

**THE NEED FOR AN AUTHORIZED STATE
DEPARTMENT**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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THE NEED FOR AN AUTHORIZED STATE DEPARTMENT

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Brian Mast (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman MAST. Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order. I ask everybody to rise and join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

All. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, everybody, for your attendance. The purpose of this hearing today is to identify structural challenges and functional deficiencies that impede the Department of State's ability to fulfill its mission and to work to find solutions to those issues.

I will now recognize myself for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BRIAN MAST

As I said, I called this hearing really to establish a simple fact. The State Department has many broken parts. It has been in many ways a broken part of our government for many years. It has been too big. It has had no clear mission or definition for public diplomacy.

It has very little command and control over the dollars that it sends across the globe. It has spent your tax dollars in ways that would have been better if the State Department just lit the money on fire in many cases.

Right now, more than 80 percent of the State Department is not authorized by Congress. That includes Bureau of International Security and Non-Proliferation, with a budget of \$57 million and 247 employees; the Bureau of International Organizations, with a budget of 90 million and 370 employees; the Bureau of Administration, with a budget of 394 million and a staff of 700.

Now, despite 80 percent of it not being authorized, the State Department's bureaus, offices, and programs, they continue to grow each and every year. Last year, the State Department employed more than 80,000 people across the globe.

Between the year 2000 and the year 2024, the State Department's budget grew from roughly 9.5 billion to more than 55 billion over the course of that time. Where did that money go? Does our foreign policy feel like it is five times more effective as we spent five times more dollars?

Instead, we have had a State Department with plenty of duplicative programs, but again, not a clear mission and a clear outline on how to go out there and effect the missions positively on behalf of the American people and all of our interests.

The largest operation of the State Department in any of our lifetimes was the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was an abysmal failure. The State Department failed to plan everything, from how many people would be requesting visas to how many people would be needed to process those visas, and a thousand other things.

The State Department is too big and it is also unaccountable because we have not conducted a comprehensive standalone reauthorization since 2002. It is also prioritizing the wrong things, in my opinion.

That is why we saw American dollars going out the door to foreign companies, foreign countries, foreign NGO's, and foreign adversaries like the Taliban, with less oversight than it takes the average American citizen to get a driver's license at the DMV.

Don't take my word for it, listen to what the State Department has funded with your tax dollars. And many of you heard me give me lists of hundreds and hundreds of items. I will list just a couple.

Fourteen million dollars in cash vouchers for migrants at our southern border; \$24,000 for a national spelling bee in Bosnia; one and a half million dollars to mobilize elderly lesbian, transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people to be involved in the Costa Rica political process; \$20,000 for a drag show in Ecuador; \$32,000 for an LGBTQ comic book in Peru.

I would challenge anybody in here to refute that American tax dollars were not spent in this way. I don't see anybody refuting that. I have hundreds of more examples of these, if not thousands.

We have proof that these things happened. We have the documents, we have the photos, we have the receipts. These things are too stupid for us to try and make up, really.

But this is not about scoring political points with each of those, otherwise I would give the full list. These programs were funded with American tax dollars because somewhere some person down the line at the State Department thought that programs like that were actually public diplomacy.

This spending was not lifesaving, it didn't make American citizens visiting those countries safer or American businesses operating there more prosperous or a better partner. It didn't bring any of the countries in which the money was spent closer to America. In fact, many of these countries actively opposed what the State Department was actually doing.

Yet State Department officials thought this was public diplomacy and exactly what America should be doing. Again, I personally disagree with that definition of public diplomacy. But we should have this debate, and we should figure out what American tax dollars should and should not be used for abroad.

And that is what the debate about a State Department reauthorization is all about. That is what this hearing and a reauthorization process will accomplish. We need to restore command and control over the State Department so that you don't have USAID betraying its core mission by funding an \$850,000 transgender job fair in Bangladesh. Or \$15 million in condoms to the Taliban. That did nothing to bolster America's national security.

Even worse, the lack of accountability allows USAID to create a bloated industry where D.C. contractors profited off sky-high overhead costs, while people most in need received very little compared to what those contractors received. Even USAID admitted that just 12 percent of its grants went directly to local organizations.

This lack of accountability at USAID is exactly why the agency needed to be brought back under the control of the State Department. And this is an idea that was embraced by President Bill Clinton and President Joe Biden, and it is moved that we should make permanent in our reauthorization bill.

The State Department has been broken. That has been true. But it is also our responsibility as the Foreign Affairs Committee to fix those issues permanently. Until now, the State Department has never shrunk. It has never downsized its budget or eliminated an office or an envoy.

President Trump, Secretary Rubio, and DOGE are already making changes, and they are looking at us to be a partner in that process. And we look forward to seeing Secretary Rubio to speak to us about that later in the month, next month.

