for IAE inspections with respect to our negotiations with Iran?

Secretary KERRY. We are examining every possible model. We are looking at Japan, South Africa, all existing enriching country

models. And we also have to measure whatever those models are against a particular country we are dealing with. But that is what we are doing.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I think some of us would be very interested in hearing more about that as you proceed.

You have counseled us to keep our powder dry. After all, there is no agreement yet. I think you surely—having been in Congress as long as you were in Congress, you can understand, however, that there is anxiety while waiting, a means that I am handed a fait accompli. We don't amend the agreement.

Meanwhile, we have the head of another Government coming to speak to Congress under circumstances that, in my view, are shameful, but, nonetheless, he's coming. And he's not keeping his powder dry.

And he is somebody, as the ranking member indicated, with an existential concern about this. And he says that is going to be a bad agreement, "It is so bad, that is why I am coming to speak to Congress. I have got to go over the heads of the Secretary of State and the President of the United States and plead with Congress and the American public to derail this agreement because it is going to threaten Israel and, frankly, other nations in the region." So he's not keeping his powder dry, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Mr. CONNOLLY. He's not keeping his powder dry. And it is awfully hard for us to pretend he is.

Secretary KERRY. And that is something that you and people in Israel and everybody else have to make your judgment about. I am not going to get dragged into that particular choice or how it came about. I don't think that is helpful.

I will say this——

Mr. CONNOLLY. It is his criticism I am asking you to address.

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me say this. The Prime Minister, as you recall, was profoundly forward-leaning and outspoken about the importance of invading Iraq under George W. Bush, and we all know what happened with that decision.

He was extremely outspoken about how bad the interim agreement was, during which time he called it the deal of the century for Iran, even though it has clearly stopped Iran's program. And, more importantly, he has decided it would be to good to continue it.

So, you know, I talk to him frequently. We work very, very closely together. We are deeply committed. We, this administration—I think we have done more to help Israel. I have a packet of 25 pages or more of things we have done on behalf of Israel in the course of this administration to stand up for it, stand with it, protect, fight back against unfair initiatives.

So we won't take a backseat to anybody in our commitment to the State of Israel. But he may have a judgment that just may not be correct here. And, you know, let's wait and hear what he says. I am not going to prejudge his statement any more than he should prejudge this agreement. But when we have heard, if appropriate, I will respond.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

My other question has to do with the Minsk agreement. Since Minsk won, there have been over 300 violations, according to the European Union, and, in part, Minsk II exists because Minsk I kind of melted away with Russian aggression.

Is Minsk the right framework for us, given Russian aggression, given what has just happened in eastern Ukraine? And does it sufficiently address the illegal annexation which should never be recognized of the Crimea? Doesn't all of this flow from the fact that perhaps the West was a little slow in responding to what happened in Crimea?

Secretary KERRY. No. That is not what it flows from at all. And the answer is the Minsk agreement, if it were implemented, would be a good way to deescalate. And that is what everybody hopes for.

This does not flow from what President Putin chose to do with respect to Crimea, which elicited a beginning response with respect to sanctions.

It flows from a view Mr. Putin holds about the new Russia that he talks about and about his efforts to try to push back against what he feels is a threat from Europe and from us in the West in encroaching in what he deems to be his sphere of influence. We don't deal with spheres of influence in that way. We deal with independence and sovereignty of nations and respect for agreements.

The Bucharest agreement says we would all protect—Russia included—would protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. And long ago, through the United Nations and other agreements, the respect for international boundaries and lines and not taking territory by force and subterfuge has been the standard for which nations have been trying to fight.

President Putin clearly has made a set of choices that violate all of that. So in Luhansk and Donetsk and now in Debaltseve, he has empowered, encouraged, and facilitated directly land grabs in order to try to destabilize Ukraine itself, and it stems from his policy, his decisions, which violate all the international norms with respect to territory and behavior.

So we have, I think, made it very—I don't think anybody in this committee is suggesting the United States ought to be sending the 101st Airborne at this moment or the on 82nd or something even greater than that. That is not what I hear. I think people feel that this is a time for smart policy.

And it is clear that, from the policy we put in place, the Russian ruble is down 50 percent. There has been $151 billion of capital flight from Russia. Russia is about to go into recession this year, according to economic predictions.

So I think, while Putin may be achieving the short-term stuff, the long term is a problem, the long term for Russia. And I think we are pursuing a policy that is smart and effective at the same time.

And our preference is to deescalate this, get back to the norms, and restore a relationship with Russia that could be more public and more productive in many, many different respects.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Mike McCaul, chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, let me just say sincerely I want to thank you for your service in these very challenging times we find ourselves. I appreciate your comments about the greatest generation.

My father was B–17 bombardier in the European theater. Truly was a great and is a great generation. They were all in and they were all in to win, and they won. And they defeated fascism.

I see a new threat. It is Islamist extremism. It seems to me the best homeland security policy we can have is to eliminate the threat where it exists rather than it coming into the United States.

Before this committee we will be deliberating an authorization for the use of military force. We had a meeting with White House officials—the chairman and myself and others—and were presented with the President's policy on this. I must say the reception was not a warm one.

I have concerns, concerns of a timetable telling ISIS how long we are in the fight, concerns about tying the hands of our generals, concerns about—usually, an authorization is asked for by the Congress to expand the President's authority and the military's powers rather than restrict them. I cannot support this authorization as presented by the administration.

The authorization I would like to see—and I would like to get your opinion—would be an authorization to degrade and destroy ISIS wherever they exist.

Can you tell me whether you would support an authorization like that.

Secretary KERRY. Well, that is in the authorization. There is no geographic limit purposefully in order to be able to destroy them wherever they exist.

The President's thinking, which I agree with, with respect to the continuation is, "Look, there is a huge divide in Congress." We all know that.

There was an unhappy experience with a prolonged war in Iraq that became a war of choice and which didn't, in most people's judgment, have to be fought. And people are tired. They don't want to go back and do another 14-year military excursion. And there is a divide as to sort of, "How do you balance this?"

So what the President did—I came up and testified on the AUMF in December. We listened to both sides of the aisle, where some people were resisting the idea of something that is open-ended, where you are going to be working 14, 15 years from now on the same authorization.

And the President, I think, thoughtfully and appropriately said, "You know what. Congress ought to be able to unite. The American people ought to be able to speak with one voice to say, 'We are going to go out'"——

Mr. MCCAUL. If I can just—it sounds like a political——

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. "'We are going to destroy and degrade ISIL.'"

Mr. MCCAUL. And I agree it says wherever it exists. But it puts all the limitations on our military. And I think all the options—options should not be taken off the table. I think that is a dangerous precedent. This would restrict the President's authority compared to the 2001 AUMF that he has current authority under.

I would like to you ask you—and I appreciate your letter of response in the Syrian refugee.

Secretary KERRY. But, Congressman, can I just say to you very quickly the reason for giving—nobody knows who the next President is. The next President ought to have the right to be able to say, "I need more," "I want more" or, "Let's continue it the way it is." Nothing is going to stop you from doing that. The policy clearly is committed to degrade and destroy ISIL.

Mr. MCCAUL. We agree with policy. I just don't think you can achieve that goal if you put restrictions on the military.

You were in the Vietnam conflict. We had a micromanaged war that I think didn't allow our troops to win that war, and I don't want to make the same mistake with ISIS. And I think our precipitous withdrawal with that status of forces agreement quite frankly created ISIS to some extent.

Syrian refugee issue. I had a hearing on this. I had the FBI testify. We have 500 refugees in this country. But the plan of the State Department, as I understand it, is to bring thousands more into the country as we are trying to block foreign fighters from coming into the United States from western Europe and Americans who have traveled.

The idea of bringing in thousands of Syrian refugees I think poses a potential risk to Americans. That was borne out not only by Homeland Security officials at my hearing, but the FBI made it very clear that they don't have the intelligence and the proper databases to properly vet these Syrian refugees who would be coming into the United States under your program, this federally sanctioned program to bring in refugees.

I think this raises serious risks and concerns and I think rightly so when the FBI is me telling that and agreeing with that as well. Can you tell me what your plan is.

Secretary KERRY. Well, the plan is to engage in what we would call super-vetting, I mean, an extraordinary level of vetting. And if the FBI is not satisfied, I am quite confident that people aren't going to be allowed in.

So I don't see this as a conflict. I mean, we have amazing ways of being able to dig down and dig deep. We are doing it now, by the way, with respect to the Syrian opposition that is being vetted in order to join up to the training and equip program.

I think we are about, you know, some—well, I am not going to put the numbers out here. But there is a disparity between the numbers who have signed up and the number of who have actually been proved and who have entered the program, and I think the same thing will happen.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, and I will close with, when I was in Jordan, I saw the refugees. And I agree. Most are mothers and children.

Secretary KERRY. We have been doing this for years now.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, we made some mistakes with Iraq. The Iraqis have been prosecuted for being terrorists. But the Minister of Interior in security in Jordan told me personally, "I don't know who these people are. I don't know who they are because I don't have the intelligence to vet them."

Secretary KERRY. I think the vetting will reach the Security Minister of Jordan and others. And when they weigh in accordingly, I don't think you will see those people coming in.

Mr. MCCAUL. Okay. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Ted Deutch, ranking member of the Middle East Subcommittee

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for being here. I also want to extend sincere thanks for your service at a really crucial and difficult time in our history. Thank you for that.

I want to talk about Iran and where we stand at the moment. I first want to follow up on Mr. Smith's comments from earlier. I am grateful for the way that you speak up about the Americans who are being held, and I just would implore you to continue to turn up the pressure.

In my case specifically with respect to my constituent Robert Levinson, one of two things, it seems, are going to happen over the coming months. Either negotiations will succeed and there will be some agreement on the nuclear issue or we are going to have to figure out how to deal with Iran's other despicable behavior when negotiations fall apart. Either way, pressure will significantly decrease on Iran to cooperate on the case of Mr. Levinson.

On March 9, Mr. Secretary, Bob Levinson's family will mark the 8th anniversary of his disappearance. You will meet your Iranian counterparts many times between now and then and now and the end of March. And I thank you for raising it, and I implore you to continue to do so.

Now, with respect to where we stand, you asked us not to prejudge. I don't think that we need to prejudge, but I think it is only fair to be able to comment on media reports about where this may be headed, particularly since often—let's be honest—a lot of the reports include information that comes from the administration. So given that, just a couple of points.

On enrichment, you had said earlier that you came and sat before our committee as others suggested the JPOA might not work. But, also, if I recall, at that hearing, with respect to enrichment, in the JPOA, it referred to a mutually agreed-upon level of enrichment, which you suggested might well be zero. It is not just actions taken in prior administrations. The U.N. seven times in security resolutions suggested that there would be no enrichment.

So the frustration that some have when you look at a deal that may ultimately include as many as 6,000 or 7,000 centrifuges is trying to understand why Iran would need that many, since currently there is one nuclear reactor that is fueled by Russian fuel. They can't use any of the uranium they are enriching to fuel that reactor. There is just some concern about how we have gotten to that point. That is number 1.

Number 2, when you talked about Iranian compliance with the JPOA, you said that the IAEA has certified that they have complied in every way, but Deputy Secretary Blinken testified just last month that there were situations that we believe were violations of the JPOA. I would like to know what those were and what it says about Iranian intentions for a long-term agreement if they are already violating those terms.

Next, on the issue of PMD, also the IAEA there published 12 sets of questions about Iran's past work, and Iran has only partially tackled one of those issues. Again, as we look toward a potential agreement, how can we be assured that Iran will comply with it if they are not willing to come clean on what they have done in the past?

I would ask if you can confirm that any deal can only be agreed upon if it provides for anytime, anywhere, inspections.

And, finally, for me and for a lot of us here, most importantly, the role of Congress, you had said yesterday on the Senate that, of course, we will have a chance to review it and we will have a vote because a vote will be necessary to ultimately terminate sanctions. That is clear to us. I appreciate you saying it.

If you could speak to Congress's role going forward and answer also whether you believe we should start talking now whether there is a role for Congress to play in talking about what would happen in the event there is a deal and in the event that Iran violates the terms of that deal. Would it be helpful for Congress to work with the administration to lay out specifically what the ramifications would be in that instance?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, first of all, I want to impress on everybody that I find very helpful and I think the administration finds very helpful the discussions with you, whether here or in classified session.

And we are not at all suggesting that, by raising a question or making suggestions as you just had about one potential complication or suspension to negotiate these other things—they are all fair questions and they help us. Actually, we factor that in and it helps us in terms of thinking about every aspect of the negotiation.

That is different from actually condemning the deal and sort of turning off and saying, "There is no way this is going to work" or, "It is a bad deal. You are about to make a bad deal" when you don't really have all of the components of the deal in front of you and we don't even because it is not yet resolved.

So that is the distinction I am trying to draw. But we welcome this kind of a question. And I would simply quickly say to you the U.N. Security Council resolution—and I went back and reread it, in fact, in the middle of the negotiations these last few days.

Paragraph 37 of the 1929 resolution, in fact, has not been lived up to. It has not been met, and it is not relevant to what we are doing right now, to be honest with you, because it talked about suspension of enrichment.

It didn't say they can't enrich. It talked about suspension. And then the negotiations would decide what is or isn't allowed, as long as it meets the terms of the Nonproliferation Treaty and so forth. So that is the negotiation we are in right now.

Now, Wendy Sherman in her discussion with you, I know did not raise any violations because there haven't been any violations. We have sanctioned individual companies—during the course of this period of time with the interim agreement, we have actually imposed more sanctions. We have sanctioned individuals. We have sanctioned companies. And there has been an ongoing effort to hold the sanctions regime accountable.

The final thing I would say to you is Iran already operates light water reactors at Bushehr, fueled by the Russians, Russia design. And these reactors pose less of a risk for the potential of civilian power production and other types of reactors that are prohibited by the U.N. Security Council.

So what they are doing now is not, in fact, a violation. And we have been clear in defining that the purpose of the negotiations we're in now with Iran is to ensure that their nuclear program is exclusively for civilian purposes. That is the key here. They can have a civilian peaceful program.

So when you get into the number of centrifuges and this and that—if you have a civilian power plant that is producing power legitimately and not a threat to proliferation, you can have as many as 190,000 or more centrifuges.

There are millions of centrifuges involved ultimately in power plants that are producing power. So the key here is: Is this a peaceful program? And are the measures in place capable of making sure you know it is peaceful? That is the standard we are trying to apply.

Chairman ROYCE. We now go to Judge Ted Poe, of Texas, chairman of the Terrorism and Nonproliferation subcommittee.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I will start with ISIS. I think it is important that we define different participants in this war with ISIS. I think it is important that we define who the enemy is, whether it is ISIS or IS or ISIL or Daesh, as it is now being called. I define them as radical Islamic terrorists. I want to know what you define them as.

The second question is, we need to define who the victims are that these folks are killing. The victims have been people who, in the name of free press, criticize them, Jews, Christians, and other Muslims who don't agree with their idea of Islam.

And the third is we need to define why they do this. What is the cause of this reign of terror throughout the world? My opinion is they do this in the name of their radical Islamic religious beliefs.

And then the plan. What is the plan? We don't have time for you and I to discuss what the plan is to defeat them.

So how would you define the enemy? Would you define them as Islamic radical terrorists?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I think many of them are. Not all of them, but many of them are. And certainly the top leadership, al-Baghdadi and folks around him, are formulating their concept of the caliphate—of the caliphate on the basis of their interpretation of Islam.

Mr. POE. Okay.

Secretary KERRY. So——

Mr. POE. So some of them are.

Secretary KERRY. To the degree they are establishing a caliphate and hanging some of their notions of organization and discipline and battle based on that, there is a component of it that is a distorted sense of Islam. Sure

Mr. POE. Who are the victims?

Secretary KERRY. Well, but let me also point out——

Mr. POE. I am sorry. I want to get an answer to all three questions.

Secretary KERRY. No, I am going to give you an answer.

But also there are a lot of criminals and thugs and adventurers and thrill seekers and—involved in this. There is a kind of criminal anarchy in all of it, notwithstanding whatever basis they want to claim with respect to Islam. And it is important in coming at this that you not empower them through the language we use to be able to make the argument to their people that in fact we are at war with Islam, and they are building that up as a recruitment tool, and we create more of our own problem. I think that is what people are trying to be sensitive to here.

Now, when you get into the deep analysis, yes, there are clearly a very distorted sense of radical extreme Islam being put forward.

The victims are anybody who stands in their way or people who are different or who have different beliefs. They can be Christians. They can be Yazidis. They can be officers and police officers who are Sunni and trying to stand up for their village or their town in Mosul. I mean, they go out and kill the mayor. They kill young kids. They will kill, you know, people they think are apostates. So——

Mr. POE. So define the third question——

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. Very complicated, and the——

Mr. POE. Answer the third question.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. Third piece is, why do they do this? They do this for power and for the extension of their leaders for their misguided notion of their caliphate and their desire to be the power that is defining not only their version of Islam but to have the power within that region to run the show.

Mr. POE. Reclaiming my time. I had another question on a different issue. Twitter. Under Federal law, it is against the law to aid or assist or provide services to a foreign terrorist organization, as you know. Foreign terrorist organization—ISIL, ISIS—uses Twitter to recruit, to raise money, and to spread its hate propaganda throughout the world. And myself and others have asked Twitter to pull down these sites because they are a foreign terrorist organization that is being allowed to do this. Twitter pulls down pornography sites, child pornography sites, without a problem.

My question to you, Secretary Kerry, 4 years ago, the White House said they were going to come up with a plan to deal with this issue. I have seen no plan yet—2011—but be that as it may, what is your position, the State Department's position, on Twitter allowing foreign terrorist organizations to use an American company to recruit, to raise money, and to spread their propaganda? We would have never allowed New York Times to take out an ad for the Nazis to recruit during World War II.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we don't——

Mr. POE. Can I get an answer, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman ROYCE. Well, I am anticipating one.

Secretary KERRY. The answer very briefly—the answer is we don't like it, and there is a lot of discussion taking place with all of the entities of social media to try to figure out how to minimize it.

Now, we have made some progress. You haven't seen the videos that have been posted, and there are a lot of things that are being reduced. So some progress is being made.

And the final comment I want to make, I neglected to say this. When you ask who the victims are, the primary most significant number of victims are Muslims, and people really need to focus on that.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going to go to Mr. Brian Higgins of New York.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Just on the Iran issue. Centrifuges, uranium enrichment, breakout capability. Ten years ago, Iran had about 164 operational centrifuges, which are the machines which mix uranium at supersonic speeds to create weapons-grade material. Today there is over 19,000, and it is suggested that 9,400 of them are operational centrifuges to enrich uranium.

How important is the number of centrifuges to the negotiations ongoing right now?

Secretary KERRY. It is important.

Mr. HIGGINS. Do we accept that Iran should have thousands of operational centrifuges to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes?

Secretary KERRY. Well, that question is so general that it doesn't allow for the question of, you know, what is their production level, what are they doing, et cetera, et cetera. I am not going to get into the numbers at this point in time except to say to you we have established a critical measurement of needing a 1-year breakout time for a reasonable period of time and an ability to be able to limit the impact of whatever is produced by whatever centrifuges are running. In other words, you have to look at, what is the stockpile? What happens to the spent fuel? What happens to other things? So there is a larger equation of how you measure what is happening, but the answer is it is part of that equation, and we are very much focused on it.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Secretary, let me ask you this. You know, we are sitting at the table with the Iranians negotiating, obviously, a very, very important issue relative to the nuclear program, relative to their nuclear intentions, not only to the region but to the world. And concurrently, we are involved in Iraq, Syria. And the Iranian influence there, despite the Americans believing that we have a friendly government in Iraq, it seems as though the loyalties of the Iraqi Government are more closely aligned with Iran and the Quds forces commander, Qasem Soleimani. The Shiite militias have been successful of late against the Islamic State, but the concern is they have a bad history with us.

You know, we authorized, you know, the President's request for military force in Iraq. And we are going to be right in the midst of fighters who are experienced but also have a contemporary history of shooting our guys, essentially. So, while we are both fighting ISIS, there must be concerns on the part of the American military about how do you influence the Shiite militias who will also be there fighting, you know, the same target?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are greatly concerned about some of the behavior of some of the militia, and that has been raised very,

very directly with Prime Minister Abadi. We have raised it with the Iranians. It is a component of the violence on the ground and has created some challenges with respect to the Sunni participation and some of the changes in reforms we are looking for, but by and large, writ large, Iranian engagement with respect to Iraq, while it is present in the form of Soleimani, as you say, and even some people fighting in the northern—northeastern corners, the fact is that there was a greater direct day-to-day control and problem presented with Former Prime Minister Maliki, which is one of the reasons why the Army wouldn't stand and fight in Mosul, and Prime Minister Abadi is working very hard to—with the oil deal made with Erbil, with the movement of weapons to the Peshmerga, with the inclusivity toward the Sunni tribes—to really change that dynamic. So, yes, Iran has influence. Iran is present. Iran is doing things, but I think overall there is a concerted effort to focus on the problem of ISIL, and they are focused on that.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going to go to Mr. Matt Salmon of Arizona, the chairman of the Asia Subcommittee.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, I would like to ask you about the U.S. hostage policy. As you know, Kayla Mueller, a young, idealistic, and inspiring Arizona women who traveled to the Middle East to help Syrian refugees, was captured and held by ISIS terrorists for over 18 months before she was tragically killed in their captivity.

While Kayla is the first American woman captured, held, and brutally killed by these terrorist thugs, other Americans have suffered this fate, which I hope we can all agree is unacceptable.

Now, recently Kayla's family gave an interview where they discussed what they went through over the last 18 months with the terrorists seeking a dollar ransom. And then, after the administration announced that they had traded five known and dangerous terrorists for Sergeant Bergdahl, ISIS changed their demands from merely money to the release of a terrorist jailed here in the U.S.

Essentially, once ISIS learned that the U.S. does indeed negotiate with terrorists, they demanded more for the life of Kayla Mueller.

Of course, it goes without saying that the devastation the family felt when they realized President Obama would negotiate with terrorists for a soldier that deserted his unit but not for their daughter.

Mr. Secretary, I would just like a yes or no answer on this, and then you can expound on the next part of the question, but were you consulted when the administration decided to conduct a prisoner swap for Sergeant Bergdahl, and can you just tell me yes or no?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, I was consulted.

Mr. SALMON. And now I would like you to expound. Knowing what you now know, would you advise the administration to make a swap similar to Bergdahl—this Bergdahl deal in the future?

Secretary KERRY. Bergdahl was a member of the military who was being held as a prisoner of a conflict. And as we draw down in any conflict, there are always historically exchanges of prisoners with respect to a conflict. He was not a hostage.

Hostages are people who are civilians or individuals who are taken for the specific purpose of ransom, and we do not negotiate for ransom. That is our policy. And you can see the tracking——

Mr. SALMON. And I am not disputing that.

Secretary KERRY. But look at the evidence of other countries who have paid. I am not going to name them here, but they have had significant increases of their citizens being taken hostage, and there is just a revolving fund of money coming in from $5 million to $10 million to significant sums and it funds terrorism. So that is—it is a hard distinction. Kayla Mueller's—Kayla, just an extraordinary young woman.

Mr. SALMON. And I am sure you can understand why it is complicated, difficult for her parents to understand that distinction.

Secretary KERRY. It is very hard, and we have talked to her parents. And our people were—have reached out. I won't tell you that every contact with one agency or another met with the response that perhaps it should have or it wasn't handled as effectively as it might be, which is why President Obama has instructed a review of that process and we have engaged in ourselves in the State Department. And we are doing a lot to deal with that, but the bottom line is ISIL is responsible for her death. We don't even know precisely how she died, but ISIL is responsible.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I totally agree that ISIL is responsible, but my—the distinction that has been made is something that I think is confusing to a lot of people. And it doesn't seem like it was very confusing to the ISIL folks because they ended up upping the ante with her negotiations after this happened.

Secretary KERRY. Actually, our interpretation is that they were never serious. The amounts of money that they put on Americans indicated an absolute—it was unfortunately not a serious deal for them, but we don't pay money. We never have, and we are not going to start.

Mr. SALMON. I am not saying we should, but I do believe that the whole Bergdahl swap sent a message. This distinction you have talked about seems to me a distinction without a significant difference. And I think that it did send a message that we do negotiate with terrorists, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROYCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

We go to Mr. David Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your extraordinary work in promoting U.S. foreign policy all around the world and during very challenging times. So I think we are all grateful for your service.

I have a series of questions that I will submit for the record and ask for a written response related to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh; our relationship with Portugal and the Azores; international family planning; U.N. peacekeeping; the continued fight against Ebola in West Africa; and 100th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. And I look forward to your responses on those issues.

But I want to begin today to speak about the atrocities that we continue to hear reported in Syria, particularly torture and murder and even some claims of the use of chemical weapons. Regardless

of the person responsible for these crimes, I think most would agree that they warrant immediate attention by the international community.

I know Russia and China have impeded our efforts at the United Nations, and I am just wondering what we are doing to help push a referral to the International Criminal Court or other things to really hold those individuals accountable for the atrocities that are occurring—happening in Syria, and, secondly, if you would speak to—as we consider the President's request for the authorization of the use of military force, many of us are very concerned about what our partners in the region are doing, what the Europeans are doing, should our Middle Eastern and Gulf allies, such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the UAE, and Egypt be playing a more prominent role. Do they have the capacity to play a more prominent role? There has been a sort of universal consensus that this is going to require air operations and ground troops and a commitment not to use U.S. ground troops, but what is the capacity of our partners in the region? Are they—I know we are heard a lot about 60 countries, but what are they actually doing? What do they have the capacity to do, and how much of this will necessarily fall on the United States to defeat and—degrade and defeat ISIL or ISIS?

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Congressman. Good questions.

On the ICC in Syria, I don't have any doubt in my mind that Bashar al-Assad has engaged in some war crimes in the course of this. I mean, the use of gas against your own citizens is a war crime. The use of barrel bombs indiscriminately against women and children. There are other examples. Starvation is a tool of war—is a war crime. So there are things that have amounted to it.