The only way that we do this as authorizers in the U.S. House of Representatives is by conducting that first full, comprehensive State Department reauthorization, again since 2002.

I thank you all for your participation in this hearing. I thank our witnesses for their testimonies when they give them. I thank the ranking member and all of your members for their attendance today.

The ranking member, Ranking Member Meeks, a Representative from New York, is now recognized for your opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GREGORY MEEKS

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Mast, Chairman Mast.

I want to say thank you to all of our witnesses for joining us here today.

As members of this committee, it our duty to reauthorize the State Department regularly, just as Congress does with respect to the Department of Defense.

As chairman of the 117th Congress, I made it a priority to pass the first State Department reauthorization in 18 years, doing so in a bipartisan way, with then-ranking member McCaul. And that is because both Democrats and Republics believed that it was in the best interest of the American people and the U.S. national security for Congress to ensure our diplomatic and development professionals have all the tools that they need to succeed.

Let me just say, I praise all of those professionals that work for the State Department, that work for USAID. They are individuals

who are focused and dedicated their lives to the United States of America. They are of the top and most respected individuals.

As we salute our military, we need to salute those that work for the State Department and USAID for their mission and the sacrifices that they make every day to their families and others for the benefit of those in-the citizens of the United States of America.

I believe that both Democrats and Republicans believe it was in the best interest of the American people and national security for Congress to ensure our diplomatic and development professionals have all of the tools that they need to succeed.

So while I appreciate that this hearing was called and agree with the need for Congress to regularly authorize the State Department, Mr. Chairman, I am afraid this committee's actions in this Congress have run counter to that goal.

After all, how can we engage in a serious bipartisan conversation about strengthening the State Department and other agencies when Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Secretary Rubio have eviscerated the very department and instruments of national security we are supposed to support, while not being called even once for a hearing before this committee?

While I appreciate the witnesses that we have here, and I know that we have proposed Secretary Rubio coming in on the 21st, we have not had any hearing with anyone from the agencies. And we appreciate the words that the chairman comes up with about all of his statistics, but the ones that should be before us should be people from the administration. And we have not had one.

So you can't remodel a home after you burn it to the ground. And Congress's legislative role should not be to simply rubber stamp the arsonists at work.

This is a profound moment, I believe, a moment of shame for the Republican Party, as its members sit silently while Secretary Rubio allows Elon Musk and his army of teenagers, who have no foreign policy or even government experience or expertise, to dismantle the very agencies that they have supported in the past. United States Agency for International Development, the U.S. Agency for Global Media, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, just to name a few, have all been met with a hatchet job for no reason.

Meanwhile, Secretary Rubio and many of my Republican colleagues who in the past understood their value, if you talked to them in the past they did, fail to speak up, or worse, contort themselves to justify the administration's actions.

There is no greater demonstration of this incredible cowardice, in my opinion, than that of Secretary Rubio, who knows this is wrong. Listen to his words when he was in the Senate, and listen to it now. You would not think it is the same individual. He knows it is wrong, but would rather sit atop a kingdom of ash than defend the work he once praised.

I had hoped that Secretary Rubio would at least try to protect the Department of USAID and their workforces, who have dedicated their lives to serving the American people. Instead, he stood by while Musk and Marocco and DOGE illegally gutted USAID, a statutory agency, and condemned millions of people around the world to disease, starvation, and death by slashing foreign assistance, forfeiting U.S. global leadership in the process.

So I see I am out of time, almost out of time, but I would just end this with this paragraph. The wanton destruction didn't end with USAID or Pete Marocco's exit. Most recently, Secretary Rubio gave this committee just 25 minutes before noticing-before announcing a sweeping dismantling of our soft power tools in the name of State reauthorization.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Ranking Member Meeks. Other members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

We are pleased to have a distinguished panel of witnesses before us today on this important topic: Hon. James F. Jeffrey, Retired Career Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Department of State; Hon. David Hale, former Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the U.S. Department of State; and Hon. Uzra Zeya, President and CEO of Human Rights First.

This committee recognizes the importance of the issues before us, and we are grateful to have you all speak with us today. Your full statements will be made a part of the record, and I will ask each of you to keep your spoken remarks to 5 minutes in order to allow time for members' questions.

I now recognize Ambassador Jeffrey for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF JAMES JEFFREY

Mr. JEFFREY. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I appreciate deeply the opportunity to address this committee on such an important issue. To save State, we must prioritize national security objectives, consolidate State operations, and empower regional bureaus.

I have submitted a statement for the record, which I will summarize now.

Chairman MAST. Sir, could you maybe pull that microphone a little bit closer for everybody?

Mr. JEFFREY. How is that, sir?

Chairman MAST. Much better, thank you.

Mr. JEFFREY. OK. But first, let me express my admiration for my former State Department colleagues, who, as Representative Meeks noted, serve our country with the same dedication I saw with my soldiers 50 years ago.

Unfortunately, their success is hampered by structural problems in the State Department, which has drifted, over multiple administrations, from its core mission: the relentless, rigorous pursuit of national interests.

For example, Congress asked State to develop strategic plans to be consistent with overall administration policy. Here is the framework chart for State's latest plan from 2022.

By then, the Biden and earlier Trump administrations had made clear that great power competition was our most important objective. Yet the State Department plan has "lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors, prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts" as only one of 19 objectives under five goals, listed as the fourth of five under the goal of global challenges.

Obviously, Secretary Blinken and other Secretaries devote almost all of their time to national security. But formal plans have consequences, and this mishmash of objectives dulls State's focus.

Another example: the 2024 report by the Commission on the National Defense Strategy noted that, "Compared to DOD and the intelligence community, the State Department lacks a similar level of planning, joint operations, and shared undertaking of national security."

To rectify this, State must more closely align its strategic plan to the current national security strategy, be established as a national security agency, and develop formal planning, institutions, doctrine, and training.

The next problem is dispersion of diplomatic activities to other agencies. I applaud the return of the USAID to its roots in the Department of State before the 1960's. I would add the Foreign Commercial Service and the military equipment programs under the NDAA Section 1209 that DOD now has. In contrast, I would transfer the visa section-the visa mission to the Department of Homeland Security.

State's geographic bureaus are the main operational arms of the Secretary. These bureaus, however, need major modifications to still function. Secretaries Christopher through Blinken, when confronted with a crisis, be it North Korea, Bosnia, Venezuela, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and more, assigned responsibility not to the geographic bureau and its Senate-confirmed assistant secretary, but to a senior non-confirmed special envoy reporting directly to the Secretary.

I have been such an envoy three times, and I can attest this is a bad situation. But it keeps being repeated because it is the least bad approach, given the restraints with the regional bureaus.

First they must balance management of large organizations with their diplomacy mission, and that mission is spread between and blurred traditional state-to-State diplomacy and expectations for transformational nation-building.

One example is a human rights report required by Congress. This is for Bulgaria. It is 53 pages long. I did the first one in 1980, it was about five pages.

Second, the bureaus have eight layers between the desk officer for a given country and the Secretary. When I was on the National Security Council, we had only two layers between such desk officers and the top.

Third, bureaus' country responsibilities should be aligned with DOD's combatant commands.

Fourth, even after the State reorganization just announced, the geographic bureaus are overwhelmed by ten global special activities bureaus and five offices overseen by three under secretaries and a new assistant. That element of the State Department needs further downsizing and structural changes to curtail interference with geographic bureaus' diplomatic missions in their communications to department leaders.

Personnel is policy, and much of the blur and baggage within State flows from confusion about the roles of foreign service officers as manager, or global officer, or diplomat.

Finally, whatever one administration changes by executive order, the next can reverse. And thus congressional action for reform is imperative.

Thank you, sir.

[The Prepared Statement of Mr. Jeffrey follows:]

To WRITTEN STATEMENT

Ambassador James F. Jeffrey

Retired Career Foreign Service Officer

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Need for an Authorized State Department, April 30 2025

I appreciate deeply the opportunity to address this committee on such an important issue. To save State, we must prioritize core national security activities, consolidate State operations, and empower regional bureaus to lead.

But, first, let me express my admiration for my former State Department colleagues, who serve our country with the same dedication I saw with my soldiers fifty years ago, especially those personnel, often with their families, pursuing our national interests in difficult and dangerous locations.

Unfortunately, success in that pursuit is hampered by structural problems in their parent organization, the State Department, which has drifted, over decades and multiple administrations, from its core mission: the relentless, rigorous advancement of national interests abroad through diplomatic activity and coordination of all elements of national power.

For example, Congress has formally tasked State and other agencies in the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 to develop Strategic Plans, to be consistent with overall administration policy. Attached is the framework chart of State's latest plan, from 2022. At that point both the Biden and earlier Trump

administrations had made clear in their national security strategy documents that great power competition was our most important foreign policy objective. Yet in the State Plan, as seen in its framework chart, resolving conflict and promoting international security is only one of nineteen State objectives in five goal clusters, and listed only as the fourth of five under the global challenges goal. Obviously then Secretary Blinken like other secretaries devoted almost all of his time to that national security objective. But formal plans and policies have consequences, and this mishmash of objectives dulls State's focus on its core job.