Now, mounting that kind of a case, putting together the evidence in the middle of the war is always very complicated No. 1, and, No. 2, there are other policy choices that are complicated about the actual lodging of a complaint, et cetera, and moving forward because it can greatly affect the options that are then available to you in terms of negotiating and coming up with a political solution. So there hasn't been at this point in time—I think there is evidence being collected. People are examining. You saw the photographs I think of the 10,000 or so people alleged to have been tortured. Many of those issues, by the way, there is not a clarity about the evidence as to who ordered it or who did it, et cetera, et cetera. So I don't think cases are ripe even though there is a lot of evidence.

And for the moment, I think the appropriate entities are busy gathering and evaluating that evidence. I think some of it has already been referred to The Hague, but I am not sure exactly what specifically.

With respect to our allies in the coalition, we have said from day one that there are many different things that each country in the coalition can do. Some countries don't have the ability to contribute air power or to engage with troops, but they have an ability to contribute with respect to humanitarian assistance. Or Japan, for instance, is doing humanitarian assistance. They have the ability to be able to provide assistance in turning off the flow of money by putting their financial systems and banking systems at the disposal of the effort to cut off the foreign financing. Almost every

country has an ability to be able to contribute to try to reduce the flow of foreign fighters going in. So airport practices, police practices, exchange of information, intelligence sharing. All of these are part of the protocol that General Allen and Brett McGurk are coordinating with respect to this global coalition. And then, of course, there is the effort to change the messaging to counter ISIS' message and discredit it in the religious community. And that effort is a very, very significant part of this, and all of those 60 nations are taking part in that one way or the other through the social media, through conferences, by helping to organize their Muslim communities to have the mullahs, imams, clerics, Grand Muftis, others all speak out. Saudi Arabian Grand Mufti, the Egyptian Grand Mufti have spoken very clearly condemning ISIL as an organ of Satan, as a criminal enterprise that represents nothing to do with Islam. So there is an enormous amount of global enterprise now being focused on the effort of ISIL. But in the end, those who are in Syria, I think we all understand, are going to have to be taken own directly on the ground in addition to the air power. And a number of countries in the region have spoken of their willingness under the right circumstances to commit troops to that effort. And that is an ongoing policy debate that is taking place even now.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going to Mr. Darrell Issa of California.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and thank you for your service and for being in many ways one of the leading characters on foreign policy long before you came to this job.

Today we are primarily talking, obviously, about budget requests, and I think I will try to stick mostly to that, but I wanted to first of all thank you for the work that is being done on the 123 Agreements, South Korea and China. I am very supportive of our partner in South Korea and in trying to meet their expectations. Obviously, we have great concerns about any agreement with a country like China, who has a record of not keeping those agreements. And we will be looking at it, and I appreciate your continued work on it and the Assistant Secretary's work.

Additionally, as we talked about just a little bit in the back, the Embassy security around the world and the rate at which the State Department has slowed in the construction of new Embassies and consulates, which, from my observation both here and in another committee, seems to have more to do with a return to one-off designs rather than the standard build that was working so well for many years.

Can you briefly tell us—can you—can you say that the new system is going to deliver the same speed and cost that the other had did because, quite frankly, so far, the Embassies being built, including the Embassy in Beirut that I am deeply concerned about, appear to be, again, one-off designs that have more architectural uniqueness to them than they should. Obviously, the moat that surrounds the unique design in London might be very British, but it concerns us at a cost of $1.2 billion.

So do you have a commitment to at least use a standard design whenever possible?

Secretary KERRY. I think whenever possible, we are. But it is not always possible just because of the setbacks, the locations where

they are today.And, you know, part of this, Congressman, is probably best discussed in a classified session simply because if I start getting specific, then we get in—you know, it sort of telegraphs——

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Secretary, I will stop over anytime a you will have me.

Secretary KERRY. Yeah. Well, I think it is worth having you come over and spending a minute with Under Secretary Pat Kennedy and going through this because a lot of thought has gone into it. Some of it driven by the ARB report and the requirements to try to deal with that. We—you all have been terrific in helping us to be able to, you know, upgrade. We have got a massive upgrade effort going on now. So—and it is costly. I think it is about $2.2 billion going into the security.

Mr. ISSA. Right. And I appreciate that, and, you know, one of my major concerns, and we will follow up in a more appropriate environment, but one of my major concerns is the rate at which new construction is occurring has clearly slowed over the last few years. And in some of the areas of greatest uncertainty as to whether or not they can keep—the countries can keep their commitments to us in Africa and in the Middle East are areas that I would hope that we can try to focus some of the funds on moving those forward.

Let me switch to one nearly a billion dollar activity. We have been working—our Oversight committee here at Foreign Affairs has been working on the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center question. This 900-or-so-million-dollar program has had a lot of questions, and, quite frankly, we are short some answers. And I would ask unanimous consent that the exchange between our Oversight counsel and the Office of Management and Budget be placed in the record.

Mr. Secretary, I will give you this, but what I would ask you to do is realize that we have been waiting for the State Department to give us the details, whether done by OMB or done by State, the details of how the cost estimates were arrived at for the $900 million. And when they stripped out the actual accommodations, assuming they were going to go to hotel rooms that just don't happen to exist at Fort Pickett, how they got the other numbers, we were told to go to OMB. Our staff went to Office Management and Budget, and they got told to come back to you, effectively.

Will you commit to us today to provide the source information and calculations because, as it exists right now, I will be very quick, we believe that the existing Georgia facility would be a fraction of the cost and would deliver to the men and women in the State Department training in a matter of weeks or months, where the other facility is going to take years and cost at least that $900 million estimate.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, we—I am happy to work through with you and have our guys work through with you the numbers on this. I have talked about it with them the other day, and the Department of State and the GSA looked at some 70 different properties before settling on—including very, very deep analysis of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia. You know that.

Mr. ISSA. Yes.

Secretary KERRY. And on, you know, the conclusion of that effort looking at the site reaffirmed that Fort Pickett was really the more suitable place for it, and that, you know, resulted in an initial layout of some money, but let me just say to you, just in—I will give you a cost comparison. The Department estimated——

Chairman ROYCE. Might I suggest this, Mr. Secretary. Might I suggest that we do that in writing, and we go now—we understand the point.

Secretary KERRY. Bottom line, I will just say to you, is there actually are huge cost savings in going to Fort Pickett over flying people——

Mr. ISSA. And thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, the only thing I did want a commitment on was that we would get the source material so that we could evaluate it fairly, the GAO could evaluate it fairly.

Chairman ROYCE. That was the question.

Secretary KERRY. I don't know exactly what you mean by the source——

Mr. ISSA. The source material. In other words, any and all cost analysis done by OMB or on behalf of the State Department. That is all we are really asking for is to see what you saw.

Secretary KERRY. What I can commit to you is that they will sit down with you and go through the cost analysis.

Also, on London, by the way, with the moat, et cetera, there was no outlay of tax dollars whatsoever for that because it was paid for entirely out of the sale of the other Embassy building.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Keating of Massachusetts, ranking member of the Terrorism and Nonproliferation committee.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the Secretary. I know firsthand by his absence from Massachusetts how hard he has been working throughout the world, and how personally he has sacrificed for our country, and I want to thank you for that.

I just want to follow up on an area of concern to me personally that we have been working on in this committee, and you did it briefly with an exchange with Chairman Royce regarding the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, which I think is one of the more important areas we should stress. I am hearing that time and time again from leaders from other European countries that have come to see me, and without exception, particularly in theEastern European area, they are saying how one-sided it seems to them; how they are worried about Russia powering up their propaganda, and they are also concerned about the deployment of the Internet in terms of terrorist organizations. So, also, similarly with the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications and working online with forums to build a better counternarrative, how that could compliment these efforts as well.

So I would just like to ask the Secretary what plans they have. I know that they are undertaken already, but what do you envision in that regard and what the prospects of success and sort of ramping up our involvement with the Broadcasting Board of Governors and with the Strategic Center for Counterterrorism Communications? It is an important area that I think is cost-effective for

our funding and something that can be very helpful and send the right message to our allies in Europe as well.

Secretary KERRY. You are absolutely correct. It does, and I think the amount—I think we have got about 300—if I recall, it is some $390 million that is going to go into—there are two separate initiatives here. One is the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund. The other is the Center for Strategic Communications. Rick Stengel, our Under Secretary is down at CENTCOM today working with them on this whole strategy for how we are going to be able to respond more effectively and deal—not just with Russia's massive propaganda but also ISIL and other entities. There is a real battle for the flow and control of information. So we are now putting together programs that will work with all of our Embassies, with local partners. I will give you an example. The UAE is setting up a center, which we are taking part in, which will have various other countries represented that are going to manage responding realtime on the social media. It is an brandnew effort. It will further regional and global collaboration to try to counter violent extremism, and we are expanding this effort in line with the discussions we just had at the White House Summit on Violent Extremism. We have just about appointed a special envoy and coordinator who will reinvigorate the original vision of how we take this mandate for information management and bring the communities, various communities around the United States, elsewhere, together to coordinate them in their ability—I am talking about specifically identifiable either Islamic or, you know, regional entities that have an ability to have an impact on those communities and coordinate their messaging. And we are still in the process of sort of laying down the entire plan of action, but in large this will be a brandnew coordinated communications effort, both through traditional media and social media, in order to maximize America's output of information and countering to the lies, the seductions, the propaganda, everything that takes place in all of those fora today.

Mr. KEATING. Yeah. Along the same lines, there was a lot of attention recently to young girls being recruited and enticed into terrorist activity. This is no news to you. No news to this committee because we have had committee hearings on this. But it is a real issue on one end, and it is also offers, though, I think a concentration on young girls and women. It offers us an opportunity on the other end to put resources into that—not only educating young girls but also empowering women to have a role.

Could you just comment briefly——

Chairman ROYCE. Well, that is a good point, but I think we are going to have to go to Mr. Tom Marino of Pennsylvania, and the Secretary must depart for another committee at 1 p.m. So, in order to get as many members before then, we will go to 3 minutes for each member. All watch the clock, please.

Mr. Marino.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you, chairman.

Good afternoon, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, I want to talk about Yemen for a moment. Since 2006, we have given them about $500 million in military assistance. Now, since we have had the overthrow that we have seen, there is money slated for Yemen. I am just going to make an as-

sumption here that that is not going to happen, given the circumstances there, but can you address the issue as to what you—what we know about the weapons—the U.S. weapons that were there? Where are they? Who has them? Would you comment on that, please?

Secretary KERRY. Sure. Very few weapons were active weapons. Weapons that were functional fell in—or were transferred into the hands of any Houthi. We had a Marine—significant Marine presence and a significant security presence there to protect our diplomatic mission, and prior to departing from the Embassy and leaving to go to the airport, those weapons were destroyed or dismantled. The firing pins taken out, firing bolts. Different things were done in order to make them nonfunctional.

Mr. MARINO. Was part of that—were the weapons instructed to be handed over to the—those that overthrew the government or is that——

Secretary KERRY. No.

Mr. MARINO [continuing]. Just a media fictitious statement.

Secretary KERRY. No. They were not. Some weapons were left in the hands of the local guards and local personnel who worked with us in order to be able for their security and for them to be able to defend themselves and go back to their—and go back into town from the airport.

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Secretary, I have 1 minute left.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just say very quickly. At the airport, there were few weapons that were turned over at that point in time, but believe me, nothing that they didn't have and hundreds and even thousands of numbers——

Mr. MARINO. Okay.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. In other forms, but those weapons were critical to our people in the event that they ran into resistance at the airport and had to in fact fight their way or cover their way to go back.

Mr. MARINO. All right. The President stated that Yemen was a success, was an example of—quintessential example of success and what we have accomplished. What did we miss? How did we go from this is an example of the success that we are fighting terrorism to being overthrown just like that and run out of the country?

Secretary KERRY. Well, very easy. Very simple answer, and it shouldn't be extrapolated to mean something that it doesn't.

The President was talking about how the work we had done with the existing government and the transfer to Hadi from Saleh—from Saleh had in fact provided us with a continuum of our platform to be able to take on al-Qaeda. So it was an example of the way in which we were using a presence and a platform, and we were attacking al-Qaeda. We were not engaged between Houthi and Hadi's forces and other people. Then that changed, obviously, internally in the politics, because Saleh was creating problems by remaining in the country, joining up with the Houthi, challenging Hadi. Those are things we were not there to be somehow able to stop through the counterterrorism program.

Chairman ROYCE. I am afraid we are going to have to go to Mr. Alan Grayson from Florida.

Mr. GRAYSON. Oh, don't be afraid of that, please. I wouldn't want that on your conscience, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary——

Chairman ROYCE. I thought I spoke for all of us.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Secretary, the Authorization for the Use of Military Force offered by the White House says in section 2(c): The authority granted in subsection (a) does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces in enduring offensive ground combat operations.

In that context, Mr. Secretary, what does "enduring" mean?

Secretary KERRY. Well, "enduring" means Iraq, Afghanistan, long-term ground operations. You could, obviously, define it in terms of months not years, but it is a distinction between someone engaged in a rescue mission or going in on a, you know, advise-and-assist program to help people understand how to do fire control over a 1- or 2- or 3-day period or something. I mean, there are all kinds of examples that could be defined, but "enduring" means we are not beginning the process or committing to a process of a long-term combat troop-on-the-ground offensive engagement in a war.

Mr. GRAYSON. Okay. So 3 days is not enduring, from what you said; 10 years is enduring.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I am not going to play with one——

Mr. GRAYSON. Well, I think maybe we should. What about 2 months?

Secretary KERRY. Depends on what somebody is asked to do, but it is a noncombat role. Noncombat engagement.

Mr. GRAYSON. Would 2 months be enduring?

Secretary KERRY. It depends on what they are being asked to do and what they were doing.

Mr. GRAYSON. Two years?

Secretary KERRY. Again, are you talking about a combat troop in combat operations——

Mr. GRAYSON. Offensive ground combat operations.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are not talking about—we are not doing offensive ground combat operations.

Mr. GRAYSON. I am asking whether this authorizes that.

Secretary KERRY. No, it doesn't.

Mr. GRAYSON. Okay. Good let me ask you another question. Are there any geographical limitations to this AUMF?

Secretary KERRY. No.

Mr. GRAYSON. For instance—no. Okay. So this would authorize military action in Jordan?

Secretary KERRY. It would authorize action against ISIL specifically. And the President had said we will degrade and destroy ISIL wherever they are. If it required an action in Jordan, it obviously would be in conjunction with the Government of Jordan, which is a strong ally, member of the coalition, asking for us to do something in a totally permissive atmosphere, but the only authorization we would have to do it would be if it was against ISIL.

Mr. GRAYSON. And also in Libya and in the Sinai and wherever else anybody who associates with ISIL might be. In fact, you are talking about a world war. Isn't that true?

Secretary KERRY. No. No. We are not. Absolutely not, and it would be incorrect to suggest that mere association would permit

anybody to do anything under this authorization because, under the 2001 AUMF and the 2002 AUMFs, we have clearly defined what "associated" means, and it means engaged in the fight, fighting alongside, or fighting United States and our allies directly. So there is——

Chairman ROYCE. Other questions and answers can be in writing.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. Associated means.

Chairman ROYCE. We need to go to Mr. Jeff Duncan of South Carolina, chair of the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, please don't disarm United States Marines ever again. That was wrong.

Does the administration plan to take Cuba off the State Sponsor of Terrorism List?

Secretary KERRY. Only if they meet the standard that is required as to whether or not they are in fact a sponsor of terror.

Mr. DUNCAN. Okay. I am having trouble defining ISIL based on some comments today. So could you—because we have an AUMF, I will follow up on Mr. Grayson's comments, what is ISIL? Define ISIL for me.

Secretary KERRY. Well, ISIS is self-defining. They are the combatants and those who have pledged allegiance to them who have formed a caliphate, fly a flag, wear their black uniforms and are engaged in a struggle both within Syria and Iraq most directly but also in what they call distant provinces as they try to establish their caliphate.

Mr. DUNCAN. Right. And so you used ISIS, and the AUMF used ISIL. What is the difference?

Secretary KERRY. It is merely their formulated—it is who calls what—ISIL—ISIS is the letters used by them to define the state versus the Levant, which is the Arab word for the "S" of ISIS?

Mr. DUNCAN. Right, which is a territory, and I understand that. We talk about that a lot.

So this AUMF, let's assume that the United States Congress passes the President's requested AUMF. What does that mean for al-Qaeda? Does that mean the drone strikes continue against al-Qaeda? Does that mean that our United States intelligence and Military Force would be applied to al-Qaeda or not?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely. Al-Qaeda is authorized under the 2001 AUMF. And that is continuing, and it is our, we believe, entirely legally and practically legitimate argument that ISIS was al-Qaeda in Iraq for about 11 years; and only by changing their name did they assume this new identity. But they are, in fact, al-Qaeda too. And we have proceeded against them based on that authorization, but the President has felt—and I think Congress has felt—it would be appropriate to now have a new authorization to demonstrate the clarity with which we are prepared to go after ISIS, Daesh, as I preferred to call it, and continue the battle with al-Qaeda.

Mr. DUNCAN. And, in the limited amounted of time, I think we have got look at foreign fighter flow to and from theater, intelligence sharing, the damage that was done by Snowden. We saw the Brussels shooter that shot up the Jewish museum back in late

May, early June. Germany knew about it, failed to share the information. I think that is critical. You touched on that a little bit. We need to look at the Visa Waiver Program, the Schengen region, working with our allies within Europe, and I believe that ISIS is Islamic jihadist, fundamentalist, and radical terrorists, so——

Chairman ROYCE. And we need to go to Mr. Alan Lowenthal of California. Thank you.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and also Ranking Member Engel, and Secretary Kerry.

First, I want to thank you for being here—I was going to say this morning—but this afternoon. And I want to thank you personally for your recent appointment of Randy Berry as the Special Envoy for LGBT Rights in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This is an important, I think, and critical step in protecting the human rights of LGBT individuals. Senator Markey and myself in both Houses had introduced legislation that would have the same goal, but you stepped forward before this legislation even moved forward. I just look forward to seeing you and also Special Envoy Berry this week.

But I have to—I want to ask some very specific questions—maybe you can just answer later on—about which I am very positive, about the giving of the $1 billion for Central America. And you talked about how in Central America—maybe you can answer these—I will state them—in writing, and I will submit them this writing—the real lack of educational opportunities, the violence, the lack of sufficient investment, and the corruption, have been part of the root causes that have allowed for the migration to the United States.

My question is, how will this new policy that we are doing really reduce poverty, corruption, and enhance security? How is it different from what we have done before? Are we going to look at some very specific purposes? We hear all along throughout the world that we are going to reduce corruption. I would really like to know how you see what we are doing as really aiding in this. And also, in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, are they going to raise the revenue to help to do this? Are they going to introduce and actually collect additional revenues or taxes to really help themselves also? Or what does this mean in terms of our ongoing relationship with——

Secretary KERRY. Well it is a really terrific question, Congressman Lowenthal, and I appreciate it very, very much because you are absolutely right. Anybody that—and I used to be chair of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee for 30 years in the Senate. And I remember working on Plan Colombia and the big debate; are we going to put $1 billion into this? Is it going to be meaningful, and so forth?

If we just did it the way we used to do some of this stuff, your skepticism would be entirely applicable and appropriate. But we are not. We have learned a lot about the delivery of aid and assistance, about oversight, follow up, mentoring, engagement. And I think Raj Shah began an effort as Administrator and AID has been transforming. Part of this came, by the way, and give credit where credit is due, the MCC, which came about during the Bush administration. The Millennium Challenge Goal sort of taught people to

say, maybe there are some metrics you can put in place more effectively——

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Secretary, if we could lay that out maybe in a written answer——

Secretary KERRY. Sure. But I will just end quickly by telling you that are three targets: One is enhanced security. We think we can track that, do police, do other work. Two, is direct economic assistance, promote trade in ways we know work, and provide more employment, et cetera. And three, is improved governance itself, and that is by being deeply engaged in creating the transparency and accountability measures necessary so you are getting the changes that you need.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you. I look forward to your response.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Mo Brooks of Alabama.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for sharing your insight with us here today. I am going to focus on the Authorization for Use of Military Force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. And as I understand it—and I think you have confirmed this—there are no geographic limitations in the force authorization sought by the President. Is that a fair statement?

Secretary KERRY. That is a fair statement.

Mr. BROOKS. And there are other limitations, though, for example, enduring ground troops, time limitations, and also who the target can be. And as a I understand the target, the target of this military force is "the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant," or under section 5, associated persons or forces who are defined as "individuals and organizations fighting for, on behalf of, or alongside ISIL, or any closely related successor entity in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners."

In that vein, there is a February 16, 2015, Associated Press article that says, "Militants in several countries, including Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, have pledged allegiance to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi." And as we have heard from other sources, we have got Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, Jordan, Sinai, a myriad of other potential countries. Is it fair to say that this authorization sought by the President does allow the use of United States Military Forces in any of these countries if the Islamic State or its associated persons or forces are there?

Secretary KERRY. No, Congressman. A group that simply embraces the ideology, pledges allegiance, is not necessarily fighting for or alongside or against the United States and our associated forces.

Mr. BROOKS. So if they claim that they are doing that, that doesn't include them?

Secretary KERRY. Well, no. It is not a question of claiming it. You pledge allegiance. Pledging allegiance to ISIL is not necessarily joining the fight.

Mr. BROOKS. So we are going to wait until they kill a bunch of people before we attack them. Is that what you are saying the administration's position is?

Secretary KERRY. No. We are going to see whether or not they are, in fact, really joined in the fight alongside ISIL.

Mr. BROOKS. Well, aren't we really quibbling—as a matter of fact, it is going to be the administration that has to make a judg-

ment call, as we all do in the positions that we hold, and this administration if it decides that these individuals are a part of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or associated persons or forces, then they will under this resolution use that military force in any geographic area of the world. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. If it is ISIS, if it is a group of ISIS that is directly threatening the United States of America, and we have reason to believe that there is an immediate imminent risk, as the President retains the authority today with respect to al-Qaeda or any other group, we will take action.

Mr. BROOKS. And that includes individuals in America?

Secretary KERRY. Excuse me?

Mr. BROOKS. And that includes individuals in America. That is any geographic area of the world.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, if we have evidence that somebody in the United States of America is engaged in terrorist activity against the United States, the FBI, the Homeland Security, and others will be on him in a nanosecond.

Chairman ROYCE. Lois Frankel of Florida.

Secretary KERRY. We will go through our normal constitutional procedures, I assure you.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Secretary, pardon my voice, but I want to thank you for your service. I truly admire what you have to deal with. And earlier, you rightly stated that we live in a very complex world. The threats we face are multifaceted, unlike the bipolar threat we faced during the cold war. I just call it complexity on steroids, and I think you are dealing with a puzzle that doesn't have the pieces that match. And I am interested in how we manage and balance competing interests in the world, and I want to give just examples. So, for example, when we respond to Russian aggression threats, especially to our allies in Europe, how does that impact our effort to prevent a nuclear Iran or reach a political solution with Assad? When we go to eliminate ISIL, are we thereby strengthening Assad, who is killing hundreds of thousands of his own people? Are we strengthening Iran, like we did when we overthrew Saddam Hussein?

And I know, I think we see Egypt as an ally against ISIL, and so the question is why do we continue to withhold financial support? So I guess my question is, what is the guiding strategy for American foreign policy in this very interconnected complex world?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congresswoman, it is really good question, and I think I have to give you an answer that I think you will probably find a little simplistic, and I hope not totally unsatisfactory. But it is really a matter of common sense. I mean, you have to apply a standard of sort of practicality of cause and effect. What is the impact of one choice on other choices that you have? That is what the President has to do every day in thinking about what you might do on any given day about Assad and the impact on Iraq, on Iran, on Shia militia, on a host of other things. But there is a connection.

I mean, I want to underscore, you have appropriately put your finger on the fact that what we choose to do in one place has an impact on things that happen in another place. And, you know, if we hadn't responded with the sanctions on Ukraine, if we weren't

engaged in putting together a coalition about ISIS, might Baghdad have fallen? Might there be a civil war? Would there be a civil war in Afghanistan today if we hadn't engaged and tried to pull a government together instead of having a failed election? Everything is connected to the other.

And to the degree that the United States commits itself to lead in these particular challenges, I am absolutely more convinced than ever before after 2 years in this job about the impact it has when we make that right choice, the impact it has on somebody's consideration about another choice they might make. What we choose to do effectively with Egypt or with Syria or with ISIS will have an impact on Iranian perception, Russian perception, Chinese, other perceptions in the world. It is all interconnected.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Secretary, might I suggest that each of the remaining members ask one question, one question only, very briefly, and then the Secretary could sum up, and we will let him depart to his meeting.

Mr. Meadows, your one question. Is that all right, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary KERRY. You are the chairman. I am at your disposal.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Secretary, since it is down to one question, I have been very keen on not criticizing the ongoing negotiations you have with Iran, so I will ask this one specific question. For over 2½ years, Pastor Saeed Abedini has been held by Iran. How can we—how can the American people expect that they are going to negotiate in good faith when we can't get an American citizen, a pastor, that really was thrown in the jail——

Chairman ROYCE. Okay. We get the gist of that one.

Now we go to Ms. Tulsi Gabbard. Your question please.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. My question is with regards to the AUMF that is before Congress and Syria and wondering as it states in the AUMF action against ISIL or associated persons, would there be an interpretation of this that would permit the U.S. and either individually or working with partners, to remove people like Assad or other dictators in other nations as it deems that their position of being in power stands in the way of defeating ISIL?

Chairman ROYCE. Okay.

Now we go to Mr. Reid Ribble.

Mr. RIBBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. And my question is in relationship to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I know you have been involved related to exit permit suspensions. Could you tell us what we could do here in the Congress to facilitate the State Department's work to help these families gets their children home?

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania.

Mr. BOYLE. Thank you.

And I waited the 3 hours here to ask this one question because I was concerned that this issue might be overlooked with the plethora of issues that we have and that you have, Secretary Kerry, around the world. One of the great achievements of the last 20 years of American foreign policy was forging a peace agreement in Northern Ireland. We are now 15, 16 years on from the Good Friday Agreement, and tensions still remain. The House, the Senate,

on a bipartisan basis, appropriated $2.5 million for the International Fund for Ireland, but the State Department is hesitating in releasing it.

Secretary Kerry, would you please commit to me and to Congress that these funds will be released by the State Department, and the United States will continue to play a strong and active role in the Northern Ireland peace situation?

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Lee Zelden of New York, followed by Mr. Tom Emmer of Minnesota, and that is it.