Another example. The 2024 Report by the Commission on the National Defense Strategy, mandated by Congress and chaired by former Congresswoman Jane Harman and former senior State official Ambassador Eric Edelman, noted (page 17) that, compared to DoD and the intelligence community, "The U.S. government lacks a similar level of planning, joint operations, and shared undertaking of national security in other parts including the Department of State."

To rectify all this, recommend Congress encourage State to more closely align its strategic plan to the current national security strategy, to establish State formally as a national security agency, and to encourage the Department to develop formal planning institutions, doctrine, training and culture to mesh with other national security agencies. While absent from the Department as a whole, such an emergency operations and institutional planning culture is found in embassies and the State operations center, which thus could serve as models.

The next problem is the dispersion of diplomatic activities to other agencies, a long-term trend that must be reversed. That should begin with the planned incorporation of USAID into the Department. The Foreign Commercial Service should also be integrated into State, as well as the foreign military equipment programs created post-9/11 under the NDAA Section 1209 and currently administered by the Defense Department. Those activities, assistance, commercial support, and military equipment provision, involve high level diplomatic exchanges and thus core State Department responsibilities.

In contrast, the Department should transfer the visa function to the Department of Homeland Security, as that function implements DHS responsibilities, does not usually involve state-to-state diplomacy, and demands considerable resources.

State's geographic Bureaus are the main operational arms of the Secretary. These Bureaus however need major modifications if they are to serve that purpose.

Every Secretary from Christopher through Blinken, apart from Powell, when confronted with a burning foreign policy crisis, be it Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Islamic State, Venezuela, North Korea, or Iran, at some point assigned responsibility not to the appropriate geographic Bureau and its Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary, but to a senior, non-confirmed special envoy, reporting directly to the Secretary and exempt from most internal bureaucratic process.

I have been such an envoy three times, and I can attest that this is a bad solution, but it keeps being repeated as it is the least bad approach to get important jobs done, given the restraints currently inherent to the regional bureaus.

First, those bureaus and their leaders are pulled in too many directions, forced to balance management of their large organizations with their core diplomacy mission, with that mission itself often blurred between traditional state-to-state relations, and expectations for transformational nation building.

One example is the annual human rights report required by Congress. The one for Bulgaria, one of the less important countries in Europe, a stable democracy and EU member state, runs 53 pages. The European Assistant Secretary has to prepare annually over thirty of them, and every word is endlessly argued within the Department.

Second, the Bureaus are far too layered. There are eight layers between the Desk Officer for a given country, the starting point for most diplomatic engagement, and the Secretary. When I was in the National Security Council, there were only two layers between such desk officers and the National Security Advisor.

Third, the Bureaus need, in terms of the countries they are responsible for, to be aligned with DoD's combatant commands. That State-Defense operational relationship at the institutional and personal levels is crucial, but is undermined when Assistant Secretaries and Commanders have multiple counterparts. That would also require abolishing the South/Central Asia Bureau.

Finally, the handful of geographic bureaus are overwhelmed by, even after the new State organization announced April 22, ten global or special activities bureaus and five special offices overseen by three under secretaries and an new assistance czar, who outrank the geographic bureau assistant secretaries, and whose seemingly

unlimited priorities and interests often must be negotiated before the assistant secretaries take any diplomatic action. That whole huge amorphous element of the Department needs to be even further downsized; but more importantly, structural and administrative changes are required to ensure that its ability to challenge geographic bureau diplomatic engagement and its communications to Department leaders is curtailed.

I recognize that this hearing is focused on structural rather than specific personnel issues related to State. But personnel is often policy. Diplomacy isn't easy, it's often a contact sport. Thus the current muddling of the mission of foreign service officers, between diplomat, transformational aid deliverer, and manager, undercuts focus on the core diplomatic mission, and creates bloat, layering, and more costs by often measuring performance through people, programs and money administered.

Finally, any State Department reform by executive order can be easily reversed by the next president. Thus, whatever the value of my or other ideas today, or initiatives taken by the administration, they will be largely for naught if they are not endorsed by congress in legislation or other channels. To serve the nation, our foreign operations for obvious reasons must reflect not some, but all Americans' long term interests, predictable to both friends and foes. To that end I have attached suggestions based on this presentation for Congress's consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Congress revise the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act to more explicitly require agencies to fit their strategic plans with the current administration's National Security Strategy or other policy guidance
2. HFAC establish formal outside bipartisan reviews of the State Strategic Plans perhaps using the new Commission on Reform and Modernization of State
3. Congress formally update the national security agencies list to include State
4. HFAC encourage State to establish a "J-5" equivalent planning unit reporting to the Secretary, with formalized planning responsibilities patterned on embassy emergency action plans, and institutionalized coordination with DoD and other national security agencies.
5. Congress place USAID and the Foreign Commercial Service in the Department of State
6. Congress terminate DoD temporary NDAA 1209 authorities for military equipment, with those authorities to return to State
7. Congress move the visa function including overseas visa operations to the Department of Homeland Security
8. HFAC require additional detailed justification for Department special envoys for specific countries
9. HFAC review reporting and operational requirements placed on the Department such as the annual human rights report to allow streamlining of responses, less frequent implementation, and less detailed requirements
10. Congress encourage DoD and State to align the geographic spans of State's geographic bureaus and Defense's combatant commands
11. HFAC encourage State to review the organization of global and specialized Under Secretaries, bureaus and offices to cut positions and whole units, and simplify procedures to promote access to Department leaders
12. HFAC consider revisions to the Foreign Service Act to curb incentives to bureaucratic growth and managerial layering, and ensure a primary focus on diplomacy in recruitment, career development, and evaluation.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Ambassador Jeffrey.
I now recognize Ambassador Hale for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF DAVID HALE

Mr. HALE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Ranking Member Meeks and the rest of the committee, for the opportunity to be with you.

I have retired after four decades as a Foreign Service Officer at the State Department, and so I really do welcome the opportunity to share my experiences and do what we can to improve the situation, I think, Mr. Chairman, you have aptly described.

I strongly support the idea of restoring the proper order of relationships between Congress and the State Department and the administration in terms of the authorization process in the bill. But I also strongly support the idea of revising and reforming the organizational structural issues at the State Department.

I would underscore, though, that these kinds of reforms can only be as good as the leaders and staff who are assigned to undertake them at the State Department.

So I would urge you after you are done with the business before the committee of the authorization bill to not get distracted and to be persistent in making sure the State follows up, and that they have the leadership, and the resources, and the mindset, and the training that are needed in order to whatever the authorization bill and the reorganization of the department demands of them.

And that includes taking a very deep look at the way in which we hire, train, promote, and separate our staff, and making sure that the services, the Civil Service and the Foreign Service, have the skills to meet the emerging and future needs that are identified in those reorganizational charts.

And I look at the latest, I don't know if it is an accurate one, but the reorganization chart that was leaked recently or released recently from the State Department, and it has got offices there that I warmly welcome in terms of emerging problems, science and technology, economics. But I would ask you to turn to the Foreign Service Institute and make sure that we are actually training people that can do those jobs. Because in my experience we are falling short in that area.

I would also look forward of course to discussing, based on my own experience, how we can do a better job in all the topics that you raise. And all that in my mind goes, it means really going back to basics: what is the Foreign Service all about and what is the State Department meant to do.

And by having a stronger connection between Congress and the State Department, we can make sure that we are following the direction of the American people, which is what service is all about.

So I look forward to your questions and the opportunity to discuss these topics further.

[The Prepared Statement of Mr. Hale follows:]

WRITTEN STATEMENT
Ambassador David Hale
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Need for an Authorized State Department
April 30, 2025

Dear Chairman Mast and Ranking Member Meeks,

Thank you for your April 23, 2025 invitation to testify before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on "The Need for an Authorized State Department" on April 30.

Having served for nearly four decades in the Foreign Service, reaching the senior-most rank of Career Ambassador, I look forward to the opportunity to offer my thoughts on what worked best at the State Department and what at times contributed to the organization missing the mark.

In particular, as a private citizen now, I look forward to expressing my support for the concept of a State Department authorization bill. It is long overdue. It can only help the State Department be more responsive to the American people.

I also welcome the opportunity to discuss your ideas on making the State Department relevant and nimble in addressing the ever-evolving national security challenges facing our country, and doing the most to make sure the personnel of the State Department have the direction, resources, mindset, and training needed to advance American interests globally.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Ambassador Hale.
I now recognize Ms. Zeya for her opening statement.

STATEMENT OF UZRA ZEYA

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Meeks for the invitation to testify today. And I, too, am a retired former Foreign Service Officer, as well as the current President and CEO of Human Rights First. congressional oversight and guidance are vital to the work of the State Department as it navigates complex and overlapping crises around the world. State authorization can and should rebuild bipartisan consensus around the imperative for cost-effective diplomacy and foreign assistance that sustains U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership and enhances American security, prosperity, and well-being.

In that bipartisan spirit, I would like to underscore three key points. First, investing in U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership makes Americans safer and more secure from autocratic overreach and transnational threats.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine upended global food and energy security and threatened neighbors, including treaty allies. But Putin was thwarted, thanks to the courage of the Ukrainian people and trans-Atlantic solidarity, including vital U.S. humanitarian, democracy, and accountability support.

Similarly, when the U.S. pushes back on transnational repression and gross violations of human rights like extrajudicial killings, torture, religious persecution, and arbitrary detention, it fosters safety for Americans at home and abroad.