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, there was a letter that was sent from the President to Congress with the Authorization for the Use of Force. If I could just read a couple of sentences from that letter: The authorization I propose would provide the flexibility to conduct ground combat operations in other more limited circumstances, such as rescue operations involving U.S. or coalition personnel or the use of Special Operations Forces to take military action against ISIL leadership. It would also authorize the use of U.S. forces in situations where ground combat operations are not expected or intended, such as intelligence collection and sharing, missions to enable kinetic strikes, or the provision of operational planning and other forms of advice and assistance to partner forces.

So this is a letter from the President, four or five paragraphs that accompanied the request for the Authorization for the Use of Force.

When Congressman Grayson was asking whether or not the authorization was providing authorization for offensive operations, you had indicated no. Obviously, for several months, we have been utilizing strikes from the air, which, you know, one could argue are offensive in nature. So I am just looking for a little bit more clarity on what, specifically from an offensive end, the President is looking to do to defeat ISIS; what is the limit of his authority under this authorization?

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Emmer.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Secretary, thank you again for all your time today. Mine is a question I wanted to ask you relates to something that really shouldn't be partisan as at all. It is about America's economy and the opportunities that it should provide for American workers and entrepreneurs.

You have long been an advocate for trade, long before this position, and I would like to ask you to give me some details so that our friends on both sides, regardless of political persuasion, understand how important the economic opportunities presented by Trade Promotion Authority and the possibility of getting trade agreements are to our national security.

Secretary KERRY. So let me try to run those though as fast as I can, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you. Saeed Abedini we have raised in the most recent discussions, and you ask how we can tell they will negotiate in good faith. We are negotiating on that very actively right now, and again the proof will be in the pudding whether we can achieve something or not achieve something. I think it is a little early to make that prediction on both accounts, on the release of individuals that we are trying to get back, as well as on the nuclear agreement itself.

Congressman Gabbard, on the subject of the AUMF, associated persons removing outside, et cetera, we have to operate under international law. This authorization is specifically targeted against ISIS itself, and it would be very hard to see how there would be any stretch that would fit any legal authority whatsoever to direct that.

There are other legal arguments available to deal with President Assad—let me make that clear—not the least of which is the fact that, if he were to join in an effort that actively engaged with ISIL or we had evidence of that in some way, he could be thereby aiding and abetting. I mean, there is an extensive argument you could make. But, no, not directly out of the AUMF. That would not be anywhere what is envisioned or allowed by it.

With respect to the DRC and exit permit, we have raised that issue. I have talked to President Kabila about it personally. We have an ongoing effort to try to make some progress on that. I am hopeful that we will finally get some kind of success.

These are those difficult internal kinds of negotiations that take place. I think this may be even tied to the prospects of the potential election that may or may not take place in the DRC. So we are waiting to see what happens, but I will continue to push it.

With respect to Congressman Boyle on the subject of northern Ireland, we are deeply engaged still. With the President's consent, I appointed former Senator Gary Hart to be engaged in those talks. He's been very active. There is a $7.5 million commitment in the existing piece, impact program. And the funding is there for 2011, and we have no reason not to be releasing it and engaging it. So we will continue to be deeply involved in that.

With respect to Congressman Zeldin on the allowance of offensive operations, the limit of authority, I thought we were talking about—so this is a good opportunity for clarification.

I was talking in the context of any potential of American ground forces and the limits of the enduring language. But, obviously, we are engaged in offensive operations. The air power could not be more so. And we are engaged directly, needless to say, you know, in training and assisting, and now we have the overt Title X training and assist program.

So those are offensive operations that the United States is going to be supporting one way or the other. But we are not talking about American ground troops, and there is no authorization in here putting American combat ground troops into an enduring offensive combat situation. I think that is what I really trying to address.

And, Congressman Emmer, on the economics and TPA, I will just close by saying one of the great changes that we face in the world today is the enormous increase of much more powerful competitive economic entities. Now, none of them yet match the size of the United States, but they are getting bigger. They are more active. There is more global market competitiveness than there has ever been before.

And if you were—you know, anybody engaged in international business knows how quick you have to move, how veracious you have to be, how disciplined you have to be in grabbing market share and knowing the markets and working with other partners.

It is a different marketplace than it was in the 1960s, 1970s, when we were the dominant single economy.

And so this kind of trade regime that we are talking about putting together under the TPP or the TTIP is far more critical to American jobs, to American growth, to America's influence, to America's ability to continue to play the important leadership role we have played in the world.

And so, if we don't get this kind of an agreement written to the higher standards of international business behavior, it will go down. The standards will go down. The protections will go down. The ability of people to have legal remedy will be reduced. The ability of people to protect intellectual property or have rights by which workers are protected—all of these things would be diminished if we are not able to achieve these kinds of trade agreements.

And TPA is critical to the ability to have those agreements because other countries will—their leaders will not make the difficult political decisions necessary to take one interest or another in their country and change the structure in favor of a larger set of rules because it costs them politically.

If they know that what they are doing when they make that decision is going to be subject to a renegotiation with Congress rather than the passing of what has been negotiated, they won't make the agreement in the first place.

So we actually hurt ourselves in achieving our larger interest of trade and growing our markets if we wind up trying to micromanage it through congressional day to day without the TPA. TPA is what actually empowers the negotiators to be able to close a deal and allow those leaders in other countries to make the tough decisions they need to make.

So, in the end, 95 percent of the world's customers are in other countries, and we cannot grow our Nation, increase wealth, do better, if we are just thinking we can somehow only sell to ourselves. We have to sell in the rest of the world. It is better for us to be helping to lead the effort to reach agreement as to what the rules will be by which we sell and raise those standards rather than leave it to somebody else and see them lowered. That is why TPA is so critical.

Chairman ROYCE. We appreciate the Secretary's time today, including today's lightening round. And we have a ton of issues to get through together. We thank you.

And we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:13 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

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

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

February 18, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Wednesday, February 25, 2015

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Advancing U.S. Interests in a Troubled World: The FY 2016 Foreign Affairs Budget

WITNESS: The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* Date *02/25/15* Room *2172*

Starting Time *10:06 a.m.* Ending Time *1:12 p.m.*

Recesses [*0*] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Edward R. Royce, Chairman

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Advancing U.S. Interests in a Troubled World: The FY 2016 Foreign Affairs Budget

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached sheet.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None.

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 - Boyle
SFR - Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *1:12 p.m.*

Joan Marter, Director of Committee Operations

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

PRESENT	*MEMBER*
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
X	Darrell Issa, CA
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Mo Brooks, AL
	Paul Cook, CA
	Randy Weber, TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
X	Ron DeSantis, FL
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted Yoho, FL
X	Curt Clawson, FL
X	Scott, DesJarlais, TN
X	Reid Ribble, WI
X	Dave Trott, MI
X	Lee Zeldin, NY
X	Tom Emmer, MN

PRESENT	*MEMBER*
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X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
X	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
X	Alan Grayson, FL
X	Ami Bera, CA
X	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
	Grace Meng, NY
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Robin Kelly, IL
X	Brendan Boyle, PA

Statement for the Record
Submitted by Mr. Connolly of Virginia

We appreciate Secretary of State Kerry coming to Capitol Hill to discuss the Administration's diplomacy and development agenda in the year ahead and the FY2016 Foreign Affairs budget.

The President's FY2016 international affairs budget request is a 7.7 percent increase over FY2015. This is bold proposal for investing in U.S. foreign policy priorities. The request includes a new aid package for Central America, funding to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and a six-fold increase in funding for bolstering Ukraine.

Global Partnerships Act
Foreign assistance and diplomacy are not just nice things to do. They project U.S. interests and values abroad and strengthen our national security. However, the cornerstone of U.S. foreign assistance policies and programs is Cold War era legislation, and Congress has not regularly enacted new authorizing legislation for the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for nearly 30 years. The Foreign Assistance Act has become outdated, with a myriad of competing goals, objectives and priorities. The legislative barnacles, built up over a half century, inhibit our ability to effectively and efficiently meet our strategic mission of delivering foreign aid around the world.

This pattern of neglect demands engagement from Congress. I intend to again introduce the Global Partnerships Act in this Congress and welcome the input of my colleagues and the State Department. This legislation, if passed into law, would be the first major rewrite of foreign assistance legislation in more than 50 years. It is time for a complete overhaul of the way we administer foreign aid. The 21st century requires a streamlined foreign aid program that recognizes today's priorities. The Global Partnerships Act simplifies the administration of foreign aid by restoring the U.S. Agency for International Development's policy and budget functions and identifying eight concise goals for development assistance. These eight goals include: accelerating economic growth, promoting food security, advancing health, expanding education, protecting and restoring the natural environment, improving access to safe water, sanitation and shelter, fostering equal opportunity, and strengthening democratic governance.

In addition, the Global Partnerships Act provides greater transparency, accountability, and oversight of the aid system by requiring an online database about all forms of U.S. foreign assistance, including an unclassified database on security assistance. This would help us avoid the type of problem on which this Committee heard testimony from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in the previous Congress. In a June 10, 2014 MENA Subcommittee hearing, SIGAR and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) testified that metrics for the percentage of funds that were well-spent or wasted in Afghanistan could not be provided, because a comprehensive accounting of raw numbers for aid expenditures simply did not exist. At a time when foreign assistance is constantly under attack and on the chopping block, we must promote good stewardship of this often misunderstood portion of the federal budget. If we cannot tell the taxpayer what portion of aid was effective, the assumption we are allowing is that it was all wasted.

AUMF
Secretary Kerry previously testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at a hearing on December 9, 2014, regarding the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) against ISIL. In his testimony, Secretary Kerry pledged to work closely with Congress on the development of AUMF language that allows the U.S. to prosecute an armed conflict against ISIL and associated forces. This spirit of collaboration is a welcome contribution to what is a constitutionally-mandated process.

Congressional reluctance notwithstanding, it is necessary for the President to receive authorization for a sustained military operation against ISIL, and the full assertion of Congressional prerogative is long overdue. It is time Congress make crystal clear to the Administration, our allies, our constituents, and our military families

the circumstances and parameters under which we would once again authorize engagement by our men and women in uniform in this tumultuous region of the world.

The President has submitted to Congress a draft AUMF against ISIL. As the committee of jurisdiction, it is incumbent upon the House Foreign Affairs Committee to initiate a robust and transparent debate in Congress regarding the authorities and limitations appropriate for an AUMF against ISIL. Congress will need to define ISIL and its associated forces, put restrictions on the deployment of ground troops, determine what, if any, geographic limitations should be applied to this authorization, set strict Congressional reporting requirements, determine the role of the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs going forward, and set an appropriate sunset date for the force resolution.

The President's draft resolution is a mixed bag. The repeal of the 2002 AUMF is a welcome step towards unwinding the commitments the U.S. made in the ill-conceived and ill-fated Iraq War. However, the draft is silent on the 2001 AUMF, the authority of which is being used to conduct the current sustained military operation against ISIL. Sun-setting the AUMF against ISIL in three years without addressing or amending the 2001 AUMF would do nothing to curtail the broad authority the President has already interpreted from the nearly 14-year-old authorization. A further vetting of the draft's limitation on ground troops, which prohibits "enduring offensive combat operations," is also warranted. A still-young 21st century has already seen two of the three longest wars in U.S. history. This experience has conditioned the U.S. to be wary of open-ended military commitments, but it remains to be seen if we have learned the lesson of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

Military action supported by an international coalition is one component of what must be a comprehensive strategy to diminish ISIL. The President's budget includes a request for $3.5 billion to counter ISIL. This must include stemming the flow of foreign fighters, coordinating an ambitious humanitarian relief effort, cutting off ISIL's financing, and combatting the sophisticated propaganda it deploys to recruit and incite further violence.

Secretary Kerry's testimony should inform the Committee's work on the difficult task of crafting an AUMF that can pass this Congress and provide the President with the authority he needs to pursue ISIL. It should also illuminate an overall strategy against ISIL that defines our metrics for success. Congress must meet this challenge. To demur once again would continue a 60-year pattern of Congress abrogating its constitutional duty.

Crimea

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea undermines Ukrainian sovereignty and sets a dangerous precedent that cannot be overstated. Russian expansionism by way of deception and military aggression threatens the stability of European borders. While the U.S. and our European allies have issued successive rounds of sanctions and warnings against Russia, Putin continues to effectively exploit a lack of resolve in Ukraine. The U.S. has limited credibility objecting to Russia's aggression without a firm stance on Crimea.

The U.S. must make a simple, declarative statement on Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. H.R. 93, the Crimea Annexation Non-recognition Act, bipartisan legislation, which I introduced in this Congress, does just that. The legislation prohibits any federal department or agency from taking any action or extending any assistance that recognizes or implies recognition of the de jure or de facto sovereignty of the Russian Federation over Crimea, its airspace, or its territorial waters.

The State Department should work with Congress to codify a statement of policy that signals to Putin that the U.S. will not concede Crimea to Russia. In H.R. 83, the FY2015 Omnibus; Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, Congress included several provisions that seek to reinforce a non-recognition policy concerning Russian sovereignty over Crimea. This included a prohibition of funding assistance for the government of a country that has taken affirmative steps intended to support or be supportive of the Russian annexation of Crimea. It also stipulated that no funds appropriated by H.R. 83 may be used for "the implementation of any action or policy that recognizes the sovereignty of the Russian Federation over Crimea;

the facilitation, financing, or guarantee of United States Government investments in Crimea, if such activity includes the participation of Russian Government officials, and Russian owned and controlled banks, or other Russian Government owned and controlled financial entities; or assistance for Crimea, if such assistance includes the participation of Russian Government officials, and Russian owned and controlled banks, and other Russian Government owned and controlled financial entities." These policies must be strengthened and made lasting by Congress, and we welcome the collaboration of the State Department to craft such legislation.

During the Cold War era, the U.S. had a policy of non-recognition regarding the Soviet Union's illegal annexation of the Baltic Republics. The U.S. recognized neither the de jure nor de facto sovereignty of the Soviet Union over the Baltic Republics. This policy of non-recognition did not end in 1991 because it had become outdated or failed to recognize the facts on the ground. Instead, the Baltic people gained their independence in 1991 almost 50 years after the Soviet occupation began, and today, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia are NATO allies.

The current situation in Ukraine provides us with little hope that we can deal with Putin in good faith. Much like the first Minsk agreement, Minsk II is in tatters. After the so-called "ceasefire" went into effect, Putin's proxy forces continued their assault on Debaltseve until they surrounded Ukrainian troops and pushed them out of the strategically important rail hub. The Minsk II agreement stipulated the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front lines of the fighting in eastern Ukraine. However, the threat posed by Russia's aggression extends far beyond the reach of Russian tactical ballistic missiles.

Putin is a bully and a thug bent on testing the strength of European borders. We must acknowledge this threat and summon the courage to meet it at its source in Crimea. Failure to do so only encourages further confrontation with Russia. This is an important moment for the U.S. and the rest of the world. We are not seeking a return to Cold War brinksmanship. But all of 20th century history tells us that bullies can never be satisfied by concession.

Embassy Security

We must not lose sight of the fact that America's diplomatic posts are important and sometimes dangerous jobs and critical components of our national security policy.

The President's FY 2016 Budget for the State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs includes $99.1 million for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett in Virginia. After weighing competing sites, the Department determined that Fort Pickett struck the best balance between cost, capabilities, and efficiencies. Training and investing in personnel is one of the most effective ways in which State can ensure that our diplomatic security and other State Department personnel can safely carry out their mission abroad.

On July 25, 2014, the GAO published a study titled, "Diplomatic Security: Overseas Facilities May Face Greater Risks Due to Gaps in Security - Related Activities, Standards and Policies." This report is a welcome analysis of how we can and must do a better job safeguarding the men and women of our foreign policy apparatus serving abroad. Among the report's findings was the recommendation that State develop risk management policies and procedures for ensuring the physical security of diplomatic facilities, including roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and a routine feedback process that continually incorporates new information. State concurred with this recommendation and committed to initiating a new risk management policy and a process for incorporating feedback from personnel on security related matters. This would produce more stakeholders in diplomatic security and ensure that employee voices are heard in matters that directly impact their safety. The State Department should update Congress on the status of this reform effort.

Diplomatic personnel put themselves on the line every single day to advance America's economic and humanitarian interests across the globe, and we must ensure they have the tools and security necessary to achieve this mission.

Congressman Brendan F. Boyle Statement for FY2016 Budget Hearing

America's experience in conflict areas such as Northern Ireland proves it's not enough to establish peace; we must also stay involved to build stable, sustainable democratic institutions. America played a huge role, under the leadership of President Clinton and George Mitchell, in forging a peace agreement in Northern Ireland. Yet, tensions remain around unresolved issues.

I commend you, Secretary Kerry, for sending Gary Hart to Ireland to establish All Party Talks to resolve outstanding issues on flags, parades, and crimes of the past. One of Mr. Hart's recommendations is greater economic involvement. As such, we need to demonstrate our continued commitment to peace in Northern Ireland through support for the International Fund for Ireland.
Both the Senate and the House have approved the $2.5 million appropriation for the IFI for 2015, but the State Department has not delivered it.

Question for the Record Submitted by
Representative Edward R. Royce (1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:

The US has a commitment to protect Taiwan, but there has been slow progress in the US-Taiwan relationship in both the economic and security areas over the past few years. This has led some to ask whether Taiwan been left out of the "rebalance"? What is the Administration doing to demonstrate a commitment to protecting Taiwan through the stipulations of the Taiwan Relations Act and Six Assurances?

Answer:

Taiwan is a key component of U.S. Asia-Pacific policies, including the rebalance to Asia. The United States continues to expand and enhance its strong and multifaceted unofficial relationship with Taiwan. Taiwan is an important security and economic partner of the United States, an important part of global value chains, a vibrant democracy, and our tenth largest trading partner.

We continue deepening our engagement with Taiwan on trade and investment issues through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) process, and welcome Taiwan's interest in future accession to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). We work cooperatively with Taiwan in APEC to promote regional economic integration initiatives, including enhanced trade and investment. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, the United States makes available to Taiwan defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Collectively, these activities demonstrate our continued commitment to Taiwan's peace, security, and prosperity as part of the U.S. rebalance.

Question 2:

How will the US support Taiwan in achieving a diversified trade policy which will also ensure the U.S. benefits from Asia's growing economic integration?

Answer:

We greatly value our economic and commercial relationship with Taiwan, which is our tenth-largest trading partner and a major investor in the U.S. economy. Taiwan is also a top ten destination for U.S. agricultural and food exports. This trade relationship directly benefits the United States by creating and sustaining American jobs.

Through the U.S.-Taiwan Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), we continue to encourage the development of a more liberalized trade policy in Taiwan. We have been able to make progress on a broad range of trade and investment issues important to the United States and Taiwan in hopes of further opening up Taiwan's market to U.S. products and to allow Taiwan to diversify its trade portfolio, which has become increasingly dependent on China.

At the 2014 TIFA meeting, Taiwan took concrete steps to address technical trade barriers and made important commitments involving investment, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices. As Taiwan assesses its readiness to take on the ambitious new commitments set by the Trans-Pacific Partnership, our sustained engagement with Taiwan on various economic liberalization initiatives remains mutually beneficial.

Question 3

How will a completed Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement shape the region strategically? For those countries which were not able to join in the first round (such as South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines) how important is their inclusion, and how quickly do you see a second round happening? What do we know about the proposed accession process?

Answer:

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a concrete manifestation of our rebalancing strategy toward Asia. Now is the time when the rules of the road are being set in Asia. If we do not lead, we risk ceding leadership to other countries that do not share our interests and our values and will push regional initiatives with weaker standards. Other economies are negotiating agreements that do not protect workers' rights or environmental interests, do not protect intellectual property rights or maintain a free and open internet, and do not address unfair competition from state-owned enterprises to the level we seek. If that becomes the model for the fastest growing region of the world, it will put our workers and firms at a significant disadvantage. TPP will help the United States to remain a major economic and strategic force, allow U.S. companies and exporters to be leading commercial players, and ensure regional initiatives to reflect U.S. values and principles. We must keep the United States at the heart of trade discussions in strategic regions like the Asia-Pacific.

We have said that TPP can include other economies in the region that can demonstrate they are ready to adopt TPP's ambitious commitments, resolve bilateral trade issues, have a track record of living up to existing trade and investment commitments, and can win the consensus support of existing members for their membership. A number of economies have expressed interest in the TPP, including the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan. We have begun the process of sharing information on the objectives and standards of TPP and the kind of reforms that would likely be required for them to join. Consensus among the current TPP Parties would be required for any new countries to join. We would of course make any decision regarding new entrants to TPP in close consultation with Congress and our domestic stakeholders. At this stage, however, we are sharply focused on completing the TPP negotiation among the current 12 members.

Question 4:

What is the Department's plan and timeline to reincorporate the Af-Pak country offices back into the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs?

Answer:

The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) was created in 2009 as a unique stand-alone office given the importance of Afghanistan and Pakistan as pivotal countries during a critical period for the United States and the world. The course of events over the past five years has necessitated the sustained focus of the SRAP office, particularly as we surged our military and civilian presence in Afghanistan. During this period, the SRAP office has fostered coordination throughout the interagency and within the Department, particularly with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), to meet U.S. strategic goals in the region. It has also played the lead role in engaging NATO and other key partners around the world who have supported these efforts.

SRAP and SCA have worked together closely to ensure the best possible coordination to advance U.S. goals in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the region. From SRAP's inception, its principal deputy was also dual-hatted as a Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) in SCA, and the offices have shared a common executive staff (EX) for all management issues along with a common public diplomacy team. Another SCA DAS attends all of SRAP's senior staff meetings with the Special Representative, typically three times per week, to ensure alignment with SCA. The principal deputies of both offices meet at least bi-weekly to discuss common concerns, and the SCA Assistant Secretary and the Special Representative meet regularly as well.

Together, SRAP, SCA, and USAID spent the past year working on the first FY15-18 Joint Regional Strategy, which presents a cohesive strategy for the entire region. On key topics such as the role of India in the region, or regional economic connectivity, we have developed working groups that meet regularly and have jointly drafted policy papers. Representatives from SCA and SRAP regularly visit each other's countries to brief on current issues (this April a Deputy Special Representative traveled to Central Asia for Afghan consultations), jointly host meetings with embassy staff in Washington, brief the Hill together, co-chair trilateral meetings, participate in the Strategic Dialogues of the other bureau's countries, and clear all relevant policy papers with each other.

In short, many steps have already been taken to prepare for the eventual folding of SRAP back into SCA. When the time is ripe for a full integration of the two, it will not be difficult to complete. But at this moment, with U.S. troops still in Afghanistan and the draw-down plans still being formulated, billions of dollars of civilian assistance still flowing to both countries which requires careful oversight, the continued robust engagement of the International Contact Group for the 50+ international partners that also have SRAPs to facilitate their relationships in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the sustained efforts to partner with Pakistan on core counter-terrorism concerns, there is still a critical need for an SRAP office that exclusively focuses attention on this region and coordinates U.S. government policy. As long as SRAP exists, it will continue the efforts to integrate Afghanistan into the broader region, working closely with SCA colleagues until the Secretary decides that the time is appropriate to formally integrate the two offices.

Question 5:

Do you believe the assistance level we are providing is sufficient to address Tunisia's obvious needs in government reform?

Answer:
Supporting Tunisia as it builds a pluralistic society and accountable, transparent government is a key objective of the Administration's request. The request for $55 million in Economic Support Fund for Tunisia, a 120 percent increase from the FY 2014 level, includes funding for programs that support Tunisian efforts to develop its democratic institutions at national and local levels by creating mechanisms for greater transparency, accountability, social inclusion, and citizen participation in Tunisia's new democracy. We believe this is the appropriate level to build on our prior and ongoing activities to promote democratic principles, civic participation, and good governance, which have been funded through various mechanisms, including the State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and USAID.

Since the 2011 revolution, the United States has provided more than $65 million to support initiatives that promote fiscal transparency and good governance, build the organizational management capacity of civil society organizations, and increase the civic participation and political leadership of youth, including approximately $15 million in support of the 2014 Tunisian parliamentary and presidential elections. Building on those successful elections, MEPI is currently developing additional programs in areas critical for the long-term sustainability of Tunisia's political transition. New programs will be designed to (1) foster effective and accountable government institutions; (2) encourage legislative transparency and accountability; and (3) prepare for local elections and facilitate decentralization initiatives. DRL is also providing approximately $2.5 million to support programs in Tunisia that work to expand the rights of people working in the informal labor sector and create a more inclusive legal and economic framework, and also working to promote freedom of expression, with special attention on women and youth empowerment.
Over the last year, there has been increased violence along the lines of conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, with increased number of cross border sniper attacks and the egregious firing upon an Armenian military helicopter in the contested area, resulting in its crash and the loss of three Armenian servicemen. President Aliyev has stated that Azerbaijan could take Nagorno-Karabakh back by force if diplomacy failed, a threat that is becoming increasingly viable as Azerbaijan increases its military defense budget.

Question 6:

In your estimation, is Azerbaijan still fully engaged in the Minsk process?

Answer:

The sides are actively engaged in the Minsk Group process to reach a lasting settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In their meetings with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and in their public comments, the Presidents and Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan have all committed themselves to finding a diplomatic resolution through the Minsk Group. The United States and the Co-Chairs support an intensified dialogue between the Presidents and continue to urge the sides to enter into a formal negotiating process that can lead to a comprehensive peace agreement.

Question 7:

Have you raised concern over these inciting remarks in your communications with President Aliyev?

Answer:

The United States and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs frequently raise the need for the sides to avoid inflammatory rhetoric. The Presidents should be preparing their publics for peace, not aggravating tensions with extreme public comments. We have made our concerns known in meetings with the Presidents and in our public statements.

Question 8:

Do you support an ultimate peace plan that would include a date certain for an independence referendum by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh?

Answer:

The United States and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs support a settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that will allow the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to determine their final legal status. The terms of a settlement must also include the return of territory surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control. As a Minsk Group Co-Chair country, we will continue our diplomatic engagement with the sides to reach a settlement on the basis of the principles of international law, the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, particularly the principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the rights and self-determination of peoples.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Eliot L. Engel (1-3)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:
How many A-2 visas have been issued to Indian nationals in 2013, 2014, and to date in 2015 for work with the Indian Missions in the United States?

Answer:
We can confirm that 3,068 A-2 visas were issued to Indian nationals in Fiscal Year 2013, and 2,338 A-2 visas were issued in Fiscal Year 2014. To date, 675 A-2 visas have been issued in Fiscal Year 2015.

It is difficult for the Department to provide a precise breakdown of Indian nationals issued A-2 visas to work with the Indian Mission in the United States, as our statistics include A-2 visas issued to Indian nationals traveling for other purposes appropriate to an A-2 visa. A-2 non-immigrant visa classification is broadly defined under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) as "other officials and employees who have been accredited by a foreign government recognized de jure by the United States who are accepted by the Secretary of State and the members of their immediate family" (see INA 101(a)(15)(A)(ii)). As such, A-2 visas are issued not only to employees assigned to work at a foreign mission in the United States, but also to officials traveling to the United States temporarily (less than 90 days) to engage in official activities. The latter make up most of the issuances. Members of the immediate family of a foreign government official or employee are also issued A-2 visas.

Question2:
How many A-3/G-5 visas have been issued to Indian nationals in 2013, 2014, and to date in 2015 for work with the Indian Missions in the United States?

Answer:
We estimate that nine A-3 visas were issued to Indian nationals working for Indian government officials in Fiscal Year 2013, and that no A-3 visas were issued to Indian nationals working for Indian government officials in Fiscal Year 2014 and thus far in Fiscal Year 2015.

We estimate that no G-5 visas were issued to Indian nationals working for employees of the Indian UN Mission in Fiscal Years 2013, 2014, and thus far in 2015.

It is difficult to provide an exact breakdown for Indian nationals issued A-3 or G-5 visas to work for an official or employee of the Indian Missions in the United States, as our statistics include A-3 or G-5 visas issued to Indian nationals working for officials or employees assigned to other countries' missions and/or at designated international organizations. Additionally, an A3 or G-5 visa may be issued to individuals traveling to the United States for temporary duty, but who will not be permanently assigned to a mission.

A-3 nonimmigrant visa classification is defined as "attendants, servants, personal employees, and members of their immediate families" of foreign government officials and employees in A-1 or A-2 nonimmigrant status (See INA 212(a)(15)(A)(iii).). G-5 nonimmigrant visa classification is defined as "attendants, servants, and personal employees…and the members of the immediate families" of the representatives, officers, or employees in G-1 through G-4 nonimmigrant status (See INA 212(a)(15)(G)(v).). As such, A-3 and G-5 visas are issued to personal employees based on their employment with a specific individual in A-1, A-2, or G-1 through G-4 status, and such individual's nationality may be different from that

of the A-3 or G-5 visa applicant. G-5 visas are also issued to personal employees of an officer or employee of a designated international organization in G-4 status.

Question3:
What happened to the Indian domestic workers that were here on A-3 or G-5 visas in 2014 working for Indian diplomats (according to press reports, there were about 14 here under that status)? Do they remain here under the same visa status or have they been moved to A-2 status? If some have, how many?

Answer:
In 2014, the Department received nine requests from the government of India to issue A-2 visas to persons previously holding A-3 visas. These A-2 visas were scrutinized with particular care and approved. All applications for visa issuances, including requests for A-2 visas for persons previously holding A-3 visas must meet requirements of U.S. law and regulations.

The Department has not received any requests for G-5 visa holders.

Question 4:
Has Diplomatic Security established a standard operating procedure in the case a foreign diplomat (whether under diplomatic or consular immunity) is arrested?

Answer:
In early 2014, the Department of State created a senior level "Special Cases Working Group" that meets to address issues that could arise from the contemplated arrest of foreign mission members by U.S. law enforcement, if the Department is made aware beforehand. The working group is chaired by the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security and includes all other Department of State bureaus and entities with equities in the case. This allows senior policymakers to review case and arrest operation details prior to an arrest. Those details will vary from case to case.

While Diplomatic Security does not control Department of Justice and courthouse detention facility procedures involving the use of handcuffs, searches, and prisoner housing, it does discuss them with the relevant agencies in the context of the contemplated arrest of a foreign mission employee.

The Department of State may not always be aware of impending arrests by other federal, state, and local law enforcement. To reduce the risk of Vienna Convention violations, Department of State employees regularly brief and train law enforcement officers across the country on diplomatic privileges and immunities.

Question 5:
What is the Department's plan and timeline to reincorporate the Af-Pak country offices back into the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs?

Answer:
The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) was created in 2009 as a unique stand-alone office given the importance of Afghanistan and Pakistan as pivotal countries during a critical period for the United States and the world. The course of events over the past five years has necessitated the sustained focus of the SRAP office, particularly as we surged our military and civilian presence in Afghanistan. During this period, the SRAP office has fostered coordination throughout the interagency and within the Department, particularly with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), to meet U.S. strategic goals in the region. It has also played the lead role in engaging NATO and other key partners around the world who have supported these efforts.

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management issues along with a common public diplomacy team. Another SCA DAS attends all of SRAP's senior staff meetings with the Special Representative, typically three times per week, to ensure alignment with SCA. The principal deputies of both offices meet at least bi-weekly to discuss common concerns, and the SCA Assistant Secretary and the Special Representative meet regularly as well.

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Question 6:

The State Department's workforce performs services that are critical to our national security, both here at home and abroad. Yet, we have been concerned about reports that more and more people are choosing to leave the Foreign Service and Civil Service ranks, and of difficulty recruiting specialized skills needed for Foreign Service Specialists. I understand that the Department has declined to submit data on the Foreign Service to the Office of Personnel Management since 2006, and that the Department does not keep detailed, systematic data on recruitment and retention of its workforce – including Foreign Service officers and specialists and civil servants. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain who is leaving the Department and why, and impossible to know if the Department is attracting and retaining a diverse group of top talent needed to carry out our national security objectives. What efforts have you undertaken to improve data collection on the Department's workforce, and using that information, to prioritize the creation of a 21st Century workforce, as was called for in the first QDDR?

Answer:

The Department is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse, talented workforce that advances U.S. values, interests and goals around the world. As part of our efforts to achieve an ever stronger, more agile, more flexible, and more innovative workforce, we closely monitor recruitment and retention in the Foreign Service and Civil Service. Our employees in both the Foreign and Civil Service, as a result of responses to OPM's annual Employee Viewpoint Survey, have kept the Department ranked highly in the Partnership for Public Service's *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* ranking, including our ranking number three out of all large agencies in 2014. We have been in the top three large agencies for the last three years and in the top ten since 2005, indicating not only that we have reason to be proud, but that we continue to improve.

Along with a focus on recruiting a diversity of perspectives, our marketing and recruitment/outreach teams are focused on generating greater awareness among key target audiences of competitive professionals with applicable experience for our 22 Foreign Service Specialist career opportunities. To effectively focus our efforts and resources, we fully utilize a variety of workforce data to enhance and guide our decision making in recruitment efforts. We face challenges similar to those of other federal agencies and the private sector in recruiting personnel with the specialized skills needed for Foreign Service Specialists, particularly in the areas

of medicine and construction. These represent a relatively small percent of the overall FS workforce, yet are critical to the Department's mission. They include, Medical Officer, Medical Provider, Medical Laboratory Scientist, Construction Engineer, and Security Engineer.

We monitor attrition closely. The data in our quarterly attrition reports show that Foreign Service (FS) attrition has remained consistently low, averaging about four percent per year, with the majority leaving due to retirement. The highest attrition rates are at the more senior levels as officers and specialists alike reach mandatory age retirement or the expiration of time-in-service rules associated with the up-or-out system, though both can happen at any grade.

Civil Service attrition rates are somewhat higher than the Foreign Service, yet still within a healthy tolerance, averaging between 6 and 7 percent per year. Neither FS nor CS attrition rates are out of line with the federal government average of 5.9 percent (2012 data, the most recent available).

The Department recognizes the need to more systematically track the reasoning behind employees leaving its workforce than we currently do. For this reason, we have developed, and are now implementing, a variety of standardized electronic exit surveys that will go live later this year. This information will be used to improve any retention problem areas and assist in recruiting efforts. Our existing monitoring of employee departures, and what we are told in letters of resignation, indicate that the majority leaving the Foreign Service do so for family reasons.

As for reporting requirements, the Department complies with OPM data requirements for the Civil Service under United States Code Title 5. Because the Foreign Service is under Title 22, and governed by the Foreign Service Act (as amended) of 1980, it is exempted from OPM reporting. However, we have some very sophisticated computer models, databases, and a workforce Analysis Office that closely tracks hiring and attrition trends.

Question 7:

How many Foreign Service officers currently serve in Washington, DC? How many Foreign Service Specialists? How many civil servants? Please break this information down by bureau?

Answer:

As of January 31, 2015, there were 2,130 Foreign Service Officers, 1,403 Foreign Service Specialists, and 8,496 Civil Service employees working in the DC Metro Area, which includes Department offices in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The break down by bureau is below.

Bureau	Foreign Service Officers	Foreign Service Specialist	FS TOTAL	Civil Service	Overall Total
A	12	22	34	911	945
AF	106	29	135	72	207
AVC	9	1	10	92	102
BP	1	0	1	69	70
CA	159	3	162	732	894
CGFS	0	4	4	119	123
CSO	14	2	16	76	92
CT	15	0	15	65	80
DRL	34	0	34	112	146
DS	1	782	783	674	1,457
EAP	174	9	183	53	236
EB	80	5	85	100	185

Bureau	Foreign Service Generalist	Foreign Service Specialist	FS TOTAL	Civil Service	Overall Total
ECA	33	9	42	372	414
ENR	23	1	24	37	61
EUR	220	20	240	134	374
FSI	258	107	365	572	937
H	10	0	10	59	69
HR	95	50	145	390	535
HR OTHER	74	11	85	0	85
IBC	0	0	0	2	2
ICJ	1	0	1	6	7
IIP	22	6	28	166	194
IJC	1	0	1	11	12
INL	22	3	25	184	209
INR	59	2	61	267	328
IO	40	2	42	95	137
IRM	6	152	158	442	600
ISN	24	4	28	202	230
L	1	0	1	241	242
M	18	3	21	43	64
M OFM	1	1	2	20	22
MED	1	32	33	93	126
NEA	158	27	185	138	323
OBO	19	55	74	517	591
OES	35	2	37	158	195
OIG	13	1	14	210	224
PA	21	0	21	193	214
PM	31	1	32	152	184
PRM	27	0	27	91	118
S	153	45	198	376	574
S CPR	0	1	1	76	77
SCA	51	2	53	76	129
WHA	108	9	117	98	215
Total	2,130	1,403	3,533	8,496	12,029

* Includes full-time permanent employees as of January 31, 2015
* Excludes employees in transit.
* HR/OTHER includes details, interns, rotational officers, entry level in training and reassignments.

Question 8:
How many Foreign Service officers are currently serving in Missions Abroad? How many Foreign Service Specialists?

Answer:

The full-time permanent Foreign Service workforce overseas as of January 31, 2015 included 5,562 Officers, and 3,796 Specialists.

Question 9:

Of the Foreign Service Officers currently serving in Washington, DC, how many are at the FS1 level? FS2 level? FS3 level? Senior Foreign Service level? Please also break this down by bureau. Could you also breakdown, by bureau, the number of Senior Executive Service serving at the State Department?

Answer:

Foreign Service Officers in the DC Metro Area – 03 Level and Above					
Bureau	SFS	FS 01	FS 02	FS 03	Total
A	3	3	4	2	12
AF	20	22	21	20	83
AVC	2	1	1	4	8
BP	1	0	0	0	1
CA	20	22	43	61	146
CSO	2	4	4	3	13
CT	4	4	4	2	14
DRL	2	11	6	8	27
EAP	21	16	42	45	124
EB	14	14	21	25	74
ECA	4	9	10	7	30
ENR	1	7	8	5	21
EUR	24	32	54	61	171
FSI	15	90	85	51	241
H	1	4	3	1	9
HR	35	31	19	9	94
HR OTHER	31	24	15	3	73
ICJ	0	0	1	0	1
IIP	2	5	6	8	21
IJC	0	0	1	0	1
INL	3	4	6	5	18
INR	9	6	14	25	54
IO	6	8	10	12	36
IRM	2	2	1	0	5
ISN	2	7	12	2	23
L	0	1	0	0	1

Foreign Service Officers in the DC Metro Area by Grade					
Bureau	SFS	FS 01	FS 02	FS 03	Total
M	6	4	8	0	18
M OFM	0	0	1	0	1
MED	1	0	0	0	1

NEA	21	24	32	27	104
OBO	1	3	5	7	16
OES	5	10	9	7	31
OIG	8	5	0	0	13
PA	4	8	6	3	21
PM	11	5	9	3	28
PRM	2	3	5	13	23
S	17	25	49	50	141
SCA	5	10	13	18	46
WHA	15	17	31	19	82
Total	320	441	559	506	1,826

*Includes full-time permanent employees as of January 31, 2015.
*Excludes employees in transit.
* HR/OTHER includes details, interns, rotational officers, entry level in training and reassignments.

Answer to question 9 continued on the next page

SES IN THE DC METRO AREA	
A	6
AF	1
AVC	7
BP	2
CA	7
CGFS	4
CSO	2
CT	2
DRL	7
DS	3
EB	5
ECA	5
ENR	1
FSI	5
H	3
HR	8
IIP	1
IJC	1
INL	2
INR	8
IO	5
IRM	6
ISN	12
L	26
M	1
OBO	6
OES	11
OIG	8
PA	4
PM	3
PRM	7
S	32
S CPR	2
SCA	3
WHA	2
Total	208

Question 10:
How many Foreign Service Officer's currently serve in management positions in Washington, DC? How many FS Specialists in management positions in Washington, DC? How many civil servants serve in management

positions in Washington, DC? How many of these civil servants are serving in a supervisory capacity? Please break this information down by bureau.

Answer:

Foreign Service Officers in Management Positions

BUREAU	FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS SERVING IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
A	7
AF	22
AVC	3
BP	1
CA	50
CSO	6
CT	4
DRL	16
EAP	29
EB	25
ECA	14
ENR	8
EUR	38
FSI	17
H	4
HR	31
IIP	12

BUREAU	FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS SERVING IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
INL	7
INR	14
IO	11
IRM	2
ISN	7
L	1
M	2
MED	1
NEA	32
OBO	5
OES	12
OIG	7

PA	10
PM	6
PRM	5
S	23
SCA	16
WHA	23
Total	471

* Includes full-time permanent employees as of January 31, 2015
* Excludes employees in transit.
* Management positions are determined by the supervisory code of the position.

Foreign Service Specialist in Management Positions

BUREAU	SPECIALISTS SERVING IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
A	9
AF	3
AVC	0
CA	0
CGFS	2
CSO	0
DS	308
EAP	1
EB	0

BUREAU	SPECIALISTS SERVING IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
ECA	3
ENR	0
EUR	0
FSI	17
HR	2
IIP	3
INL	0
INR	2
IO	1
IRM	78
ISN	0
M	2
M OFM	0
MED	13
NEA	3
OBO	12
OES	0
OIG	0
PM	0
S	3
S CPR	1
SCA	0
WHA	1
Total	464

* Includes full-time permanent employees as of January 31, 2015
* Excludes employees in transit.
* Management positions are determined by the supervisory code of the position.

Civil Service in Management Positions

BUREAU	CIVIL SERVICE SERVING IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
A	194
AF	19
AVC	16
BP	13
CA	123
CGFS	24

BUREAU	CIVIL SERVICE SERVING IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
CSO	21
CT	11
DRL	35
DS	100
EAP	4
EB	26
ECA	68
ENR	11
EUR	25
FSI	86
H	12
HR	70
IBC	2
ICJ	4
IIP	27
IJC	1
INL	49
INR	70
IO	22
IRM	110
ISN	37
L	64
M	5
M OFM	4
MED	20
NEA	13
OBO	73
OES	41
OIG	80
PA	40
PM	37
PRM	25
S	69
S CPR	10
SCA	13
WHA	23
Total	1,697

* Management positions are determined by the supervisory code of the position.

Question 11:

The budget provides $845.6 million in foreign assistance for the Asia-Pacific region, an increase of 8% over FY 2014. However, I am interested to understand how the Department is internally "rebalancing" its human resources toward the Asia Pacific. For example, of the 18 new positions requested in the budget and the 21 positions being realigned from Afghanistan, the Department plans to allocate resources for only three additional Foreign Service Officers to work in the Asia Pacific region. By contrast, the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs would receive four, International Information Programs would receive five, and International Security and Nonproliferation would receive 8. How does this allocation reflect the priority that the Department is placing on the Asia Pacific region, and on developing deep expertise within the foreign and civil service workforce that can support increased levels of U.S. engagement, both here in Washington and in Asia?

Answer:

The Department is committed to the President's Asia-Pacific Rebalance and appreciates the importance of the region to the future prosperity and security of the United States. The Department requested and received approximately twenty-seven new positions for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific (EAP) affairs over the past three years. The rebalance will continue to build upon this growing footprint throughout the region. In addition to the 3 new U.S. direct hire positions included in the FY 2016 request for EAP, it also includes new locally employed staff positions for China (thirty) and Burma (twenty-one), as well as seventy-seven new Consular positions in the region. The Department's FY 2016 request allocates positions to areas experiencing critical needs such as Ukraine's path to democracy and economic stability as well as focuses on developing deep expertise within the EAP workforce. The eight positions allocated to the International Security and Nonproliferation bureau are budget neutral due to a permanent base transfer from Foreign Assistance program funding. The five positions for International Information Programs are also budget neutral as funds were reallocated within the Public Diplomacy earmark to expand its Evaluation Unit.

Question 12:

Encouraging the development of strong, equitable institutions in Asia is a critically important, long-term enterprise, and I understand that it is also an Administration priority. Indeed, democracy in the region faces significant challenges: from a military coup in Thailand, to recent protests in Hong Kong, to a challenging reform process in Burma, to questions around Malaysia's recent court decision regarding the political opposition leader. Can you tell us what proportion of your overall assistance to the region will go to supporting democracy and governance objectives, and how these funds will be used to support both near term and long term goals in this area?

Answer:

Recognizing that America's future prosperity and security are very much intertwined with the prosperity and security of the Asia-Pacific region, President Obama made a strategic commitment when he came into office to *rebalance* our interests and investments to this region. Our total $1.4 billion request for FY 2016 provides crucial resources to support the U.S. Rebalance, which includes $845.6 million for foreign assistance and $584.1 million for diplomatic engagement.

Of the overall foreign assistance request, $142.4 million (16.8 percent) supports Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programs across the region at a level that is $68 million higher than the FY 2014 appropriation and $23.7 million higher than the FY 2015 Request. This commitment to the expansion of democratic development and human rights helps create responsible partners who share the United States' most fundamental values. U.S. assistance in this area will advance the development of robust democratic institutions throughout the region. The United States also has a significant interest in helping the region institutionalize democratic gains and continue on the path toward effective and transparent democratic governance, including human rights and gender equality, rule of law, and vibrant civil societies.

For example, the request expands support for the political and economic transition in Burma. The new government will inherit weak institutions incapable of resolving the country's social, economic and governance challenges. DRG funding will help ensure the newly elected government is able to meet the public's exceedingly high expectations. Programs will improve the credibility and transparency of Burma's electoral

and political processes, strengthen civil society, and promote media freedom to support the development of democratic institutions.

In Indonesia and the Philippines, programs will focus on tackling persistent issues in corruption and institution-building, including strengthening civil society, governmental bodies, legal institutions, political parties, and local governments. Programs in Vietnam will help the government implement new policies to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Recognizing the coup and ongoing military rule have interrupted Thailand's democratic traditions and undermined civil society's efforts to support a truly responsive democratic system, U.S. assistance programs will emphasize building a more participatory, inclusive, and accountable system of governance in Thailand. Future work with Thai government institutions will be contingent upon the country's return to a democratic system. Free, fair, and inclusive elections should be held as soon as possible.

In Malaysia, U.S. assistance programs play a critical role in promoting good governance and rule of law. Recent accomplishments include the repeal of preventive detention laws that permitted police to detain criminal suspects without trial or judicial review, the expansion of rights to freedom of assembly and public protest, hate crimes legislation, and consideration of Freedom of Information laws promoting transparency in government. Programs bring legal experts to Malaysia to share their expertise and promote reforms in law and policy that strengthen respect for human rights, especially freedom of expression, assembly, association and religion.

Although foreign assistance funding does not support programs in Hong Kong, through programs such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the State Department has helped strengthen civil society development in Hong Kong. In addition, we have repeatedly expressed our support for universal suffrage in Hong Kong in accordance with China's commitments under the Basic Law, "the one country, two systems" principle, and the aspirations of the Hong Kong people. We firmly believe that the legitimacy of the Chief Executive will be greatly enhanced if the Chief Executive is selected through universal suffrage and Hong Kong's residents have a meaningful choice of candidates.

The Department also leverages funding from global and regional accounts to support democracy and human rights programs across the region. For example, funds requested for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor address human rights abuses , open political space in struggling or nascent democracies and authoritarian regimes, support civil society activities, and protect members of at-risk populations, including women, youth, religious and ethnic minorities, indigenous populations, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgeder person.

Question 13:

13. The United States hopes that a rising China will be peaceful and prosperous, respect international norms and contribute to peace and stability in the region. Yet, too often, that is not the China that we observe. We see a China that facilitates state-sponsored economic espionage, and one that continues to violate basic human rights, most notably in Tibet and Xinjiang (shin-JANG). Of particular concern to me is the sharp increase in provocative Chinese actions in the East and South China Seas over the last few years. These actions are destabilizing to our allies and partners and threaten international norms of freedom of navigation and lawful commerce. At a time when we need to be increasing our maritime capacity building efforts in the region, I understand that the FY16 budget request saw a decrease in EAP's regional International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) from $9 million in FY14 to only $4.8 million. Can you explain the reasoning behind this decrease? What options, beyond capacity building training and sales of Excess Defense Articles (EDA), might be necessary to decisively change China's calculus in the South China Sea?

Answer

The Administration remains fully committed to U.S. national interests in freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce, respect for international law, and the maintenance of peace and stability in the South China Sea. We have consistently and frequently raised with China our concerns over its large scale land reclamation, which undermines peace and stability in the South China Sea and more broadly in the Asia-Pacific region. We will continue to take additional concrete steps to support peace and stability in the South China Sea, including active diplomacy, increased maritime security assistance to Southeast Asian

claimants, the support of crisis management tools, and strengthening our relationships with U.S. allies and security partners in the region. We and others in the region are paying close attention to how China proceeds with its land reclamation projects and how it intends to utilize the new outposts. How China proceeds will be a key indicator of whether the region is heading towards heightened tensions and confrontation or towards greater cooperation.

The FY16 budget request decrease in EAP's regional International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) from $9 million in FY 2014 to only $4.8 million does not reflect a decrease of our commitment to maritime security in the region. State previously responded by reprogramming $25 million in prior year INCLE funds to address this issue to allow us to respond more quickly to the need to advance maritime capacity building under the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (MLE). This INCLE funding aims to increase maritime law enforcement capacity through four bilateral programs – with Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia – and a regional program that will facilitate cooperation and interoperability. INCLE supports and strengthens maritime capabilities, cooperation, and coordination throughout Southeast Asia to improve regional responses to criminal activities and threats that could potentially destabilize the region. This includes strengthening civilian maritime law enforcement such as the respective host country Coast Guards and maritime police units.

The initial $25 million investment will be sustained through a mixture of regional funds and also through our bilateral requests within various foreign assistance accounts, $1.1 million of the $4.8 million included in the request for FY 2016 EAP Regional INCLE request will support maritime capacity building. In addition, the following separate bilateral INCLE requests will also support maritime capacity building: Indonesia, $1 million; Malaysia, $855,000; Philippines, $1 million; and Vietnam, $ 4 million. The total FY 2016 INCLE request for maritime capacity building is $8 million.

State is also preparing for Congress a report that describes our strategy for maritime security cooperation in the Asia Pacific.

Question 14:

During the past year, Taiwan has contributed aid and support for global humanitarian and disaster relief. The Taiwanese government donated US $1 million to the CDC foundation in the United States and sent protective gear to West Africa to combat Ebola. In December 2014, Taiwan joined a coalition of sixty nations in Brussels and issued a joint statement of their commitment to defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Considering Taiwan's greater involvement with global humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, what actions do you believe Taiwan should take to further establish itself within the international community, including formalized participation in international organizations like Interpol, ICAO, and the WHO?

Answer:

We greatly appreciate Taiwan's contribution to the world's health, safety, peace, and security, including those important examples you mention. We continue to encourage and support Taiwan's efforts to play a greater role in the international community. We believe Taiwan is taking appropriate steps in this regard, such as participating in the World Health Assembly as an Observer and engaging at the expert level in WHO technical bodies, requesting access to civil aviation safety information through ICAO's Secure Portal, and seeking engagement in law enforcement information sharing through Interpol. We will continue to support Taiwan's efforts in this regard to the greatest extent allowed by the various organizations' charters, and we will continue to urge international organizations and like-minded member states to do the same.

We also believe that Taiwan will be able to further expand its international space by pursuing opportunities outside of traditional multilateral organizations. Providing more capacity building to tackle global health issues, contributing additional humanitarian assistance to those affected by ongoing crises, and utilizing its expertise and resources to strengthen civil society and promote democracy around the world will be very beneficial in highlighting the positive role that Taiwan can play in the international community. Taiwan's ability to leverage bilateral and regional relationships to contribute to crisis response, including for the Ebola response effort, have continued to expand Taiwan's global presence.

Question 15:
The Minsk ceasefire agreements envision steps that will not be taken until late 2015 at the earliest. Does this mean that sanctions relief for Russia is off the table for the coming year given that U.S. and EU leaders have made full compliance with Minsk a precondition for sanctions relief?

Answer:
As the President has said, we'll judge Russia by its actions, not its words.

We and our European partners agree that if Russia fully implements its Minsk commitments, we will roll back significant sanctions. These commitments include the withdrawal of all foreign troops and equipment from the territory of Ukraine; return of control of the Ukrainian side of the international border to the Ukrainian government; establishment of a heavy weapons-free security buffer zone on both sides of the international border, to include meaningful border monitoring and verification by the OSCE; and release of all hostages and prisoners.

Should Russia ignore the Minsk commitments, these costs will continue to grow.