When U.S.-supported peace process include women and civil society, it increases the chances that resulting accords break cycles of conflict, keeping our troops out of harm's way. When the U.S. enforces human rights standards in our foreign security assistance, it creates more reliable partners and upholds U.S. law.

Second, U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership makes our Nation more prosperous. That is why State long partnered with the Department of Labor and others to target forced labor, purge it from U.S. supply chains, and raise labor standards abroad.

Recent slashing of programs supporting these activities hurts American workers and companies. Corruption is also a major barrier for U.S. companies investing and doing business overseas. This makes all the more concerning the current administration's suspended enforcement of core anti-U.S. corruption law.

U.S. humanitarian leadership saves lives and advances U.S. security and prosperity by reducing onward migration to the United States and upholding legal pathways that enrich U.S. society. State Department advocacy for shared responsibility on migration in our hemisphere helped nearly two million Venezuelan refugees find protection in Colombia. It expanded asylum access in countries like Costa Rica and Mexico.

U.S.-based refugee resettlement, now frozen and decimated at home, helps ensure other nations continue to host the vast majority of the world's refugees, but has also delivered billions of dollars in net gains to the U.S. economy.

Third and finally, proposals to slash State personnel, bureaus, and offices and integrate virtually all functions into regional bu-

reaus will hobble U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership. With due respect to my former colleagues, over my three decades at State, I often saw regional bureaus shy away from difficult conversations or actions on human rights, even with U.S. adversaries.

That is why Congress created an Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and the DRL bureau, now being stripped of its policy role, programs, and much of its personnel after decades of bipartisan support holding the world's worst regimes to account, rallying democratic partners, and providing life-saving support to thousands of human rights defenders worldwide.

Meanwhile, elimination of the Conflict Stabilization Bureau and offices of global criminal justice and global women's issues will shutter negotiation support that helped push cease-fire agreements over the finish line and accountability efforts for the world's worst human rights violators and curtail U.S. leadership combating gender-based violence locally.

These cuts also erase department leads on bipartisan legislation to modernize U.S. foreign policy, such as the Global Fragility Act and the Women, Peace, and Security Act. Vague consolidation plans combined with an unexplained 15 percent cut in domestic State personnel and dissolution of USAID also bode poorly for effectiveness.

Consolidation of the Office of Trafficking in Persons into the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration ignores J-TIPS's statutory mandate and leadership implementing the Uyghur Force Labor Prevention Act. Absorption of complex USAID disaster and other operations into an attenuated PRM Bureau is a recipe for failure.

Oversight should ensure consolidation is not a cover for collapsing U.S. humanitarian and development leadership as we know it.

I would urge you to raise the concerns I have shared today with the current administration before its plan become a fait accompli. And I also encourage you to seek the views of subject matter experts and international civil society leaders. They will remember if the United States was on their side.

[The Prepared Statement of Ms. Zeya follows:]

**Uzra Zeya, President and CEO, Human Rights First
House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 30, 2025 Hearing
The Need for an Authorized State Department**

Thank you, Chairman Mast and Ranking Member Meeks, for the invitation to testify today.

I appear before this Committee having served proudly for nearly three decades as a career foreign service officer under five Presidents, Republican and Democratic. I was honored to return to public service and secure bipartisan Senate confirmation as Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights during the Biden Administration. In this role, advancing U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership worldwide and countering global threats to our security and prosperity, I prioritized consultation with both sides of the aisle, including as a member of the Congressional Executive Commission for China and former U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues.

As of last week, I have the honor of leading Human Rights First (HRF), a non-partisan human rights organization that has engaged and held to account every U.S. administration in pursuit of a foreign policy that upholds human rights for all. Such a foreign policy makes Americans safer by keeping authoritarians in check and securing more reliable, rights-respecting U.S. partners. It benefits American workers, consumers, and business, by producing a more level playing field, purging forced labor from our supply chains, and fighting corruption that lines the pockets of autocrats and narcotraffickers alike. It also protects those who stand up to oppressive regimes, report the truth at grave personal risk, help make their countries safe and inclusive for all people, and seek refuge when persecuted for how they worship, whom they love, or who they are. For its part, HRF has advanced human rights for all by supporting rights defenders on the front lines of conflict, representation for individuals fleeing persecution, and policy outcomes that bolstered refugee and anti-torture protections, accountability, and anti-corruption, from the Refugee Act of 1980 to the Global Magnitsky Act of 2016.