Question 16:
In the event that Minsk is fully implemented, will Russia's forcible and illegal occupation of Crimea be an insurmountable obstacle to the normalization of U.S.-Russia relations?

Answer:
The United States remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Crimea is sovereign Ukrainian territory and we do not recognize Russia's attempted annexation of it, unless and until Ukraine regains control of its territory.

Question 17:
What poses a greater risk to transatlantic unity – the United States providing Ukraine with so-called lethal defense arms or unilaterally imposing significantly more severe sanctions on Russia?

Answer:
Continuing to maintain and build transatlantic unity will be an important part of international community efforts to increase pressure on Russia during the coming weeks and months to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. Despite great challenges posed to transatlantic relations throughout the crisis, unity has remained a fixture of Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

First, the Administration has not taken a position against other nations providing security assistance to Ukraine. In fact, we have worked closely with a number of Allies and partners to encourage them to contribute greater security assistance to Ukraine, bilaterally and through NATO. Solidarity among Allies is essential to our response to Russian aggression. Russia's actions in Ukraine makes clear that European security and the international rules and norms against territorial aggression cannot be taken for granted.

While we continue to believe that there is no military resolution to this crisis, Ukraine has the right to defend itself. We have committed significant non-lethal security assistance to help Ukraine sustain its defense and internal security operations. And we continue to monitor the situation closely and remain in constant contact with our Ukrainian counterparts, as well as our NATO Allies and partners, to explore opportunities for additional defense cooperation. While we have not taken anything off the table, our focus from the outset has been on supporting Ukraine and on pursuing a diplomatic solution that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Second, from a practical standpoint, sanctions against Russia are most effective when implemented in concert with Europe because the European Union (EU) has a far stronger economic relationship with Russia, making the bloc's participation key to ensuring the effectiveness of sanctions packages. We have already put in place four rounds of sanctions, including economic sanctions on Russia's financial, defense, and energy sectors,

in coordination with the EU. Our joint sanctions, along with a dramatic fall in oil prices and the Kremlin's own economic mismanagement, are exacting a heavy toll on the Russian economy.

Question 18:
With Ukraine's low foreign currency reserves, should the United States consider extending additional loan guarantees and what, if any, conditions should be placed on such guarantees? Also, is the United States pushing European states to provide Ukraine the additional financial assistance it needs to stay solvent? What additional challenges to U.S. interests would be posed by a financial collapse in Ukraine?

Answer:
Facing ongoing Russian aggression after years of mismanagement under prior governments, Ukraine's economy remains fragile. To help stabilize the economy and support implementation of reforms needed to put the country on a path of sound governance and sustainable growth, the United States is supporting a broad international package of macro-financial support for Ukraine, anchored by a new $17.5 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board on March 11, 2015.

As part of the international effort, the United States intends to provide a new $1 billion loan guarantee in the first half of 2015, provided Ukraine remains on-track with the reform program it has agreed with the IMF. We are currently discussing conditions for the $1 billion loan guarantee; as in the prior guarantee, we will seek a strong set of conditions intended to support Ukraine's reform agenda, including in critical reform areas identified by the IMF and World Bank. If Ukraine continues making concrete progress on its economic reform agenda and conditions warrant, the U.S. Administration will also be willing, working with Congress, to consider providing an additional loan guarantee up to $1 billion in late 2015.

We also continue to coordinate our assistance with our European partners and allies. We welcome the EU's announcement to provide an additional 1.8 billion euros to Ukraine in 2015 and note that individual member states, including Poland, Sweden and Germany, have also committed financial assistance to Ukraine conditioned on continued progress on reforms. We will continue to work with the EU and the rest of the international community to give Ukraine the support it needs – provided the authorities adhere to their reform program.

U.S. policy is centered on realizing and strengthening a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine more closely integrated into Europe and Euro-Atlantic structures. Providing economic support to the Ukrainian government is critical to achieving this goal.

Question 19:
In 2012, Congress terminated the application of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment to Russia and imposed the Magnitsky Act, sanctioning corruption and human rights violations. How do you assess the overall impact on the United States of the granting of PNTR to Russia? Also, does the Department of State intend to expand targeting under the Magnitsky Act? Is the statutory language of the Act sufficient to target a substantially larger number of individuals involved in human rights abuses in Russia? What is the Department doing to encourage our allies to impose similar sanctions?

Answer:
Despite the granting of PNTR to Russia, overall trade remains low. The Department of State continues to work with the Department of the Treasury on the Magnitsky List. The Department is prepared to expand the list as new information becomes available. For inclusion on the Magnitsky List the Administration considers information from a broad array of sources, including but not limited to activists, NGOs, and other governments, in addition to conducting its own research through public and classified sources. As called for in the law, this is an ongoing process with an annual reporting requirement to Congress. Regarding additional names, we will closely examine any information that indicates an individual meets the criteria in the Act. When we have credible information that supports a determination that someone meets the criteria of the Act, we will take

appropriate action. Senior administration officials continue to engage with the United States' partners and allies to encourage them to impose similar sanctions.

The statutory language of the Magnitsky Act regarding gross violations of internationally recognized human rights sets a high standard for the type of conduct that would qualify someone for potential inclusion on the list. Many suggested targets for Magnitsky sanctions that have been provided by civil society and other sources have not satisfied the criteria in the Act.

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Question 20:
The increasingly authoritarian environment in Russia makes civil society assistance and democracy programming more important even as it becomes harder to implement. How does the United States plan to continue to support the legitimate aspirations of dissidents in Russia who seek a role in their country's politics?

Answer:

The United States is firmly committed to promoting democracy, the rule of law, civil society, and human rights in Russia despite the enactment of laws and practices that restrict fundamental freedoms and the ability of organizations to receive international support.

We raise our concerns in public statements and private discussions about disruptive government inspections of hundreds of NGOs, an array of new laws aimed at intimidating civil society, and the prosecution of political and civil society leaders. We frequently join with the international community in urging Russian officials to protect the fundamental human rights of all citizens.

I would be happy to have State Department officials brief you on the specific programs we have in place to support civil society.

Question 21:

Soviet/Russia studies atrophied in the recent decades following the end of the Cold War. Should the events of the past year affect the prioritization of funding for cultural exchanges with Russia as well as for social-science research on Russia and Eurasia such as was previously funded under the Title VIII program?

Answer:

Russia has been and remains a priority for cultural and educational exchanges. We conduct all of our core exchange programs with Russian citizens – from Fulbright Exchanges to the International Visitor Leadership Program – and are continually seeking new opportunities to engage Russians through both existing and new programs. The Government of Russia suspended its participation in the FLEX youth exchange program last year after more than 20 years. We will search for other forms of youth exchange that will bring young Russians to the U.S. and send young Americans to Russia. We understand that, in the search for common ground and common solutions to our global challenges, we need our societies to interact, build mutual understanding, and share knowledge. Educational and cultural exchanges play an important role in this common effort.

Question 22:

In 1975, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was signed in Helsinki. Forty years later, all ten principles of this signature achievement in comprehensive security from Vancouver to Vladivostok are being violated by the Government of Russia. Has the crisis in Ukraine, the demise of the G8, and the suspension of Russia-NATO cooperation elevated the OSCE as a more important forum for U.S.-Russia dialogue? Or have recent conflicts exposed the limits of the OSCE and decreased its relevance?

Answer:

The OSCE has been an important venue for political engagement and has provided a framework for democratic change since the Helsinki Final Act was signed forty years ago. The OSCE's comprehensive security concept links respect for human rights and democratic principles *within* states to lasting security and cooperation *among* states. The crisis in and around Ukraine has reinvigorated the OSCE as a forum for engagement on key security issues across Europe and Eurasia. Our delegation to the OSCE in Vienna has continuously raised concerns about Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its disregard for its OSCE commitments, in the OSCE Permanent Council, the Ministerial Council, and at other OSCE events since February 2014.

The OSCE has also responded in an operational way to the crisis in and around Ukraine by deploying a Special Monitoring Mission, comprised of approximately 500 international monitors, to report on the situation on the ground and monitor the ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons in eastern Ukraine. In addition, the OSCE's independent institutions, including the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, have engaged in support of needed reforms in Ukraine and a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine, with the full backing of the United States government and with the blessing of the Ukrainian government.

Question 23:

I am very pleased that the President's FY 16 budget includes $1.14 billion in assistance to Central America which will help address the root causes of child migration from the subregion to the United States. I have been a big proponent of increased funding for Central America for many years. The President's request includes $508 million in assistance for the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – more than four times the FY 14 levels. How will the Administration target assistance in Central America to ensure that it reaches the most vulnerable communities from which children are migrating?

Answer:

Last summer's surge in unaccompanied children and families from Central America was a sign of the serious and persistent challenges that Central America has faced for years. The violence in Central America, coupled with a lack of economic growth and jobs, poor educational opportunities, poverty, social exclusion, discrimination against historically marginalized groups, and a lack of institutional capacity and social services, contributed to an increase in outward migration. The Administration's Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central

America, which our $1 billion request will support, calls for expanded U.S. focus, investment, and prioritization in the areas of security, governance, and prosperity – areas that drive migration in vulnerable communities.

Through Embassy-conducted focus groups, partner government data, and U.S. government information, we have identified many of the source communities from which unaccompanied children migrated. U.S. assistance supports many of the identified source communities; going forward, we will continue to employ smart targeting for U.S. assistance.

The United States has already made investments in Central America that have established successful models focusing on vulnerable communities, including $880 million committed for the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). The FY 2016 request maintains and strengthens proven CARSI programs, including community-based crime prevention programs. Community-based programs have produced results, including reported reductions in robberies (19 percent), homicides (51 percent), and extortion (51 percent) and increased community participation in communities where programs operate. The request will expand on and improve upon these programs through place-based, people-focused targeting, especially for communities and individuals most at risk from crime and violence and with high levels of immigration.

The Northern Triangle governments have also begun to follow through on their commitment to protect vulnerable populations. For example, the Guatemalan government reached a settlement with communities affected by the construction of the Chixoy dam, which requires Guatemala to pay $156 million in reparations, and President Perez Molina acknowledged that the state committed human rights violations during construction. Honduras will see the opening of a new UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which the United States is helping to fund.

Question 24:

In the recent Al Shabaab video calling for attacks on shopping malls overseas, including our own Mall of America, the group makes repeated reference to human rights abuses perpetrated against Muslims by Kenyan security forces – with alleged support from Western countries – as a justification for its 2013 attack on the Westgate mall and subsequent terrorist acts. In countries like Kenya, which is an important counterterrorism partner, what is the State Department doing to ensure that U.S. security assistance does not go to security forces who commit serious abuses against Muslim populations, such as the alleged extrajudicial killings linked to specific Kenyan police units by Al Jazeera last fall, which could be used by groups like Al Shabaab as extremist recruitment propaganda?

Answer:

We strongly condemn human rights abuses by Kenyan security forces and take seriously our responsibility to withhold or condition our assistance in light of applicable legal requirements and ethical principles. Ongoing U.S. training seeks to increase the professionalism and capacity of partner forces to carry out difficult jobs effectively while respecting human rights. We are also providing support for independent police oversight bodies, and assisting internal and external police accountability mechanisms to improve integrity, accountability, and transparency in the Kenyan police services.

Trainees and units are screened in accordance with the Leahy law and all training includes modules devoted to respect for human rights and the rule of law. We have excluded some Kenyan individuals and units from U.S. government training as a result of concerns about human rights abuses. We continue to review all available information to protect against the State Department supporting training and assistance to units who have committed gross violations of human rights.

Senior U.S. government officials have raised and will continue to raise at the highest levels of the Kenyan government concerns about human rights violations by Kenyan security forces, including alleged extra-judicial killing. We emphasize that any such violations are not only ineffective, but also counterproductive, and place elements of U.S. security assistance at risk. We stress the need for a sustainable and effective long term counterterrorism strategy in Kenya that incorporates government and civil society perspectives. Moreover, we consistently urge the Kenyan government to bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice and engage more constructively with members of populations at risk of recruitment to violent extremism, including Coastal communities.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Ileana Ros- Lehtinen
Secretary of State John F. Kerry (1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:

Given the escalating arms race in maritime Asia, not only in the Taiwan Strait but also in the South China and East China Seas, what is the United States Government doing to move forward with its pledge to provide Taiwan with diesel electronic submarines? And how has the East China Sea Peace Initiative assisted in reducing the current tensions in maritime Asia?

Answer:

The United States remains committed to the U.S. one-China policy, based on the Three Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, we continue to make available defense articles and services to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Since 2009, we have notified Congress of over $12 billion in arms sales to Taiwan.

Given the growing imbalance between China and Taiwan's defense budgets, we also encourage the Taiwan authorities to invest in innovative and asymmetric defensive capabilities to deter and defend against aggression or coercion. We recognize Taiwan's need for limited, defense submarines, and we are actively reviewing its request for U.S. assistance.

The 2013 agreement between the representative offices of Taiwan and Japan regarding fisheries in the East China Sea can serve as a model for promoting regional stability despite conflicting maritime claims. The existence of conflicting maritime claims does not and should not preclude claimants from finding peaceful and effective ways to share and manage resources responsibly. This principle, which is enunciated in the East China Sea Peace Initiative, is relevant across maritime Asia.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Albio Sires (#1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question1:

As you know, U.S.-Argentine relations have been tenuous for some time now. At the crux of these tensions have been several legal disputes, a worrisome trend of Argentine laws aimed to weaken judicial independence and freedom of the press, alongside the recent troubling death of prosecutor Alberto Nisman. Recently in September 2014, Argentina was found in contempt of court for its numerous attempts to circumvent a series of rulings, including passing legislation to change the jurisdiction of its bonds. In another case, the World Trade Organization recently ruled against Argentina, noting that its import licensing requirement and other import restrictions breach international trade rules. These cases highlight what have been repeated efforts to circumvent U.S. and international laws and regulations. What efforts is the United States taking to encourage Argentina to abide by international laws and norms respecting the rule of law and an independent judiciary and media, reasonably conclude longstanding legal disputes, and to continue the work of Mr. Nisman in order to bring the perpetrators behind the AMIA terrorist bombing to justice?

Answer:

The U.S. government has consistently urged the Argentine government to normalize its relationship to the international financial community. Following a prolonged period of inaction, Argentina made progress over the past two years. In October 2013, it resolved five outstanding awards at the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes, including three involving U.S. firms. Argentina's failure to honor those awards prompted the 2012 revocation of its Generalized System of Preferences benefits. In May 2014, Argentina reached an arrangement with Paris Club creditors, including the United States; consequently, it has begun repaying its $608 million debt to U.S. taxpayers. However, Argentina has failed to resolve its longstanding dispute with private bondholders.

Regarding judicial and press freedoms in Argentina, in successive Human Rights Reports, the U.S. government has highlighted challenges facing Argentine journalists and certain media companies and has drawn attention to threats to judicial independence. Alberto Nisman's tragic death on January 18 presents Argentina the opportunity to demonstrate the professionalism and operational independence of its justice institutions. The U.S. government has made it clear to Argentine authorities that we are closely following the investigation into Mr. Nisman's death and stand ready to assist. We have expressed our expectation that the prosecutorial and judicial authorities will conduct a thorough, transparent, and credible investigation, and that Mr. Nisman's death will not disrupt the investigation into the barbaric AMIA bombing to which Mr. Nisman dedicated so much of his professional life.

Question 2:

One of the goals of the Asia pivot, as articulated by President Obama, is "shared prosperity." Taiwan, the United States' 10th largest trading partner, has indicated a desire to join the second round of Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations. The Administration has indicated that it "welcomes Taiwan's interest" in joining TPP. If President Obama is granted Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) in order to move TPP negotiations forward, what concrete steps will be taken to ensure Taiwan's inclusion?

Answer:

We greatly value our economic and commercial relationship with Taiwan, which is our tenth-largest trading partner and a major investor in the U.S. economy. We continue to welcome Taiwan's interest in the TPP Agreement, noting Taiwan's ongoing domestic work to assess its readiness to take on TPP's ambitious new commitments. Once it enters into force, TPP will be open to accession by economies that can demonstrate this readiness and win consensus support from existing TPP parties. Currently, the focus of TPP negotiating parties is to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion before consideration of additional members.

The Administration also is working hard with Congress to secure bilateral trade promotion legislation. We have consistently told Taiwan, as well as other potential candidates for later accession to TPP, that the U.S. decision will be based on a trading partner's demonstrated ability to meet the high level of trade commitments that the TPP embodies, success in resolving bilateral trade problems, and record of meeting its bilateral and multilateral trade obligations.

In the meantime, we continue to make progress with Taiwan on a broad range of trade and investment issues through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council, which provides an opportunity for Taiwan to resolve existing U.S. trade and investment concerns, demonstrate its preparations to take on new trade commitments, and set itself on a path of broader economic liberalization.

Question for the Record Submitted by
Representative Dana Rohrabacher (#1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question:

Beijing's expansion of its submarine fleet has been a concern in the western Pacific for more than a decade. Recognizing a widening imbalance in the waters of the Taiwan Strait, the George W. Bush Administration in 2001 offered to assist Taiwan in obtaining diesel electronic submarines. A 2008 Congressional Notification on the first phase of a program for submarine construction remains bottled up in the State Department. With maritime tensions in Asia at a historic high, what is the current status of the pledge to assist Taiwan with submarine production, as mandated as a defensive measure by the Taiwan Relations Act?

Answer:

We remain committed to the U.S. one-China policy, based on the Three Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, we continue to make available defense articles and services to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Since 2009, the Obama Administration has notified Congress of over $12 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, including a retrofit of F-16s, PAC-3 missiles, Blackhawk helicopters, Harpoon missiles, and Osprey-class minehunter ships.

Given the growing imbalance between China and Taiwan's defense budgets, we also encourage the Taiwan authorities to invest in innovative and asymmetric defensive capabilities to deter and defend against aggression or coercion. We recognize Taiwan's need for limited, coastal-defense submarines, and we are actively reviewing its request for U.S. assistance.

Question:

The U.S. innovative pharmaceutical industry faces severe challenges in Turkey, including an arbitrary fixed exchange rate system that saddles the industry with an extra 50 percent erosion of their prices. This is on top of a pricing regime that already forces the industry to accept some of the lowest prices in the world, in a market that hopes to be a top 10 global economy by 2023. Turkey is a recipient of US foreign aid - what will you to do to help resolve this long-standing, market-distorting, unfair trade practice?

Answer:

Over the last 18 months, numerous senior U.S. officials from the Departments of State, Commerce, and Office of the U.S. Trade Representative have raised the exchange rate matter, and other issues of concern to the pharmaceutical industry, on multiple occasions at the highest levels of the Turkish government, including in such bilateral fora as the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation, U.S.-Turkey High Level Committee, Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Council, and most recently, in the Economic Partnership Commission meeting held on February 12.

In October, Secretary Pritzker led the President's Export Council delegation to Turkey and, during the visit, expressed our concerns to Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu about a number of market access impediments, including the fixed exchange rate for pharmaceutical products. Vice President Biden elaborated on these concerns in a meeting with the Prime Minister during his visit to Ankara in November.

With respect to the exchange rate issue specifically, we are strongly encouraging the Turkish government to comply with court decisions requiring adjustments to the fixed rate used for purchases of pharmaceutical products to reflect the current market value of the Turkish Lira. Ambassador Bass and Washington-based agencies will continue to urge the Turkish government to allow the pharmaceutical reimbursement exchange rate to float with the broader foreign exchange market.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Gerald Connolly (1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question1:

The State Department's workforce performs services that are critical to our national security, both here at home and abroad. Yet, we have been concerned about reports that more and more people are choosing to leave the Foreign Service and Civil Service ranks, and of difficulty recruiting specialized skills needed for Foreign Service Specialists. I understand that the Department has declined to submit data on the Foreign Service to the Office of Personnel Management since 2006, and that the Department does not keep detailed, systematic data on recruitment and retention of its workforce – including Foreign Service officers and specialists and civil servants. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain who is leaving the Department and why, and impossible to know if the Department is attracting and retaining a diverse group of top talent needed to carry out our national security objectives. What efforts have you undertaken to improve data collection on the Department's workforce, and using that information, to prioritize the creation of a 21st Century workforce, as was called for in the first QDDR?

Answer:

The Department is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse, talented workforce that advances U.S. values, interests and goals around the world. As part of our efforts to achieve an ever stronger, more agile, more flexible, and more innovative workforce, we closely monitor recruitment and retention in the Foreign Service and Civil Service. Our employees in both the Foreign and Civil Service, as a result of responses to OPM's annual Employee Viewpoint Survey, have kept the Department ranked highly in the Partnership for Public Service's *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* ranking, including our ranking number three out of all large agencies in 2014. We have been in the top three large agencies for the last three years and in the top ten since 2005, indicating not only that we have reason to be proud, but that we continue to improve.

Along with a focus on recruiting a diversity of perspectives, our marketing and recruitment/outreach teams are focused on generating greater awareness among key target audiences of competitive professionals with applicable experience for our 22 Foreign Service Specialist career opportunities. To effectively focus our efforts and resources, we fully utilize a variety of workforce data to enhance and guide our decision making in recruitment efforts. We face challenges similar to those of other federal agencies and the private sector in recruiting personnel with the specialized skills needed for Foreign Service Specialists, particularly in the areas of medicine and construction. These represent a relatively small percent of the overall FS workforce, yet are critical to the Department's mission. They include, Medical Officer, Medical Provider, Medical Laboratory Scientist, Construction Engineer, and Security Engineer.

We monitor attrition closely. The data in our quarterly attrition reports show that Foreign Service (FS) attrition has remained consistently low, averaging about four percent per year, with the majority leaving due to retirement. The highest attrition rates are at the more senior levels as officers and specialists alike reach mandatory age retirement or the expiration of time-in-service rules associated with the up-or-out system, though both can happen at any grade.

Civil Service attrition rates are somewhat higher than the Foreign Service, yet still within a healthy tolerance, averaging between 6 and 7 percent per year. Neither FS nor CS attrition rates are out of line with the federal government average of 5.9 percent (2012 data, the most recent available).

The Department recognizes the need to more systematically track the reasoning behind employees leaving its workforce than we currently do. For this reason, we have developed, and are now implementing, a variety of standardized electronic exit surveys that will go live later this year. This information will be used to improve any retention problem areas and assist in recruiting efforts. Our existing monitoring of employee

departures, and what we are told in letters of resignation, indicate that the majority leaving the Foreign Service do so for family reasons.
As for reporting requirements, the Department complies with OPM data requirements for the Civil Service under United States Code Title 5. Because the Foreign Service is under Title 22, and governed by the Foreign Service Act (as amended) of 1980, it is exempted from OPM reporting. However, we have some very sophisticated computer models, databases, and a workforce Analysis Office that closely tracks hiring and attrition trends.

Question2:

As we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, we recall that the Republic of China (Taiwan), which fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Allies, is one of America's oldest security partners. How does Taiwan fit strategically into the Administration's concept of a rebalance to Asia?

Answer:

Taiwan is a key component of U.S. Asia-Pacific policies, including the Asia rebalance. The United States continues to expand and enhance its strong and multifaceted unofficial relationship with Taiwan. Taiwan is an important security and economic partner of the United States, an important part of global value chains, a vibrant democracy, and our tenth-largest trading partner.

We continue deepening our engagement on Taiwan trade and investment issues through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement process, and we welcome Taiwan's interest in future accession to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We work cooperatively with Taiwan in APEC to promote regional economic integration initiatives, including enhanced trade and investment. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and the United States' "one China" policy, the United States makes available to Taiwan defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Collectively, these activities demonstrate our continued commitment to Taiwan's peace, security, and prosperity as part of the U.S. rebalance.

Question3:

The FY15 Appropriations Act required two follow-up actions to the Committees on Appropriations in regards to Egypt: 1) Due by mid-January, a report "describing any defense articles withheld from deliver to Egypt"; and 2) consultation "on plans to restructure military assistance for Egypt including cash flow financing." Can you summarize the defense articles currently withheld from delivery from Egypt, including the conditions under which they can be delivered? Second, can you tell us who in your department will be the lead tasked with implementation of the plan to restructure military assistance for Egypt? What steps will you take to ensure Congress is involved in restructuring Egypt's military assistance?

Answer:

The defense articles currently withheld from delivery to Egypt are 12 Block 52 F-16 aircraft, 97 kits of M1A1 tank components, 20 Harpoon missiles, and a number of machine guns. In determining whether and when to resume deliveries currently on hold, the Administration is evaluating both Egypt's progress on political reform and each item's relevance to U.S. security interests. The Department of State has not tied resumption of delivery to a specific timeline or set of actions by Egypt.

The Political-Military Affairs Bureau, in close cooperation with the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau and other relevant Department and interagency offices, will take the lead in implementing plans to restructure military assistance to Egypt. We will continue to work with Congress to ensure that the United States maintains support to Egypt, to include conducting all the legislatively required consultations required on this issue.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Steve Chabot (1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 3, 2015

Question 1:

Secretary Kerry, last year, the House created the Select Committee on Benghazi to look into the events that occurred on September 11, 2012, which ultimately led to the deaths of four Americans, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the time of the attack, I joined the Committee's efforts to look into the State Department and the policies, decisions, and actions that were taken before, during and after the attack. What is the State Department doing to support the Select Committee's investigation?

Answer:

Since the attacks in Benghazi, the Department has been committed to working with Congress to provide it the information it needs. To date, the Department has participated in over 60 briefings, 14 hearings, and 30 interviews.

We renewed our commitment to cooperation last year when the Select Committee on Benghazi was formed. We are in almost daily contact with the Select Committee. State Department witnesses have appeared at each of the Select Committee's three public hearings. In addition, we have provided the Select Committee with five member and staff briefings on a range of topics. Since February 2015 alone, the Department has facilitated 11 transcribed interviews and is engaged in scheduling more. We have also produced thousands of pages of relevant materials to the Select Committee and are engaged actively in providing the additional information it needs.

Question 2:

Mr. Secretary, the fiscal year 2016 budget requests $81 million in U.S. contributions to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This aid is aimed at suffering populations in many authoritarian countries, but more often than not, this aid helps perpetuate that suffering. Human rights groups have criticized the UNDP of funding state-controlled programs in Burma, for example, that are expanding military control over the population and legitimizing the military's policies in the name of development. The UNDP has also funded government-supported activities in Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe. Clearly, the management of UNDP resources is weak, which even the 2011 audit by the U.S. Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction noted. Can you justify this continued support for the UNDP and discuss what benefits U.S. taxpayers are getting for this $81 million?

Answer:

The Administration supports UNDP's mission to promote democratic governance, poverty reduction, environment protection, and crisis prevention and recovery. We will continue to encourage UNDP to focus more of its resources and programs to address issues that have the greatest long-term development impact, such as governance, markets, and development of the private sector to foster stable societies and to generate jobs. Since UNDP works in many parts of the world and its activities complement and contribute to U.S. foreign policy objectives, we will continue to encourage UNDP to do so more effectively.

For example, in response to the former Burmese military government's oppressive policies, the UNDP Executive Board, with the active support of the U.S. government and other likeminded countries, scaled back UNDP's development work in Burma from 1993 to 2012 and limited its programs to helping the poorest Burmese at a grassroots level. In addition, the U.S. government imposed policy restrictions on UNDP's interaction with Burma's government to prevent UNDP programs from benefiting the military regime, and, as required by law, also withheld from UNDP the proportionate share of U.S. voluntary contributions for UNDP programs for Burma.

Following Burma's reforms that began in 2011, including the release of political prisoners, legalization of opposition parties, and the holding of by-elections, the U.S. government moved to normalize our relations with Burma.

In recognition of the government's reforms, the United States along, with other partners in the international community, eased many of the economic sanctions and other restrictions that were imposed on Burma during the worst days of military rule. Among other things, starting in FY 2014, Congress has exempted programs for Burma from the proportionate withholding requirement applicable to the International Organizations and Programs account. The UNDP Executive Board, for the first time since 1993, has approved a normal country program for Burma, one that will run from 2013 to 2015. The new country program was designed to help Burma build democratic institutions, create open and inclusive government and communities, and strengthen capacities to implement economic development to better people's lives. Our support for UNDP's work in Burma, particularly the 2013-15 country program, is intended to help the UNDP achieve those goals. When UNDP is successful in its country program, Burma stands a greater chance of achieving its democratic transition and aligning with U.S. policy interests.

More broadly, U.S. active engagement on the UNDP Executive Board and our continuous promotion of increased effectiveness and management reform through the governing body processes and other country-specific venues, not only provides us the opportunities to shape UNDP's activities and ensure complementarity with other U.S. programs, it also allows us to improve the effectiveness of the organization.

We have made considerable progress in recent years in reforming UNDP management policies and practices. The establishment of an ethics office and public disclosure of internal audits are two signal achievements of these efforts. U.S. leadership in promoting transparency and accountability in the UNDP Executive Board and in forging coalitions with like-minded countries were key in overcoming initial UNDP management resistance, and in codifying these practices through formal Board decisions.

We will continue our transparency and accountability drive in the coming months and years, to install effective program oversight systems in UNDP to ensure programs and projects produce their intended results on the ground. An important objective of this work is to establish a robust evaluation function in UNDP that would allow donors and program beneficiaries to see UNDP program results and to hold UNDP management accountable for improving program performance.

Question 3:

In 2011, a 71-year old American aid worker named Warren Weinstein was kidnapped in Pakistan. Since then, various videos have shown him pleading for help from the U.S. and then, Israel, because he felt abandoned by the U.S. My office has reached out to the State Department about this case asking for information about what is being done to help secure his release. However, we never received any response. What is Mr. Weinstein current situation? What is being done to ensure he comes home alive?

Answer:

We remain committed to bringing Mr. Weinstein home to his family and continue to work with Pakistani authorities to try to secure his release. We are coordinating with all relevant law enforcement entities including Pakistani authorities. We have frequently and consistently raised Mr. Weinstein's case at the highest levels of the Pakistani government, including with the Prime Minister, the National Security and Foreign Affairs Advisor of Pakistan, and senior military officials.

Senior U.S. government officials, including the Secretary of State, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, Deputy National Security Advisor Lisa Monaco, staff from Vice President Biden's office, and Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, have met with Mrs. Weinstein to discuss the case. We continue to be in close contact with the Weinstein family to provide updates on our efforts.

The Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan was recently in Pakistan and again engaged the Pakistanis on Weinstein's case; he plans to meet with Mrs. Weinstein later this month. The release and return of Warren Weinstein is a top priority of the Department of State.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary John Kerry by
Representative Higgins (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:

In recent months, the strategic relationship between China and Argentina has progressed, with leaders from both countries meeting to secure trade and lending agreements. Argentina's refusal to constructively negotiate with its creditors has prevented it from receiving loans from traditional international bodies, so it has aligned itself with countries such as China, Russia and Iran, for support. With Chinese influence growing in the Latin American region in general, what is the Administration doing to counter these dangerous alliances and to ensure that Argentina pursues good faith negotiations with its creditors?

Answer:

The U.S. government continues to urge the Argentine government to normalize its relationship to the international financial community. Following a prolonged period of inaction, Argentina made progress over the past two years. In October 2013, it resolved five outstanding awards at the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes, including three involving U.S. firms. Argentina's failure to honor those awards had prompted the 2012 revocation of its Generalized System of Preferences benefits. In May 2014, Argentina reached an arrangement with Paris Club creditors, including the United States; consequently, it has begun repaying its $608 million debt to U.S. taxpayers. However, Argentina has failed to resolve its longstanding dispute with private bondholders. We will continue to urge Argentina to fulfill its international financial responsibilities.

We are aware several countries in the region, including Argentina, have sought and received credit from the Chinese. Many of the largest recipients of Chinese development finance in the region are countries with trouble accessing credit in capital markets. From 2001-2014 China's trade in goods with Latin America and the Caribbean grew from $10 billion to over $240 billion. The United States remains the region's largest trading partner with trade in goods at $870 billion in 2014.

The United States welcomes a China that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and plays a responsible role in global affairs. To the degree that China adheres to a rules-based international economic system and works in a transparent manner, China's engagement with Latin America could play a positive role in building a more prosperous and globally engaged region.

We have a recurring structured U.S.-China Sub-Dialogue on Latin America that enables us to share views on trends in Latin America and Caribbean, and improve our understanding of one another's policies in the region. The most recent round of talks took place in Beijing in November 2013, and the talks were open, frank, and constructive.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Joe Wilson (1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:
Can you tell us, in specific detail, about the level of counterterrorism cooperation between Azerbaijan and the U.S.?

Answer:
Azerbaijan maintains strong counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. Consistent with its obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178, Azerbaijan amended its law on terrorism last year to increase penalties for those who go to Syria and Iraq as foreign terrorist fighters. While not a member of the anti-ISIL Coalition, Azerbaijan is working to stop the financing of terrorist groups such as ISIL, for example through its membership in the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval). Working through Treasury and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the United States has provided assistance to Azerbaijan's financial intelligence unit, the Financial Monitoring Service, supporting its efforts to curtail financial crime, including financing of terrorism.

Our cooperation with Azerbaijan extends to capacity-building assistance to enhance the effectiveness of the counterterrorism efforts of the country's law enforcement personnel. This has included recent training aimed at enhancing border security and infrastructure protection skills.

On a multilateral basis, Azerbaijan works constructively with the United States on counterterrorism in bodies such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Question 2:
Azerbaijan plays a critically important role in providing a transportation route for overflights and supplies to our forces in Afghanistan through the Northern Distribution Network. Would you not agree that Azerbaijan's cooperation in this area is vital to supporting our troops and the retrograde of our equipment?

Answer:
Azerbaijan is a valuable partner and a strong supporter of coalition operations in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan provides valuable overflight, refueling, and landing rights for U.S. and coalition aircraft in and out of Afghanistan. It is also a key node on the Northern Distribution Network allowing non-lethal goods to transit its territory to and from Afghanistan. Azerbaijan also has 94 troops deployed in Afghanistan as part of the NATO Resolute Support Mission, and has been an active and productive partner in the Partnership for Peace since its inception.

NOTE: No responses were received to the following questions prior to printing.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD OF THE HONORABLE DAVID N. CICILLINE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
"ADVANCING U.S. INTERESTS IN A TROUBLED WORLD: THE FY 2016 FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET"
February 25, 2015

The following questions are directed to Secretary John Kerry:

1. While seeking his first term, President Barack Obama stated, "America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides," yet since taking office he has failed to fully recognize the Armenian Genocide and condemn its perpetrators. This year, however, marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan has extended an invitation to President Obama to attend the 100th anniversary commemoration ceremony in Yerevan. Will the President be attending? If not, why not and who from the Administration will be attending in his place?
2. In yet another of its ploys to cover up its culpability for the Armenian Genocide, Turkey has planned to stage a commemoration of the WWI Gallipoli battle on April 24, the same day as the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, although it normally commemorates this battle in March. Turkey had the audacity to invite the President of Armenia, without even responding to his earlier invitation to attend the Armenian Genocide commemoration in Yerevan on the same day. Sargsyan was quick to reject the invitation and noted "Turkey continues its conventional denial policy and is perfecting its instrumentation for distorting history." Very few countries have accepted the invitation to attend. There are even reports that it will be cancelled, because of poor interest from international leaders. I implore the Administration to not send anyone to the Gallipoli event, but instead send U.S. Ambassador to Turkey John Bass to the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul. Will the Administration be sending any representatives to the Gallipoli commemoration? If so, why?
3. In light of the priority that the President has attached to moving Turkey toward an honest reckoning with its past, will the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, John Bass, be supporting any commemorations of the Armenian Genocide that will be taking place in Turkey? If not, please explain why not.
4. The United States has been consistently providing assistance to Nagorno Karabakh, but at modest amounts, despite the tremendous humanitarian needs there. AID conducted a needs assessment in 1998 and 2007. Has there been a needs assessment since 2007 and if not, why not?
5. Please provide an accounting of the Administration's distribution of aid in Nagorno Karabakh for FY15, including: 1) Name of project and purpose, 2) Institution(s) receiving funds, 3) Total funding disbursement, 4) Locations where each project is conducted, 5) Years funded, and 6) Assessment of goals achieved.
6. New reports have surfaced on Turkey's assistance and coordination with ISIS and Al Qaeda terrorists to attack the Armenian town of Kessab, Syria. What safeguards has the Administration put in place to ensure that the opposition fighters, which will be trained in Turkey, will not target Armenians or other minorities?
7. Armenia has accepted over 10,000 refugees from Syria and has generously granted them full citizenship rights. How much funding has the United States provided to Armenia to help resettle Syrian Armenians? Can you please provide a breakdown of the projects and amounts funded in Armenia to help accommodate the civilians who have fled Syria?
8. What are we doing to mitigate the consequences of Lajes force structure reduction upon our relationship with Portugal and the Azores? Are we exploring all opportunities to improve our economic and diplomatic relations?
9. 20 years ago at the 4th World Conference on Women the world was called upon to recognize that women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights. Since then a lot of progress has

been made, including thanks to the work you and this Administration have done to focus on women and girls as a cornerstone of foreign policy. We know that a woman's ability to decide when, whether, and how many children to have is fundamental to her ability to thrive and fully realize her rights and potential. Can you speak to how the U.S. is helping to expand access to voluntary family planning services as part of broader efforts to support women's health and rights?

10. Do you believe that it is important for the U.S. to continue to honor its financial commitment to UN peacekeeping by paying its peacekeeping dues in full? How does failing to pay our peacekeeping dues in full impact critical missions in Mali, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other places? What message do we send to our international partners—particularly countries who contribute uniformed personnel to peacekeeping operations—when we fail to fully fund our share of missions that we vote for on the Security Council?
11. As you know, in December 2011, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum on International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Persons to "address the violence and discrimination targeting LGBT persons around the world." In that Memorandum, foreign affairs agencies were directed to continue protecting the human rights of all individuals with an increased awareness of their protection of LGBT individuals, such as by combating criminalization of LGBT individuals, protecting vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, and directly responding to human rights abuses abroad. Can you explain how the State Department has implemented this Memorandum? What types of trends or major events have we seen regarding violence and discrimination against LGBT individuals? And what is the U.S. government policy on the ground regarding human rights, including the human rights of LGBT individuals?
12. I was very pleased to hear that the State Department has appointed a Special Envoy to protect the human rights of LGBT people around the world. However, is there any plan for funding the position, either with staff or with a programmatic budget?
13. I was very pleased with the creation of the position of Senior LGBT Coordinator at USAID, and believe this fulfills a critical function of our development work. What kind of funding have you provided for the position itself and related staffing, and how much are you providing in funding specifically to help strengthen the important work being done by LGBT groups around the world, or to combat discrimination and violence against LGBT communities worldwide.
14. I am deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Egypt. We have heard reports of human rights violations committed against many different minority groups there, including Copts and LGBT people. It's been reported that over 80 individuals have been arrested -- some imprisoned for up to 6 years -- because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. What is the US government doing to send a message to Egypt that we are concerned and that we are watching these issues closely? Will this message be communicated to the Egyptian government at the Egyptian Economic Development Conference in March? Who will represent the U.S. at that conference?
15. I was pleased to see that the U.S. removed The Gambia from eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act in December, as a result of their human rights abuses. Thank you for your leadership on that. However, I believe that President Jammeh's rhetoric and intentions are extremely dangerous and we need to be taking a more robust approach. What else is the U.S. government planning in order to send him a message that his ongoing human rights abuses will not be ignored?
16. While the U.S. issued a strong response to the Anti-Homosexuality Act that was enacted in Uganda, it has not established a similar review process regarding Nigeria. I believe the U.S. must show that we will respond seriously whenever a country enacts such discriminatory laws. Why has the U.S. not taken similar steps in Nigeria?
17. Despite the progress that has been made combating the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the battle is not over and in the meantime, the governments of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have suffered a serious blow to state capacities. These are all countries with a recent history of civil conflict and low per capita incomes. How does the President's budget reflect plans for the economic recovery and stabilization of state institutions in these countries?

18. Saudi Arabia is—and will continue to be—an important partner and ally of the United States in the Middle East. How has the death of King Abdullah and the change of leadership affected this relationship? Do you expect it to lead to a real improvement in the human rights situation?
19. Liberia continues to deal with several post-conflict issues, many of which have been compounded by the Ebola epidemic. When I visited the country in the fall of 2013, I was shocked by the number of young girls I spoke with who were victims of gender-based violence. What is the United States doing to support equality and rule of law in Liberia; specifically, what are we doing to prevent gender-based violence and to support its victims?

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Ted Poe (1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:

Social media has become a breeding ground of terrorist propaganda. Companies like Twitter allow official and unofficial terrorists a platform to recruit and fundraise. Rep. Sherman and I are going to send a letter to Twitter soon. We are calling on Twitter to do what other social media companies are already doing and allow Twitter users to voluntarily flag accounts that post images and content promoting terrorism. We also urge Twitter to have a dedicated team to review user flagged content within 24 hours or less to determine whether it violates the Twitter Rules. Do you think this is a good idea?

Answer:

It is important to work closely with the private sector to address the challenge of terrorist use of the Internet and social media platforms. The communications tools provided by these private companies have provided exceptional benefit to all of us. Unfortunately, the power these platforms hold also has been exploited by terrorists and terrorist groups for recruitment and propaganda purposes.

Governments must build partnerships that include the private sector, civil society, and all levels of government to counter the threats from the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. The use of the Internet, including social media, and the use of information technology in furtherance of terrorism and other crimes, should be addressed by all lawful means, while respecting international obligations and commitments regarding human rights, including freedom of expression, the free flow of information, and a free and open Internet. The Administration has been actively engaging with private companies, including service providers on this important issue.

Our efforts to counter terrorism in cyberspace must also continue to focus on criminal activities that facilitate terrorism, such as illicit financing through money transfers, attack planning and coordination and other crimes committed online, rather than on constraints on expressive content, no matter how repugnant to our core values.

Finally, our efforts to counter radicalization to violence must continue to focus on engagement with those who may be targeted by violent extremists and the social networks that influence them. Counter-messaging and challenging the narrative presented by terrorists and terrorist groups must remain a feature of our efforts in this area. We cannot leave this space open and unchallenged to the terrorists' distorted world view. The Administration is committed to continuing our engagement with the private sector, including social media companies and our foreign counterparts to meet these challenges.

Question 2:

In 2011, the White House promised a strategy to counter online radicalization. Four years later, we are still waiting on that strategy. When can we expect this strategy?

Answer:

The Department of State is not the lead department for the domestically-focused strategy to counter online radicalization associated with the White House-led 2011 domestic CVE strategy, the *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, and the subsequent strategic implementation plan. We would refer you to the White House.

Question 3:

When you came up here a year ago, I asked you when this Administration was going to decide whether or not to take in some members of the MEK, the Iranian opposition group stuck in Iraq. You said "there are urgent circumstances here" and "Their safety is at risk; no question about it. And we want to move them out of Iraq as rapidly as possible." Well that was back on March 13. How many MEK members have we taken into the United States since then? Has a decision been made? Why is it taking so long? You said yourself people's lives were at risk. Since we last talked, Iraq hasn't got any safer. When is the Administration going to pick a horse and ride it?

Answer:

The State Department agrees that the only way the residents of Camp Hurriya can be made safe is by finding them safe, secure, and permanent locations to live outside of Iraq. The Administration has pledged to offer parole into the United States to at least 100 residents of Camp Hurriya and as of February 25 the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security has authorized parole for 17. Two Camp Hurriya residents have already arrived in the United States and we expect to have paroled 20 Camp Hurriya residents into the United States by the end of April. An interagency team is currently interviewing new candidates for parole into the United States. We anticipate paroling into the United States an additional 25-30 Camp Hurriya residents by June and reaching 100 by the end of 2015. The pace of moving candidates to the United States has been dictated by the availability of appropriate and interested candidates, the security environment in Iraq, which forced a suspension of the interviewing and assessment process for five months, and the cooperation of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK).

The Department of State's Senior Advisor for MEK Resettlement, Mr. Jonathan Winer, is focusing intensive U.S. efforts on securing the cooperation of other countries in relocating the residents outside of Iraq and finding them safe, secure, and permanent locations to live. Thus far, 13 countries have accepted 634 Camp Hurriya residents. The State Department performed a strategic review in February and has identified promising new possible countries for resettlement. We have begun our engagement with these countries, in consultation with the United Nations and its Senior Adviser for MEK Relocation, UNAMI, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and representatives of the MEK.

Question 4:

Yesterday the MEK, an Iranian opposition group that revealed Iran's Natanz site in 2002, revealed another secret nuclear site. The site is called Lavizan-3 and is in a military base in northeast Tehran suburbs. It has been running advanced centrifuges at this site since 2008. Did you know about this? Did Iran tell the IAEA about this site? Will we have access to inspect this site? What steps are involved in verifying this claim?

Answer:

We have seen these claims and we take all such reports seriously. We are examining the report but we have no information at this time to support such a conclusion.

Question 5:

On January 22, I sent a letter with the Chairmen and Ranking Members of this committee to you arguing that we should not give the Palestinian Authority any more aid until they pull out of the International Criminal Court. Do you agree?

Answer:

We opposed the Palestinian approach to the ICC. We have also made clear that we oppose actions against Israel at the ICC as counterproductive. The State Department, in conjunction with USAID, continues to examine our assistance to the Palestinians to determine how it can best advance U.S. interests. Although our view is that the legislative restrictions related to Palestinian initiation or active support for an ICC judicially authorized investigation have not been triggered to date, we are deeply troubled by Palestinian action at the ICC and continue to voice our opposition to further actions to both the Palestinians and the international community.

It remains our view that U.S. assistance to the Palestinian people contributes to stability and security for both Palestinians and Israelis. We will make necessary adjustments in view of recent developments and will work closely with Congress on this matter. Similarly, we will continue to ensure that assistance is in full compliance with relevant legislation.

The answer to this question is not within the purview of the Department of State. The Department of State defers to the Department of Defense.

Question 6:

1. Is the President going to tell Congress what his strategy is when it comes to using military force against ISIS? I understand there are other elements besides the military like building partner capacity but that's not what I'm talking about here. I want to know how the President would use an AUMF if Congress gave it to him. Have you seen such a strategy? Is he going to tell Congress his strategy?

Question 7:

The President's draft AUMF says "no enduring offensive ground combat operations". What does that mean? How long is enduring? Does offensive mean our troops can't help take a town? Does this prevent the President from putting tens of thousands of troops on the ground like we did Iraq as long as they don't "endure" and are not "offensive"?

Answer:
As the President noted in his letter transmitting the proposed AUMF to the Congress, the proposal does not authorize long-term, large-scale ground combat operations like those our nation conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such operations will be the responsibility of local forces because that is what our local partners and allies want, that is what is best for preserving our international coalition, and, most importantly, that is in the best interest of the United States.

The President has been clear, however, that there always may be exigent or unforeseen circumstances in which small numbers of U.S. forces may need to engage in limited or short duration ground combat operations, for example, to protect and defend U.S. personnel or citizens. The proposed AUMF would therefore provide the flexibility to conduct ground combat operations in other, more limited circumstances, such as rescue operations involving U.S. or coalition personnel or the use of special operations forces to take military action against ISIL leadership. The proposal would also authorize the use of U.S. forces in situations where ground combat operations are not expected or intended, such as intelligence collection and sharing, missions to enable kinetic strikes, or the provision of operational planning and other forms of advice and assistance to partner forces.

As the ground combat limitation is focused on major operations – long-term, large-scale – the proposal would provide the authority and the flexibility required to perform the mission.

Question 8:

Ambassador Robert Ford, the former U.S. Ambassador to Syria, used to be one of the chief advocates of arming rebels in Syria. He now has reversed his position, saying that they are untrustworthy and some groups collaborate with jihadists, especially the al-Qaeda connected Nusra Front. Do you agree with Amb. Ford or do you think he is wrong?

Answer:

We believe that DoD's Train and Equip Program can help opposition elements defending territory, confront ISIL, and help create the environment ofr a political solution in Syria. DoD is preparing a deliberate vetting process for its train and equip program, which will be critical to its success. As with other T&E efforts DoD undertakes worldwide, it will work closely with the State Department, the intelligence community, and partners in the region to screen and vet Syrian opposition forces selected to receive training and equipment.

There is inherent risk in a program like this. We will do our utmost to minimize that risk, but we believe this effort is justified by the imperative of protecting innocent Syrians and defeating extremists such as al Qa'ida and ISIL – and the necessity of having capable partners on the ground in Syria.

A critical reason for our training and equipping appropriately vetted elements of the Syrian opposition is to ensure that they are capable of defending the Syrian people against ISIL, extremists, and the Asad regime in a manner that complies with international humanitarian law. Our diplomatic efforts and non-lethal assistance strategy have encouraged stronger connections between local governance, broader political leadership, and appropriately vetted armed opposition

groups. We are working to strengthen civil society in Syria, and welcome civil society's role in documenting violations and human rights abuses.

Alongside the DoD T&E efforts and the broader Coalition effort against ISIL, it is critically important that the United States – through the Department of State and USAID – continue nonlethal support to moderate actors, armed and civilian, to provide governance, rule of law, and basic services in areas where security gains are made.

Question 9:

In the recent NDAA, Pakistan is restricted from receiving $300 million in aid unless the U.S. government certifies that they have taken concrete action against the Haqqani Network. Do you believe they have tried to defeat or dismantle the Haqqani Network?

Answer:

The Department of State remains seized with the threat that the Haqqani Network poses to our interests, including to our men and women serving in Afghanistan. We raise our concerns about the Haqqani Network at the highest levels with the Government of Pakistan. This year, I have personally stressed with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Interior Minister, and the Chief of Army Staff about the need for Pakistan to take sustained and effective action to curtail the Haqqani Network's ability to plan attacks.

The Pakistan military has approximately 150,000 troops deployed in counterinsurgency operations along the border with Afghanistan. In June 2014, the Pakistani military initiated operation Zarb-e-Azb, its largest operation since 2009, in North Waziristan Agency. This operation continues to degrade and disrupt militant networks, including those that target U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, the Afghan National Security Forces, and the U.S. homeland, and it has substantially disrupted militant activities in North Waziristan. U.S. assistance to Pakistan has enhanced its counterterrorism capabilities and has enabled more effective Pakistani operations. Since operation Zarb-e-Azb started, Pakistan has employed F-16 precision strikes and night vision capability to strike militants, limit freedom of movement, operate at night, and reduce civilian collateral damage.

The operation has resulted in a disruption to the Haqqani network, removed them from their longstanding safe havens, caused the seizure of significant amounts of material, and impeded the travel of members of the network. All of these are positive outcomes, but they must be sustained and further actions are required.

The tragic December 16 attack on a school in Peshawar further galvanized Pakistan's resolve to counter militancy and violent extremism. Since the attack, senior Pakistani officials, including Prime Minister Sharif, have publicly stated there will not be a distinction between "good and bad militants". We will continue to engage the Pakistani government on the basis of this commitment and work with our interagency partners to assess their actions consistent with the legislative requirements.

Question 10:

Given Iran's history of cheating on its international commitments, will anything other than anytime, anywhere inspections give you comfort that Iran is living up to its commitments? Will specific penalties be delineated for not living up to those commitments?

Answer:

There is no question that a comprehensive deal must ensure that Iran is subject to significantly enhanced transparency and monitoring measures to verify the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program and to quickly detect any attempts to break out. Under a nuclear deal Iran will implement the Additional Protocol (AP), which will significantly enhance the IAEA's ability to investigate questions about covert nuclear activities in Iran and conduct intrusive inspections of Iranian facilities. We are also seeking additional transparency measures beyond the AP.

Question 11:

What role does religion play in the ideology of ISIS? Is ISIS a radical Islamist terrorist group? Are we at war with ISIS? Then aren't we at war with at least a radical and violent form of Islam?

Answer:

ISIL, or Daesh, is a terrorist group that has perverted religious principles and taken advantage of economic, political, and social distress in vulnerable communities to seize territory and carry out acts of extreme and gratuitous violence against its perceived enemies. ISIL subscribes to the Salafi-Jihadi ideology and makes use of unconventional interpretations of Islamic concepts to justify its violence and oppression of those who do not share its worldview. The group portrays its followers as pious champions of Islam, but its thorough rejection of widely held Islamic norms and traditions have earned it widespread condemnation from global Muslim communities.

The group propagates the notion that America and the West are at war with Islam, and uses this pretext to radicalize young people and recruit. We should reject this pretext and take every opportunity to deny these terrorists any access to the religious legitimacy that they seek. As Muslims the world over have repeatedly emphasized, there is absolutely no justification for these attacks. ISIL are not religious leaders, they are terrorists. We are not at war with Islam – we are at war with people who have perverted Islam to commit mass murder. The vast majority of Muslims, who have suffered grievously at the hands of al-Qa'ida and ISIL, share this view.