Today's hearing could not be more timely, as a global democratic recession approaches the two-decade mark, forced displacement worldwide is at a historic peak, and autocratic overreach and transnational repression by Russia, China, Iran, the DPRK and others surge unabated. Congressional oversight and guidance

are vital to the work of the State Department as it navigates complex and overlapping crises around the world. Indeed, Congress has often pushed reluctant administrations to take up these issues – enacting laws that oblige the executive to examine and report publicly on trafficking-in-persons, religious freedom and corruption. For these reasons, this moment of truth is not the time to politicize the Department’s mission or retreat into partisan corners. State Authorization can and should rebuild bipartisan consensus around the imperative for diplomacy and foreign assistance that sustains U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership and recognizes the direct through-line to American security, prosperity, and well-being.

Recent weeks and months have been disheartening on that count. We’ve seen the Trump Administration’s chaotic take-down of USAID and other Congressionally-mandated entities, alongside its flat refusal to spend bipartisan Congressional appropriations -- from life-saving disease prevention, disaster response, and food aid to emergency support for human rights defenders at risk of being killed. In announcing drastic cuts to State Department personnel last week, Secretary Rubio wrongly slandered public servants whose roles and mandates are to advocate for human rights and democracy as pursuing “radical causes” in “direct conflict with the goals” of government leaders.

Let’s remember what those goals are. Congress has rightly [made clear](#) that “a principal goal” of U.S. foreign policy “shall be to promote the increased observance of internationally recognized human rights by all countries.” But instead of carrying forward President Reagan’s historic call for an “infrastructure for democracy,” which every administration I served built upon in some form, we’re seeing some in today’s executive branch parrot [Kremlin](#) tropes against so-called “color revolutions” and vilify those helping hold U.S. adversaries to account. The latter includes vitriol directed at Voice of America and Radio Free Asia journalists getting uncensored news into China, U.S. Institute of Peace experts informing U.S. diplomacy to dislodge extremist and Wagner Group footholds across Africa, and brave affiliates of the National Endowment for Democracy helping front-line states like Nepal, Moldova, Armenia, and Mongolia turn the page on their autocratic pasts and anchor a democratic future.

It is not too late for Congress to reassert its historic and deep-rooted bipartisan consensus that U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership matters. Recent

[polling](#) shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans say the United States should maintain its levels of investment in foreign assistance, including strong majorities for humanitarian relief and democracy and human rights.

In that bipartisan spirit, I want to underscore three overarching considerations as this committee considers authorizing legislation for the State Department, how to make it more cost-effective, and the implications of current reform proposals:

First, investing in U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership makes Americans safer and more secure from autocratic overreach and transnational threats. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine upended global food and energy security and threatened neighbors, including treaty allies. But the Kremlin's aim to erase Ukraine's democracy, culture, and sovereignty was thwarted, thanks to the courage of the Ukrainian people and steadfast U.S., European, and international support. That U.S. support helped millions of refugees and IDPs, anti-corruption activists, the recovery of Ukrainian children abducted into Russia, and the prosecution of Russian war crimes – all of which helped keep Ukraine's democracy alive and prevent Russia from marching further west.

When the U.S. government pushes back on transnational repression and gross violations of human rights like extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary detention -- whether those acts are committed by adversaries like China and Iran, terrorists like Hamas or Al Shabaab, narcotraffickers in our hemisphere, or abusive partners like Rwanda and Saudi Arabia -- it pays dividends for the safety of Americans at home and abroad. When U.S.-supported peace processes include women and civil society, it increases the chances that resulting accords actually break the cycle of impunity and conflict, as we've seen in Liberia, Northern Ireland, and Colombia. When the United States enforces human rights standards when providing assistance to foreign security forces, it upholds U.S. law, creates more reliable partners for U.S. servicemembers, and reduces drivers of anti-Americanism abroad that can be exploited by our geopolitical rivals.

Second, U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership makes the United States more prosperous. With longstanding bipartisan support, State has partnered with the Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies to help end forced labor, prevent its byproducts from entering the U.S., and raise labor standards abroad, benefiting workers in those countries and leveling the

playing field for American businesses and workers. Recent slashing of programs supporting these activities will be detrimental to workers here and abroad and U.S. business, from Gulf Coast and New England fisheries to Texas cattle ranchers. Corruption is also a major barrier for many U.S. companies investing and doing business overseas, and one that a whole suite of U.S. policies and initiatives have worked to confront. This makes it all the more concerning that the current administration has suspended enforcement of core U.S. anti-corruption laws and that its only Global Magnitsky action thus far has been to lift sanctions on a foreign official designated for involvement in corruption.