While some leaders and followers of ISIL may ascribe to or are motivated by this distorted religious ideology, others join the movement out of a desire to right what they perceive as social and political injustices in the Middle East. Some are driven by basic material concerns, including the fact that fighting for ISIL can be a source of income and livelihood in a region that faces a severe shortage of economic opportunities. This is likely a key factor in foreign terrorist fighter recruitment within the Middle East. American leadership, together with the efforts of our Coalition partners, is stopping ISIL's advance in Iraq and Syria. Sixty-two nations and partners are currently in the coalition, joining forces to degrade and defeat ISIL along multiple lines of effort. The Coalition is conducting air strikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria to eliminate ISIL's leadership, logistical, and operational capabilities and denying it the sanctuary and resources to plan and execute terrorist attacks. The strikes have removed ISIL fighters, commanders, hundreds of vehicles and tanks, nearly 200 oil and gas facilities, the infrastructure that funds its terror, as well as more than a thousand fighting positions, checkpoints, buildings, and barracks in Iraq and Syria.

The Coalition is also working to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, who pose a threat not only to the region but also globally. It is collaborating to choke off ISIL's finances and access to financing, including through UN sanctions. At the same time, it is delegitimizing ISIL's messages. While ensuring humanitarian relief, the Coalition is working to ensure that areas already being liberated from ISIL have security and good governance. As a result of this effort, ISIL's momentum has been blunted, its ability to mass and maneuver forces degraded, its leadership cells pressured or eliminated, its command-and-control and supply lines severed, and the group has been put on the defensive.

Question 12:

Libya is currently on fire. The U.S. and NATO helped overthrow the dictator Qaddafi and then turned their backs on the country. It is a major safehaven for ISIS and al-Qaeda, along with other groups. 21 Christians from Egypt- yes they were Christians- were killed by ISIS there. Weapons from Libya went to terrorists like Mokhtar Belmokhtar. He's the terrorist that led an attack in January 2013 on an Algerian gas plant, killing 3 Americans. One of them, Victor Lovelady, was my constituent. Would you say that overthrowing Qaddafi has made Libya a safer place?

Answer:

For 42 years, Qadhafi denied Libyans their basic human rights, used terror as a political tool, and deliberately fostered and manipulated political divisions among Libyans. When Libyans challenged his authoritarian rule, the international community saw his government gun down innocent civilians defending their basic human rights. NATO's intervention, supported by the United States and the international community, was necessary to stop the Qadhafi regime from committing more human rights abuses.

Qadhafi's legacy of misrule, including deep political divisions, mistrust, and lack of institutional capacity, will take time to overcome. Despite the extraordinary challenges the Libyan people faced, there have been many successes since the 2011 revolution, including Libya's first free and fair elections in July 2012, the seating of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly in 2014, and municipal elections in 2014. Unfortunately, these successes have been squandered by spoilers whose continued fighting threatens the peace and security of Libya.

The ongoing Libyan conflict can only be resolved through political, not military, means. The United States strongly supports the efforts of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Bernardino Leon to negotiate a ceasefire and build a national unity government that can begin to establish security, and which the international community can work with to counter terrorist threats and to rebuild Libya's institutions. In the meantime, we continue to work closely with Libya's neighbors to address counterterrorism and border security concerns.

Question13:

Are you encouraging the Cuban government to move to one single currency so trade can be more streamlined? If so, what efforts have you taken to date?

Answer:
In 2013, the Cuban government announced plans to end its dual currency system, but it has not set a specific timeframe for the unification. While we see Cuban plans to end the dual currency system as a positive development that will help the Cuban economy and the Cuban people, it was not the result of a request from the United States.

Question 14:

In the last 6 months, has Cuba provided safe haven to the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)?

Answer:
The Department is reviewing Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. We are undertaking a serious review of Cuba's designation based on all relevant, applicable information, and the statutory standard. We will not prejudge that process.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Alan Lowenthal (1a)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1a:

How will the new Central American Aid package reduce poverty, counter corruption and enhance security? What was the U.S. approach in the past with regard to addressing these issues?

Answer:

The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America prioritizes three interdependent objectives: prosperity, governance, and security. The U.S. government has committed $880 million for the Central America Regional Security Initiative since Fiscal Year 2008. While our security programming remains paramount for addressing the persistent challenges in Central America, we have broadened our approach under the Strategy for Engagement in Central America to include a focus on governance and prosperity issues as well.

Our prosperity agenda for Central America fosters the integration of a regional market of 43 million people and the reduction of legal impediments that only benefit established economic elites. It will enable Central Americans to create the jobs and local businesses that will thrive in a growing market. Economic integration is happening throughout the hemisphere and, despite its location at the crossroads of the hemisphere, Central America risks being left behind. Economic growth should reach everyone, not just the well-connected few.

Our governance agenda is really about strengthening institutions. Economic growth and security are only sustainable when the rule of law and democratic institutions flourish, and when independent civil society and the media can play their rightful roles. Citizens and investors will trust institutions once those institutions establish a pattern of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness.

Our strategy's prosperity and governance agendas are essential for success of the security agenda, which remains a core priority. We must collectively and effectively address insecurity now by urging police reform, facilitating community security, and countering transnational organized crime. Otherwise, the payoff from our other important investments will not bear fruit in the longer term.

Question 1b:

What are the indicators that you look at to see if we are achieving the goals of these programs? How do we measure progress on improved governance? Were previous programs that address these issues evaluated? Do we have any data about transparency and accountability? How do we measure reductions in corruption?

Answer:

Monitoring and evaluation are important elements of our assistance. We are continuously evaluating the impact of our assistance.

For instance, USAID, through Vanderbilt University, recently completed a three-year impact evaluation of USAID CARSI community-based crime and violence prevention programs in four countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama); this evaluation reflected baseline, mid-point, and final data in 120 high-crime, urban treatment, and control communities. Final results demonstrated with statistically significant

evidence that crime victimization is lower and public perception of security higher in USAID CARSI treatment communities. Communities targeted by INCLE community policing programs show reduced homicide rates, including a 40 percent reduction in Santa Ana, El Salvador, and a 50 percent reduction in homicides in Belize City, Belize. To gather specific results for CARSI INCLE programming, the Department is funding an evaluation of INCLE programing to address El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in 2015.

The Department and USAID have made investments in Central America and we know what works. Under CARSI, the Department and USAID have established demonstrated, successful programming models that can be replicated in additional communities in Central America. However, achieving national level impact for CARSI will require increased resources to allow for expansion.

Going forward, the Department and USAID will implement violence prevention and justice and security sector projects in targeted communities of greatest need. Crime and violence are concentrated in specific neighborhoods and committed by a specific group of people. Both agencies will be more effective by focusing on people connected by geography and those who are most at risk.

Good governance can be measured in a number of ways. For example, citizen's trust in state institutions, effective use of public revenue, and actions by the government that hold officials to account are all indicative of the strength of government institutions. A number of well-regarded third party organizations capture governance indicators. We will draw information in part from these sources.

Question 1c:

Are these governments committed to the goals of the aid package? Will Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador raise revenue to pay for better education, police and infrastructure? Will the State Department press these governments to raise new revenue so they can contribute to their own future success?

Answer:

The presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, the so-called Northern Triangle countries, have a plan and have committed themselves to a near-term timeline for continued action. They are already making progress. The three presidents publicly presented the Alliance for Prosperity plan in November, and they are taking steps to implement it. We are encouraged by the joint statement signed by the presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras as well as Vice President Biden on March 3.

The joint statement provides specific actions for each of the governments to take related to energizing the productive sectors of the economy; creating economic opportunities; developing human capital, citizen security, and social inclusion; improving public safety and enhancing access to the legal system; and strengthening institutions to increase trust in the state.

On the governance side, the governments agreed to promote approaches to strengthening the justice sector, emphasizing efficiency, transparency, and accountability, as well as to promote independent monitoring mechanisms, using best practices to ensure governmental transparency. The countries also committed to increase and strengthen tax revenues.

Specific commitments relating to our prosperity agenda include: advancing economic integration under the Central American integration process and promotion of an integrated, efficient energy market among the countries of the Regional Electricity Market, and the markets of neighboring countries.

Specific security focused commitments include: expansion of security policies and programs, especially those focused on gangs as well as an agreement to increase focus on combatting common crime, extortion, money laundering, human trafficking, illegal trafficking, and drug trafficking. We will work to strengthen and expand centers against domestic violence and violence against women. We will strengthen justice institutions, among others, using international best practices, depending on the specific context of the priority area.

Question 2:

The FY 2016 funding request for Ukraine is $513 million, six times more than FY 2014. Can you inform us about what the funding will be used for specifically. How are we currently using the aid funding in Ukraine? What programs are receiving the most funding and have they been evaluated?

Answer:

Ukraine is central to our 25-year transatlantic quest for a "Europe whole, free and at peace." Over the last 12 months, Ukraine has undertaken the tremendous task – with U.S. and international community support – to build a more democratic, independent, European country. At the same time, Ukraine has encountered unprecedented pressure from Russia, including the forcible seizure, occupation and purported annexation of Crimea; a violent conflict carried out by Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine; and painful economic, energy, and trade measures. Despite the severe strain Russia's destabilizing actions have placed on the Ukraine's security and economy, Ukraine's new government is bravely pushing forward with important, but difficult economic, political, justice, and security reforms needed to meet European Union (EU) standards, advance the battle against pervasive corruption, and diversify its trade and energy sectors to reduce vulnerability to external shocks and Russia's aggressive acts.

We will stand with Ukraine as it continues to advance its reform plans and counter Russian pressure. Almost two-thirds of the Administration's FY 2016 request for Ukraine will provide vital macroeconomic support by financing an additional loan guarantee, provided that Ukraine continues to make progress with its reform agenda and if conditions warrant and in consultation with Congress. Other funds will build on ongoing U.S. support to Ukraine: we will help Ukraine modernize its military services; secure its borders; advance its financial stability and improve the business environment to help generate economic growth; fight corruption and strengthen the rule of law; increase energy security, including by helping Ukraine produce more of its own energy and to improve energy efficiency; and strengthen its democratic institutions and the role of civil society to hold the new government accountable to its commitments. Funding also will support nuclear security and nonproliferation controls as well as the Global Health Initiative and the Global Climate Change Initiative.

The State Department and USAID prioritize larger programs for independent evaluation. In 2014, USAID evaluated key economic competiveness and civil society programs in Ukraine, which were among the largest in place prior to the start of the year. USAID is using findings from these evaluations to support the Ukrainian government's decentralization plans, among other benefits. Programs launched and significantly expanded in recent months will be considered for evaluation in the future.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Matt Salmon
Secretary of State John F. Kerry (1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question1:

China continues to invest in and develop military capabilities, such as short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) deployed opposite Taiwan, that clearly signal its preparation for potential military conflict with the island. U.S. administration and military officials alike have attested that planning for a Taiwan scenario is a primary driver in China's military modernization efforts. Taiwan has, over the past several years, repeatedly requested U.S. assistance in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act to provide arms sales packages to aid in its self-defense against China, including new F-16C/Ds and diesel-electric submarines. While Congress has the ability to approve a military arms package to Taiwan, it must work with the Administration as well. With ageing defense systems and outdated hardware, there is no way we can say that Taiwan has the adequate means for self-defense against China. Before President Obama completes his term in 2016, can Congress expect that the United States will be able to fulfill its obligations to aid Taiwan's self-defense?

Answer:

The Obama Administration remains committed to providing Taiwan with arms of a defensive character. The United States also remains committed to the U.S. one-China policy, based on the Three Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act.

Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, we continue to make available defense articles and services to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Since 2009, we have notified Congress of over $12 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, including an upgrade of Taiwan's existing F-16 A/B aircraft that improves their capabilities.

Given the growing imbalance between China and Taiwan's defense budgets, we also encourage the Taiwan authorities to invest in innovative and asymmetric defensive capabilities to deter and defend against aggression or coercion. We have also suggested that Taiwan increase its defense budget to maintain a strong deterrent. We recognize Taiwan's need for limited, defense submarines, and we are actively reviewing its request for U.S. assistance.

Question 2:

Obviously, there are a range of global challenges – and opportunities- that confront you daily as you lead the State Department. An example of this is our relationship with India. India is a vital ally in Asia and one with whom we have an important and rapidly growing relationship. Indeed, our investment in India, and India's investment in the US, has been significantly expanding. I believe this good and growing relationship is only natural between the world's two largest democracies. But the fact is that, like any strong relationship, this one requires work on both sides – and right now, we need to work on establishing an even playing field for all of our workers and businesses. As you know, India has made a number of decisions related to incremental innovation, patentability, and compulsory licensing over the last year that threaten to spread to other markets and slow down overall R&D investment. How will your department work with India to ensure the best possible relationship between our two countries?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to working with India – a vital partner – to ensure the best and most beneficial relationship possible between our two countries. The United States and India are indispensable partners in promoting peace, prosperity, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The expansion of the annual U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue into a new, high-level Strategic and Commercial Dialogue will strengthen our commercial and economic ties and focus our bureaucracies on achieving the bold trade, clean energy, and strategic commitments made by our two leaders during the President's January visit to India. The new commercial component of the dialogue will focus on growing our economies, creating good-paying jobs, strengthening our middle classes, and establishing a level playing field for all of our workers and businesses.

We have seen a significant increase in our engagement with the Government of India over the past year on trade and investment issues, including on those issues that most significantly affect U.S. companies operating in India, such as

tariffs and customs procedures, localization, compulsory licenses, taxes, and financial regulations. We have also increased our engagement on intellectual property rights (IPR) related issues, especially those that could slow down overall R&D investment. We are actively engaging India on how to create an ecosystem that supports innovation through strong IPR protection and enforcement.

Through new, regularized engagement across trade and investment issues with India, including through the Cabinet-level Trade Policy Forum and Strategic and Commercial Dialogue, and other bilateral dialogues, we will continue to encourage the Indian Government to adopt policy reforms to address the matters that have the most significant effect on U.S. companies operating in India.

Question 3:

We are seeing increasing challenges to U.S. competitiveness overseas as a result of a variety of unfair practices, including through the weakening of intellectual property protections and patents in places like India, Canada and beyond. Such practices are inconsistent with international obligations and best practices. What will you do to combat these growing threats to innovation and providing important life-saving products around the world?

Answer:

The Obama Administration is committed to protecting intellectual property (IP). Millions of American jobs rely on IP, which is vital to promoting and encouraging innovation and creativity. We will continue to work closely with Congress and all of our stakeholders on a wide range of trade issues related to the protection and enforcement of copyrights, trademarks, patents, trade secrets, and other forms of intellectual property.

Our Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, particularly the Office of Intellectual Property Enforcement (IPE), works closely with the State Department's overseas missions to encourage and help governments to strengthen the legal and regulatory ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation. We work to improve market access for U.S. exports and investment and to build public awareness of the value of IPR. Our three key lines of effort are to:

- Reduce digital piracy by reducing access to infringing products, increasing access to genuine products, strengthening laws and regulations, and changing public attitudes towards impact of downloading infringing materials.
- Combat counterfeit products, especially those that threaten public health and safety; pharmaceuticals, auto parts, cosmetics, electrical.
- Support IP as a tool to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship, job creation and economic growth.

We also work closely with the U.S. Trade Representative and other agencies in implementing the annual "Special 301" process and the Notorious Market Report, which highlight countries and markets that do not effectively protect U.S. intellectual property.

We will continue to use our trade agenda to defend the IP rights of our creators and innovators, while supporting the freedom of the internet and encouraging the free flow of information across the digital world. Through our trade agreements, including TPP and T-TIP, we will continue to open markets for IP-intensive goods and services, and defend the jobs that rely on innovation.

Additionally, we remain committed to fighting against the theft of U.S. intellectual property. IP theft not only puts U.S. jobs at risk, but counterfeit products oftentimes pose a threat to the health and safety of consumers in the United States and across the world. We will continue to use a variety of tools, including our ongoing trade negotiations, our collaboration with trade partners in APEC and ASEAN, and the "Special 301" and Notorious Market reports to implement the Administration's Strategy on Mitigating Theft of U.S. Trade Secrets. Notably, in the critical area of public health, the Administration continues to seek and embrace diverse stakeholder input that will help shape the development of proposals to promote access to high-quality innovative and generic medical products.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Grace Meng (#1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question #1:
I'd like to get a sense of our strategy in relation to Ukraine. It seems that the West was caught very off guard by Russia here. And now, it seems that the Russians are willing to withstand the effects of international sanctions, to the extent we can even really impose biting sanctions on them. I'm not confident that our position is strong in relation to Ukraine, and I don't feel that we're deterring Russia from further expansionary policies. What is the status of Minsk II, and at what point would we supply lethal arms to Ukraine? The Russians and rebels have taken advantage of the fact that we have not done so.

Answer:
We welcomed the February 12 Minsk implementation plan as a chance to finally bring a comprehensive ceasefire and a full withdrawal of foreign fighters and heavy weapons from eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian forces are doing all they can to implement the ceasefire. Unfortunately, Russia and its separatist proxies continue to violate the agreements they signed. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) continues to record daily violations of the February 15 ceasefire, separatists refuse to allow the OSCE SMM full and unfettered access to separatist-controlled territories to verify heavy weapons withdrawals, and Russia continues to transfer tanks, armored vehicles, heavy artillery, rocket systems, and other military equipment to the separatists in eastern Ukraine.

We continue to monitor the situation closely and remain in constant contact with our Ukrainian counterparts to explore opportunities for defense cooperation. The interagency is conducting an ongoing review of our elements of security assistance to Ukraine to ensure they are responsive, appropriate, and calibrated to achieve our objectives. The United States has provided significant non-lethal defensive security assistance to Ukraine to help address the crisis, committing over $118 million in 2014. Our focus remains on finding a diplomatic solution.

Question #2:
I'd like to get your impression on Russian influence in Europe. Russians own media properties in Britain, and Russia has close ties with political parties in Britain and France, namely the UK Independence Party, as well as the National Front in France. We know of close German relationships as well. Some of the ties – such as the energy relationships – are clear. Others are more in the shadows. Can you shed some light on Russian influence in the European media and finance sectors, and give us a sense of who in the western European political landscape is close with the Kremlin?

Answer:
In Western Europe and globally, the most quantifiable evidence of Russia's media reach is in well-funded, well-networked Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik News, outlets which have a budget of over $400 million and reach 600 million people in English, Arabic, and Spanish (with plans for outreach in German and French). RT is carried by 22 satellites and over 230 operators and reaches more than 100 countries around the world. Sputnik News (a web and radio portal) plans to broadcast 800 hours of programming per day in 30 languages in 130 countries, among them many in Europe. In addition, Russia uses disinformation tactics, such as trolls and fake experts, to influence traditional media coverage.

Some aspects of Russian messaging appeals across the European political landscape – from the far-left, who sympathize with anti-Americanism, to the far-right, who often agree with Putin's anti-immigrant views.

With respect to the financial sector, although many Russians, including the wealthiest of them, use and benefit from European financial systems, it is not clear that their participation in those systems reflects any specific influence of the Russian government.

We would be happy to address these issues in greater detail in a closed briefing with your staff, which could be arranged through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Question 3:
Could you offer some insight into the trends of anti-Semitism in Europe and the rise of radical Islam there? Do you think there is a future for Jews in Europe, and is there a role for the U.S. to play?

Answer:

Anti-Semitism remains a challenge in Europe, as elsewhere. In some western European countries, Jewish community leaders have told us that they feel threatened by a variety of forms of anti-Semitism, but that their primary concern at the present time is the violence targeting Jewish institutions and places of worship perpetrated by a minority of actors. In central and eastern Europe, some Jewish communities have expressed concerns about their governments' failure to condemn statements and incidents of anti-Semitism and punish perpetrators with stricter law enforcement measures. Other forms of anti-Semitism include those stemming from extreme right-wing nationalists. Specifically, we are extremely disturbed by the rise of nationalist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic political parties, such as Jobbik in Hungary, and the continued presence of Golden Dawn in Greece.

Jewish communities throughout Europe have reported that they feel threatened, to differing degrees, by the rise of radical Islam.

If the current negative trends continue, it is possible that we may soon witness a sharp reduction in some of the smaller Jewish communities in Europe, such as the community in Turkey, which, it is important to note, is also under pressure from changing demographics, such as lower birth rates.

The U.S. Government is working bilaterally and multi-laterally with our allies across Europe to combat anti-Semitism. The U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, Ira Forman, routinely travels to Europe to meet with government officials, faith leaders, and members of civil society to urge them to speak out against anti-Semitism and to take steps to collectively promote mutual respect. Combatting anti-Semitism is also a priority for the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, our Ambassador to the OSCE, and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. On January 22, the United States was proud to join with the European Union, Canada, Israel, and other countries in convening the first-ever UN General Assembly meeting on anti-Semitism, at which more than 50 countries expressed the nearly uniform view that the current rise in anti-Semitism is unacceptable and called on European leaders to do more.

The U.S. Government is also funding programs that encourage civil society organizations across Europe to combat anti-Semitism and to promote interreligious peace.

Question4:

There is an interesting piece in this week's New Yorker about Khalifa Haftar in Libya. Libya is totally lawless and Islamic extremists control large portions of the country, and it appears that a civil war is emerging between Haftar and the Islamists. We're not supporting Haftar because we're holding out hope for a political solution. But a political solution really seems unlikely at this point. So why are we not supporting the secular forces in Libya that are fighting the radical Islamist elements?

Answer:

The ongoing security threat and counterterrorism concerns in Libya underscore the need for all parties in Libya to participate in the UN-led political dialogue convened by Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Bernardino Leon to form a National Unity Government. Libya's security challenges can only be sustainably addressed by regular armed forces under the control of a central authority which is accountable to a democratic and inclusive government.

The United States has consistently been very firm in our message to all parties on the ground as well as to regional partners that the best way to counter the terrorists who are operating in Libya is to help Libyans build the national consensus that they need to fight these groups, instead of each other. The continued polarization perpetrated by both sides of the conflict will only provide more opportunities for extremist groups to threaten the peace and security of Libya. Neither of Libya's currently fragmented governments has been able to provide a platform sufficient to bring security and stability to the country. We assess that a national unity government would be in a much better position to do this, as well as a government that remains under civilian, rather than military, control.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State John F. Kerry by
Representative Jeff Duncan (1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question1:

In March 2014, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) published its third review of the CSO since 2007. It found that the "mission of the Bureau remains unclear." This week, the OIG released its follow-up report to the March 2014 report. This report stated again that the CSO has no mission. Mr. Secretary, what is the mission of the CSO? What is the difference between the CSO and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) at USAID? How are these two offices not duplicative?

Answer:

The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) advances the Department of State's understanding of how to anticipate, prevent, and respond to violent conflict through high-quality analysis and planning, ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning, and targeted in-country efforts that inform U.S. policymaking. This mission statement was approved by the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J) and submitted to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) as part of our response to their recommendations.

As one of seven bureaus and offices reporting to the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, CSO works within a broader umbrella of civilian security diplomacy and programming. The Bureau works to improve the Department's understanding of conflict, developing and employing a full range of tools to effectively anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict-related risks; sets Department-wide priorities for conflict policy and programs; and launches focused operations to address these priorities on the ground.

To avoid duplication with comparable roles played by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) for USAID-specific programs and development policy, CSO works closely with USAID to share analysis, undertake joint State-USAID assessments and plans, and ensure effective division of labor in focused efforts to support embassies in conflict zones.

In addition, in support of the State Department's lead foreign policy role, CSO works hand-in-hand with regional bureaus and embassies to develop and drive planning processes that help prepare for contingencies, identify priorities, and make strategic choices to counter destabilizing political violence. CSO monitors the impact of conflict-focused efforts, particularly around State's diplomatic, security, and political roles, in order to inform decision-making, capture lessons, and contribute to the U.S. government's understanding of these conflict environments. Similarly, CSO undertakes evaluations to build the Department's body of knowledge of what works and what doesn't in developing political and security solutions to potential conflict.

Finally, the bureau works to improve approaches within State for combating the most extreme forms of violence, including mass atrocities against civilians and violence caused by extremism. In support of the President's Atrocities Prevention Board (APB), the bureau works with the interagency, regional bureaus, and embassies on earlier identification of countries vulnerable to mass violence, better diagnoses of causes, and better alignment of policies and programs to address the risk of atrocities. This work brings needed resources, expertise, and policy attention to policymakers and embassies in countries at risk of instability. With respect to violent extremism, CSO is conducting research and analysis on the factors associated with violent extremism, including what makes communities more vulnerable to its appeal and how local resiliencies against violent extremism can be strengthened. Our aim is to help the Department identify areas that are vulnerable to the spread of violent extremism and then design and deploy context-specific diplomatic and programmatic tools to try to prevent the spread of violent extremism into new areas. We are also taking a lead role in advancing the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit work-stream promoting research into local drivers of violent extremism and effective responses, to build an evidence base for future U.S. government CVE programming and to encourage more effective CVE approaches by international partners.

Question 2a:
Central America. The President's budget proposes a $1 Billion whole-of-government approach to Central America to address the root causes of migration of unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to the U.S.

As Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee I remain deeply skeptical of the political will and financial buy-in of these countries political leaders.

a. Before we commit to spending large amounts of U.S. taxpayer dollars in an attempt to keep these kids in their home countries, please provide a top-to-bottom assessment of USAID programs in Central American countries of what programs are working and what programs have been eliminated for failing to achieve results.

Answer:

USAID views monitoring and evaluation as integral to the design of our programs, and we continuously evaluate the impact of our assistance. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation plans improve the effectiveness of our programs, enabling us to learn from what works and adjust what is less effective. USAID's evaluation policy (http://www.usaid.gov/evaluation) guides our efforts, and we allocate funds for monitoring and evaluation each year when we get enacted levels. USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx) contains both reports and evaluations of USAID programs. Here are a few examples of what USAID has learned and how we have adjusted programming accordingly.

USAID, through Vanderbilt University, completed a three-year impact evaluation of USAID Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) community-based crime and violence prevention programs in four countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama). This evaluation reflected baseline, mid-point, and final data in 120 high-crime, urban treatment and control communities. Final results demonstrated with statistically significant evidence that crime victimization is lower and public perception of security higher in USAID CARSI treatment communities.

Under CARSI, the Department and USAID have established proven, successful programming models we can replicate in additional communities in Central America. However, achieving national-level impact for CARSI will require an expansion of programming and an elevated level of related resources.

When national-level political will for major structural reforms has lagged, USAID has redoubled its efforts to invest in transparency, accountability, and service delivery at the municipal level. Surveys show higher levels of confidence in local government, and in transparency and accountability, where USAID has had municipal development programming. By many measures, local governments are stronger and more robust today than they were a generation ago. There is significant opportunity for a generational change in leadership in the region, resulting from these more transparent and accountable local systems.

There is much work to be done to reform the judicial sector in the region. Levels of impunity are unacceptably high, and in recent years political will for reform has been lacking in some countries. However, this misses a critical part of the story: all three countries in the Northern Triangle have transitioned from the inquisitorial system of justice to an oral-adversarial system that presumes innocence and holds proceedings in public, instead of in chambers. Judges now preside over courtrooms, and do not manage investigations. While imperfect, the scope and scale of the transformation is remarkable, and there has been no indication of backsliding. Our studies of the reform in the region indicate the system now adjudicates cases more quickly and transparently than before the reform. Significant challenges with judicial independence, corruption, and caseload remain, but we have a much better institutional framework to start from than we did a generation ago.

USAID ended support for judicial reform with the Honduran Supreme Court and Ministry of Justice in 2008 due to a lack of progress. Weakened political will for independence of the justice sector resulted in less impact from our programs than we had hoped for. In a tough budget environment, we ended assistance. We will not re-engage with these institutions without strong reform signals.

Given the inherent political and technical challenges in Guatemala, USAID paused its work rehabilitating and reinserting former gang members into society. While these programs did claim successes, we have since learned that discretion and a low-profile are key elements in engaging with this group, which is critical in order to have the levels of reduction in crime and violence that we all seek. As we reengage in this area, we are relying on lessons learned from past experiences to inform the design and implementation of these efforts.

Question 2b:
Additionally, what new programs and innovative approaches are you proposing in your budget request that is different from last year?

Answer:
The Administration's FY 2016 request continues to expand security investments, to include new assistance for prosperity and governance. In prior years, U.S. assistance for these areas in particular was inadequate to sustain and complement our security programs. We must invest in these areas to advance an economically integrated Central America with effective and accountable institutions which can maintain better security investments.

Under the governance objective, for example, we will be addressing chronically low tax revenue collection. In Honduras, USAID will work with the Department of Treasury to improve enforcement and provide technical assistance to the tax ministry so it can more effectively collect taxes. In Guatemala, USAID will be working at the municipal level to help local governments generate and manage use of fees. In El Salvador, USAID will deepen work to improve tax collection while also helping improve the management of public expenditure systems.

Under the prosperity objective, USAID will assist medium, small, and micro enterprises to become more productive and competitive by helping them integrate into existing supply chains and expand production. In El Salvador, in partnership with the private sector, USAID will strengthen municipal competitiveness committees and provide assistance to the export and investment promotion agency and to the Ministry of Economy to facilitate a business enabling environment and export readiness services.

Communities receiving INCLE community policing program assistance show reduced homicide rates, including a forty-percent reduction in Santa Ana, El Salvador. To gather specific results data for CARSI INCLE programming, the Department is funding an evaluation of INCLE programming addressing El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Going forward, USAID intends to calibrate assistance in response to real reform efforts to send a clear message at the outset that resources will follow reform, not vice versa, and that we will reward strong performers. The joint approach represented by the Alliance for Prosperity and the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America introduces a new kind of leverage that the United States can employ to promote healthy competition for reform across these countries.

Question 3:
Haiti. Five years after the earthquake, I continue to be deeply concerned with the lack of political progress in Haiti. I am also concerned that USAID is still lagging in disbursing nearly half of the $1.7 Billion in Supplemental and Annual Funding already appropriated for Haiti reconstruction. With so much taxpayer funding still sitting in the pipeline, requesting an additional $242 Million at this time seems wasteful. We are particularly disappointed with the ongoing lack of progress in creating a new port in the north at Cap Haitien, where USAID has still yet to even hire a port engineer.

a) Will State and USAID cancel programs that aren't working in Haiti, or reprogram funds that have been sitting in the pipeline unused for years?
b) Due to a long-standing lack of progress in holding elections, how can you justify spending any further taxpayer dollars on governance or rule of law programs?

Answer:
a) Given the importance of Haiti's economic and social development, the United States remains strongly committed to supporting the people of Haiti for the long-term. As is well known, Haiti has long struggled with serious development challenges, which were only exacerbated by the devastating January 2010 earthquake. While the country has achieved significant progress in several key sectors such as agriculture and health over the past five years, overall reconstruction and development have been slower than desired. In response to delays in some areas and in order to improve cost efficiency and sustainability, the 2011 "Post-Earthquake U.S. government Haiti Strategy: Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity" was updated in 2015. The updated strategy is now extended to FY 2018, and continues to guide the United States' overall approach to development assistance to Haiti. The U.S. government is aligning our programs with the Government of Haiti's priorities and supporting

specific activities where the Haitian government demonstrates political will and leadership necessary to address needed reforms. We will continue to monitor progress, and will cancel programs that are not working, as we did with our efforts to help reform the state utility. In that case, when it became evident that lack of political will would cause our program to lose effect, we ended the program and did not proceed with follow-on projects. With Congressional approval we have reprogrammed funds from our pipeline to support higher priorities. Examples include shifting some funds away from support for the national energy utility and moving them into programs to improve the capacity of the Ministry of Health.

b) Despite a difficult political environment, Haiti has achieved some notable progress in governance and rule of law in recent years, including the establishment in 2013 of the first independent judiciary council, passage of landmark anti-corruption and anti-trafficking in persons legislation in 2014, and an expanding and more professional Haitian National Police force. Other improvements have not moved forward as quickly, however. This is particularly true in addressing high levels of pre-trial detention and advancing necessary reforms to the criminal code and criminal procedure code. Progress in these and other areas has been less clear, often due to a lack of political will in Haiti to advance necessary reforms. As a result, the U.S. government is reassessing its approaches and the probability of reaching targeted results for the remainder of the strategy period ending in FY 2018.

We will redirect or withdraw support in line with the level of Government of Haiti commitment to achieving project objectives. In cases of a lack of Government of Haiti support for institutional strengthening activities, the U.S. government will refocus its assistance, pending sufficient Government of Haiti commitment. Conversely, where the Government of Haiti increases its commitment to meaningful reform – as it has with the recent steps to move forward with civil service reform – the U.S. government will explore redirecting funds to support this initiatives.

Since Haiti's long-term development requires political stability and adherence to the rule of law, success in these two areas is important to the success of U.S. government investments in all sectors, and remains crucial to the achievement of the goals of the broader post-earthquake strategy. Key to the success of these reforms is holding fair and inclusive elections, which are essential for Haiti's democratic progress. We are encouraged by the Government of Haiti's announcement that the long-overdue parliamentary, local and presidential elections will be held in 2015. Given the critical importance of upcoming elections, the U.S. government will maintain or increase support for election-related activities, as long as USAID, in consultation with the State Department, determines that the Government of Haiti and electoral authorities maintain an adequate commitment to timely, free, fair and credible elections this year.

Question 4a:
As Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I plan to keep a very close eye and conduct oversight on U.S. foreign assistance funding issues in Mexico, Colombia and Cuba, especially in light of the ongoing lack of citizen security in Mexico, the uncertain future of the ongoing peace talks with the FARC in Colombia, and the President's Executive Actions on Cuba announced in December of 2014.

Through the Merida Initiative in Mexico and solidifying the gains made in Colombia thanks to Plan Colombia, these are some of the largest recipients of U.S. taxpayer dollars in the Hemisphere. What percentage of Mexico's and Colombia's own revenues go into their citizen security programs compared to U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer:
U.S. partnerships with Mexico and Colombia are based on a shared commitment to address common challenges. Both the Mexican and Colombian governments invest substantial national resources in their own security and development, and these investments are many times more than U.S. contributions. In addition, while Mexico, Colombia, and the United States have separate national budgeting and accounting processes, both the Mexican and Colombian governments have increased national budget investments for areas jointly supported by U.S. assistance.

The Merida Initiative complements Mexico's overall investment to prevent and fight crime and effect institutional change in the security sector. The Peña Nieto Administration has established a comprehensive security policy as a central element of Mexico's National Development Plan. The strategy focuses on strengthening the institutional framework to

build and consolidate security and justice capabilities at the federal, state, and municipal levels. Mexico also supports crime and violence prevention through civic engagement, social assistance, education, and economic opportunity creation to effectively repair the social fabric and recover public spaces in Mexico's communities.

Over the past 15 years, Colombia has experienced significant economic growth and developed an ability to export regional security. Colombia has seen a 52 percent drop in coca cultivation since 2007, along with substantial gains in security, including an 89 percent reduction in kidnappings, and a 48 percent reduction in homicides since 2002. Because of Colombia's ability to pay for its own security and development, the United States has been able to reduce its assistance. However, as Colombia seeks peace and a durable end to a half century of conflict with the region's largest and oldest insurgent group, U.S. assistance will need to remain flexible. The U.S. government continues to partner with Colombia to advance security, stability, law enforcement, counternarcotics, the justice sector, human rights, economic development, and social inclusion.

Question 4b:
With the second round of "normalization" talks with Cuba occurring in Washington, DC on February 27, 2015, what specific conditions are you making on the Cuban Government to establish diplomatic relations and attain normalized relations?

Answer:
We are focused on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations and the re-opening of embassies, the first steps in the longer-term process of normalization. Re-establishing diplomatic relations and re-opening the embassy will enable the United States to more effectively press the Cuban government on other issues, including human rights, claims, and the return of fugitives from U.S. justice. During our discussions with the Cuban government on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, we are addressing certain operational issues, such as those relating to travel restrictions on U.S. diplomats, controls on access by visitors to the U.S. facility, and limitations on diplomatic staffing, to ensure our embassy, once re-opened, will be able to function like other embassies.

This new approach is not about what the Cuban government will do for us, but rather what the U.S. government can do to better support the Cuban and American people. Through a policy of engagement, we can more effectively stand up for our values and help the Cuban people help themselves.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative Brendan F. Boyle
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question:

Can the Secretary assure us that this $2.5 million appropriation for the IFI will be delivered?

Answer:

The Department has set aside a total of $750,000 in FY 2015 Economic Support Fund (ESF) for the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) in the initial FY 2015 levels transmitted to the Committees on Appropriations. While this level of U.S. funding is lower than in previous years, it reflects the substantial reductions to ESF country levels in most of the Europe and Eurasia region in FY 2015 and is the maximum amount that can be justified in light of our current global and regional priorities. As such, resources available for worthy causes such as the IFI are increasingly limited.

At the same time, the United States remains committed to helping Northern Ireland build a strong society, vibrant economy, and enduring peace – through a wide range of programs, as well as the continuing engagement of the Secretary's Personal Representative Gary Hart. The United States will continue to look for additional opportunities to support the peace process in Northern Ireland, including through grants awarded through the U.S. Consulate General in Belfast and initiatives launched by Special Representative for Global Partnerships Drew O'Brien. We are also optimistic that the IFI will be able to use our FY 2015 contribution to leverage additional international funding for its valuable work with youth through its Peace Impact Programme.

Question for the Record Submitted by
Representative Scott Perry
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question:
When then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wrote an article in Foreign Policy magazine in October 2011 titled "America's Pacific Century," she made no mention of Taiwan or cross-Strait issues. How does Taiwan currently factor in as a key component in the Obama Administration's ongoing "pivot" to Asia?

Answer:
Taiwan is key component of U.S. Asia-Pacific policies, including the Asia rebalance. The United States continues to expand and enhance its strong and multifaceted unofficial relationship with Taiwan. Taiwan is an important security and economic partner of the United States, an important part of global value chains, a vibrant democracy, and our tenth largest trading partner.

We continue deepening our engagement on Taiwan trade and investment issues through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) process, and welcome Taiwan's interest in future accession to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). We work cooperatively with Taiwan in APEC to promote regional economic integration initiatives, including enhanced trade and investment. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and the United States' one China policy, the United States makes available to Taiwan defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Collectively, these activities demonstrate our continued commitment to Taiwan's peace, security, and prosperity as part of the U.S. rebalance.

Questions for the Record Submitted by
Representative David Trott (1)
Secretary of State John F. Kerry
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 25, 2015

Question 1:

What diplomatic measures have been taken in order to ensure that such rights are protected? And what is the administration's view point of President Sisi's visit to the Coptic Cathedral during the Nativity Liturgy, and his subsequent visit to His Holiness *Pope Tawadros the second* to offer his condolences for the 21 executed in Libya?

Answer:

We view Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's visit to St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral during the Coptic Christmas Eve Mass, and his personal visit to Pope Tawadros II to offer his condolences on the occasion of the murder of Coptic Christians in Libya, as very positive and encouraging. Ambassador at-Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein stated on January 15 that he was encouraged that al-Sisi is first Egyptian president to attend Coptic Christmas mass.

We welcome the Egyptian constitution's stipulation of equality before the law irrespective of religion, provision for the establishment of an anti-discrimination commission to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and the requirement that parliament pass a new law facilitating the construction and renovation of Christian churches. We urge the government to implement those obligations, hold perpetrators of sectarian violence accountable, and redress the discriminatory use of Article 98(f) of the Penal Code to prosecute citizens accused of denigrating religions.

In September, President Obama met with a delegation of Christian religious leaders from the Middle East, including Coptic Orthodox Bishop Angaelos. The President emphasized the United States recognizes the importance of the historic role of Christian communities and of protecting Christians and other religious minorities in the region. During his speech at the National Prayer Breakfast in February, the President emphasized no society can truly succeed unless it guarantees the rights of all its peoples, including religious minorities, and mentioned Egypt's Coptic Christians as an example.

The Administration is firmly committed to protecting religious minorities and advancing religious freedom around the globe, including through bilateral and multilateral engagement, visa bans, programming, and actions provided in the International Religious Freedom Act, such as Country of Particular Concern (CPC) designations. We urge government officials in countries with violations of international religious freedom to improve their records and uphold their international commitments as outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.*

Question 2:

Two weeks ago the State Department hosted a group of Muslim Brotherhood aligned leaders. Just days after this meeting, the Muslim Brotherhood released a statement that called for, amongst other things "a long, un-comprising Jihad." Why does the administration continually seek to meet with these types of violent organizations?

Answer:

On January 26, Department officials participated in meetings with a group of Egyptian opposition politicians that included former Freedom and Justice Party parliamentarians, democracy advocates and a former judge. While in Washington, the group also met with think tanks with an interest in Egyptian domestic politics. The meetings were organized by the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID), a Washington based non-governmental organization.

As a matter of policy, Department officials regularly meet with political groups and leaders from across the world and political spectrum, including some whose positions we may oppose. Such meetings allow us to build a more complete picture of national and regional political dynamics. In the case of Egypt, we regularly meet with an array of

government officials, military officers, representatives from human rights groups, academics, politicians from across the spectrum, and the leadership of religious minorities.

We appreciate your interest in this matter and share your concerns about foreign organizations that promote violent extremism. Let me assure you that we do not meet with entities that have been designated as terrorists.

Question 3:

While seeking his first term, President Barack Obama stated, "America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides," yet he has failed to do so for every year since. This year, however, marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The President of Armenia has extended an invitation to President Obama to attend the 100th anniversary commemoration ceremony in Yerevan. Will the President be attending? If not, why not and who from the Administration will be attending in his place?

Answer:

The President and other senior Administration officials have repeatedly acknowledged as historical fact that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. As we have said in previous years, a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests, including Turkey's, Armenia's, and America's. We recognize the importance of historical remembrance, and for that reason, a Presidential Delegation led by Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew traveled to Yerevan on April 23, to mark the terrible events that began in 1915, and stood in solidarity with the Armenian people.

The President also issued a statement on April 23 that marked the historical significance of this centennial and—as in past years—mourned the senseless loss of 1.5 million Armenian lives in the atrocities known as the "Meds Yeghern."

Question 4:

In light of the priority that the President has attached to moving Turkey toward an honest reckoning with its past, will any representatives from our government be supporting any commemorations of the Armenian Genocide that will be taking place in Turkey? If not, please explain your reasons for not doing so.

Answer:

We intend to have a senior representative from Mission Turkey attend the commemoration in Istanbul this year, as has been our tradition. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens live in Turkey. We will also continue the tradition of officially participating in the memorial event in Yerevan.

Question 5:

How do you expect Turkey to support this Administration's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts," of the Armenian Genocide, if it is not even willing to do so itself starting with acknowledging that the massacres were orchestrated by the Ottoman government?

Answer:

Though much more needs to be done, there are signs the Turkish government and Turkish society are starting to address the Ottoman-era deportations and massacres of Armenian citizens starting in 1915. Important steps include:

- The Turkish government no longer prosecutes individuals for historical discussion of the events of 1915.
- In December 2013, then-Foreign Minister Davutoglu traveled to Yerevan and met with Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandian. During that trip, Davutoglu publicly referred to the Ottoman Empire's deportations of Armenians as "inhumane."
- In April 2014, then-Prime Minister Erdogan issued a statement in Armenian, Turkish, and other languages offering condolences to the descendants of Armenians killed in World War I.

- In January 2015, Prime Minister Davutoglu issued a statement on the anniversary of prominent Turkish-Armenian Hrant Dink's assassination. The statement lauded Dink for shedding light on one of the major issues the Ottoman Empire passed down to Turkey, reiterated the "inhumane" policies against Armenian citizens of the Empire, and called for a future of friendship and peace with the people of Armenia.

The Department of State will continue to encourage concrete steps by Turkey that support the President's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts" regarding the events of 1915.

Question 6:

In the wake of the violence in the last 48 hours in Khabour, Syria, where an ISIL advance claimed the lives of multiple Christians of Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac descent, who also saw their citizens kidnapped and churches burned, what is the State Department doing to ensure the safety and security of these vulnerable communities in Iraq and Syria? We seem to be standing idle as the birthplace of Christianity quickly becomes its cemetery. I ask you, Mr. Secretary, what is the State Department doing to protect these ancient communities?

Answer:

The State Department is intensely focused on the safety and rights of members of Iraq's and Syria's vulnerable populations, including religious and ethnic minorities. Protecting these communities in the face of the existential threat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) poses is a part of our regular diplomatic engagement, as well as one of the priorities of our counter-ISIL strategy and of the 62-nation international counter-ISIL Coalition.

The United States and our Coalition partners have come to the aid of members of communities targeted by ISIL. We have conducted a campaign of coordinated airstrikes, military assistance, diplomatic engagement, and intelligence and messaging coordination to defeat, degrade, and delegitimize ISIL. The Coalition has dealt ISIL strategic blows, halting its advances and limiting further atrocities against religious and ethnic minorities.

Regarding ISIL's attack on the Khabour River in Syria, we are closely monitoring developments. On March 9, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Tom Malinowski and Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein met with Bishops Mar Away Royel and Mar Paulus Benjamin of the *Assyrian Church of the East* to discuss ISIL's February 23 offensive. We are closely monitoring the ongoing fighting between ISIL and the Assyrian and Kurdish forces for control of villages on the northeast bank of the Khabur River. We relay information being shared with us from all sources about this fighting to all appropriate entities within the U.S. government so that it can be analyzed and evaluated for appropriate action. In recent days, the Coalition conducted multiple airstrikes in Hasakeh province in order to degrade ISIL capabilities there. We are also concerned about the several hundred residents of these villages that were taken captive, and we remain focused on helping those still in ISIL control. We also understand that 4,000 to 5,000 people fled the fighting and are currently displaced, and we are working with our aid implementing partners to address their humanitarian needs.

More generally, at the State Department, we have dedicated staff that focus on the rights of ethno-religious minorities in Iraq and Syria, and meet regularly with leaders of these vulnerable minority groups throughout the Middle East region and in the United States to discuss their well-being and needs. Our contacts include leaders and activists of Christian, Yezidi, Sabean, and other communities, civil society and clergy members, minority diaspora, and advocacy groups.

During my September 10, 2014 trip to Baghdad, I urged the new Abadi government to govern inclusively and to protect and respect the rights of members of ethnic and religious minorities. Assistant Secretary Malinowski and Ambassador Saperstein traveled to Iraq in February 2015, where they met with representatives of Iraq's diverse religious and ethnic minority communities, as well as with government officials and civil society representatives, to discuss various human rights and religious freedom concerns with a significant focus on the safety and rights of ethno-religious minorities. They spoke about the need to incorporate members of these groups into State security structures, so they can play a role providing security for their own communities. We reiterate these communities' concerns in our engagements at every level with the Iraqi government.

In Syria we are supporting interim governance structures, as well as local and provincial councils, civil society organizations, and local security actors, setting a course toward a peaceful, democratic, inclusive future and helping establish the conditions for a political solution to this conflict. We also support programs to empower religious and ethnic minorities and promote tolerance and reconciliation to counter rising sectarian tensions, among others; for instance, we have hosted multiple Syrian interfaith conferences and activities both in the United States and in the region that featured prominent Syrian clergy of all backgrounds with large followings. In addition, the Administration's train and equip

program will train appropriately vetted Syrian opposition forces to defend themselves and other Syrians from attacks, prevent ISIL advances, secure opposition-held areas of Syria, promote the conditions for a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Syria, and empower trainees to go on the offensive against ISIL.

In Iraq and Syria, we will continue to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL, and we will work to support the development of stable, inclusive societies that respect diversity and guarantees human rights to all individuals, including religious and ethnic minorities.

Question 7:

The President in his September 10th, 2014 address on ISIL spoke of the Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac Christian people and stated "we cannot allow these communities to be driven from their ancient homelands." What can the State Department do in light of this legislation to ensure these communities have the opportunity to survive and thrive as the President so eloquently suggested we should work to allow?

Answer:

The security of religious and ethnic minorities is a priority in our strategy to degrade and defeat ISIL. The United States and our 62-member international counter-ISIL coalition partners have come to the aid of minority communities and others by providing humanitarian assistance, conducting a campaign of coordinated airstrikes, military assistance, diplomatic engagement, and intelligence and messaging coordination.

In February, Assistant Secretary Malinowski and Ambassador for International Religious Freedom Saperstein traveled to Iraq where they met with representatives of Iraq's diverse religious and ethnic minority communities, as well as senior government officials and members of civil society. They listened to their human rights concerns, including those regarding religious freedom and the marginalization of religious minorities, assured them of the US government's focus on the safety and rights of members of ethno-religious minorities, and emphasized the need to incorporate minority group members into existing security structures to help provide safety for their own communities.

The U.S. is supporting the Iraqi government's efforts to establish an inclusive governance system and incorporate minorities through the proposed National Guard. We are supporting Iraqi government and civil society efforts to reconstitute areas liberated from ISIL control with communities who were previously forced to flee. We see the proposed Iraqi National Guard as providing a mechanism for local communities to take responsibility for their own protection, while receiving resources and training.

In Syria, we encourage interim governance structures, local and provincial councils, armed actors, and civil society to work toward a peaceful, democratic, inclusive future and help establish the conditions for a political solution to this conflict. We support programs to empower religious and ethnic minorities, promote tolerance and reconciliation, counter rising sectarian tensions, solve local problems, negotiate localized cease fires and hostage releases, and advocate more effectively to a variety of groups. For example, we hosted multiple Syrian interfaith conferences in the United States and in the region that featured prominent Syrian clergy of various backgrounds.

In both Iraq and Syria, we will continue to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL. We will work to support the development of stable, inclusive societies that respect diversity and guarantee human rights to all individuals, including religious and ethnic minorities.

Question 8:

On December 3, 2014, when referring to air strikes by a 'coalition' against IS, you were quoted as stating, "Our commitment will be measured most likely in years but our efforts are already having a significant impact..." Taking such into regard, what is the measure of success against IS? If such is undefined, what milestones is the administration aiming to achieve?

Answer:

Our Counter-ISIL strategy aims to degrade ISIL in Iraq and Syria over the course of a multi-year timeframe, leading to its eventual defeat.

Degrading ISIL involves suppressing its ability to conduct large-scale operations. In the immediate to medium term, conducting military operations to halt and reverse ISIL/Daesh's territorial expansion; reducing its capability to resource, plan and execute offensive and/or terrorist attacks; diminishing its capacity to generate funding; and restoring legitimate governance and security in Iraq will all have the effect of degrading ISIL's capacity.

In the longer-term, the defeat of ISIL/Daesh will come when it no longer has a safe-haven from which to operate, when it no longer poses an existential threat to Iraq and other states in the region, when its draw of foreign fighters is significantly reduced, when it cannot inspire or conduct terrorist attacks outside of the region, and when the Coalition effectively counters its reach in spreading its message and ideology of hate globally, thus preventing it from regenerating over time.

In Iraq, Coalition efforts are focused on helping Iraqi Security Forces reclaim territory held by ISIL, suppressing ISIL's ability to conduct large-scale operations, degrading its command, control and logistics capabilities, and building the political foundations for long-term security.

Prime Minister Abadi's progress in implementing the National Program and taking steps to move forward political reform legislation are key milestones in the Iraq counter-ISIL campaign. Through words and actions, PM Abadi is working to reform the sectarian policies of his predecessor in an attempt to address the grievances which facilitated the rise of ISIL. In addition to promoting legislative reform, the PM also enacted an executive order on the promotion of detainee rights and is working to implement a "zero tolerance" approach to human rights abuses.

On the battlefield, with successes at Zumar, Kirkuk, Sinjar Mountain, Mosul Dam, and Bayji Refinery, Iraqi forces have proven that ISIL is defeatable. The mobilization of Sunni tribes in collaboration with the GOI against ISIL represents another important milestone in the campaign that we continue to develop. With our air support, the Iraqi Army and Sunni tribal volunteers – over 8,000 mobilized to date – are leading successful operations and proving to ISIL that its conquests will not be unchecked and that Iraqis can and will unite in the face of its terror.

In Syria, airstrikes against ISIL targets have degraded its economic infrastructure and have defended local forces contesting ISIL advances, such as in Kobani. Our counter-ISIL strategy in both countries will inhibit the group's capability to operate globally and expand.

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