U.S. humanitarian leadership similarly protects human lives and advances U.S. security and prosperity by promoting stability abroad, reducing onward migration to the United States, and upholding legal pathways that enrich U.S. society. State Department advocacy for shared responsibility on migration and program support helped enable nearly two million Venezuelan refugees to remain in Colombia with temporary protected status. Similarly, with U.S. support, UN bodies have helped develop asylum systems that enable far greater numbers to seek protection in countries like Costa Rica and Mexico than ever before. And when the United States does its part by resettling refugees here, it helps ensure that allies and other front-line states remain willing to host the vast majority of the world's refugees. In turn, as a 2024 [study](#) by the Health and Human Services Department found, refugees and asylees in the United States delivered nearly \$124 billion in net fiscal gains over 15 years at the federal, state, and local levels thanks to jobs filled, businesses launched, goods and services purchased, and taxes paid.

Third, and finally, following the dissolution of USAID, many of the recently announced steps to slash State Department personnel, bureaus, offices, and programs and integrate virtually all functions into the regional bureaus will result in an abdication of U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership. This ultimately undercuts Americans' safety, security, and prosperity. With due respect to my former colleagues at the State Department, there is nothing automatic about ensuring that the policymaking process takes human rights and humanitarian concerns into account in the ways that I've described. That's why Congress originally created an assistant secretary for human rights and humanitarian affairs and requires the State Department's annual country reports on human rights, religious freedom, and trafficking in persons. Choosing to prioritize human rights and humanitarian issues sometimes requires accepting some friction in a

diplomatic relationship or internal Department or interagency deliberations. But through crisis after crisis, I saw regional and functional bureaus roll up their sleeves to problem solve together and bring their expertise to the fore. This was reflected in joint action to hold accountable thousands of enablers of Putin's war on Ukraine, build pathways to safety for America's Afghan allies facing Taliban death threats, help Iranian activists communicate with the world in the face of a state-sponsored war on women and girls, and secure the release of prisoners of conscience from Egypt and Nicaragua to Nigeria and Russia.

Abolishing the position I recently held and excising "human rights and democracy" out of the State Department's top leadership responsibilities, as Secretary Rubio announced last week, sends a further marginalizing signal about the importance of these issues, both within the Department and to nations hostile to human rights. But the boxes on the organizational chart don't matter nearly as much as the policies and people behind them. For example, elimination of the Conflict and Stabilization Bureau and Offices of Global Criminal Justice and Global Women's Issues will shutter U.S. negotiation support that helped push ceasefire agreements over the finish line, U.S.-led accountability efforts for the world's worst rights violators, and U.S.-leadership combating gender-based violence globally. These cuts also erase Department leads for landmark, bipartisan legislation like the Women, Peace and Security Act, the Global Fragility Act, and the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act.

Vague and opaque consolidation plans, combined with an imminent and unexplained 15 percent across the board cut in domestic personnel, also bode poorly for State Department effectiveness and American security and prosperity. Consolidation of the Office of Trafficking in Persons into the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) combines two disparate missions and ignores J/TIP leadership implementing the bipartisan Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Consolidation of USAID humanitarian responsibilities into PRM, meanwhile, cannot be accomplished with an attenuated PRM domestic staff. Even with draconian cuts to USAID programs, PRM needs substantially more personnel and expertise to oversee what remains of USAID's disaster and famine response, from which the U.S. government's best experts were cruelly terminated. Oversight should ensure consolidation is not a cover for ending U.S. humanitarian response as we know it.

Everyone who has worked in and with the State Department knows that its processes can be cumbersome and need improvement to get better results. I took that approach in leveraging technology to streamline production of the J Family's flagship Congressional reports, saving 30,000 production hours annually while upholding the reports' quality and impact. This administration is reportedly taking a radically different approach to this year's human right reports, deleting mention of fundamental freedoms like freedom of speech and freedom of assembly; the right to participate in free and fair elections; prison conditions; discrimination and violence against women, children, ethnic and racial minorities, and LGBTQ+ persons; political corruption, or other topics not strictly required by law. These carefully researched reports are the most read State Department publications, widely viewed as the gold standard for human rights assessment globally, and the basis for embassy engagements across the full spectrum of societies, from labor activists and business owners to religious leaders and government officials. Hollowing them out gives rights violators a pass and dims U.S. human rights leadership.

As this committee works on authorizing legislation for the State Department, I would urge you to raise the concerns I've shared today with the current Administration before its plan becomes a fait accompli. I also encourage you to seek the views of activists and civic leaders from countries that have benefited from U.S. diplomacy and assistance, to include those for whom U.S. policies have fallen short. Today's human rights defenders and political prisoners may be tomorrow's world leaders, like Vaclav Havel and Nelson Mandela. They will remember if the United States was on their side.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I hope Committee Members can work together to support oversight and cost-effective American diplomacy that sustains and deepens U.S. human rights and humanitarian leadership, works to keep authoritarians in check, protects the vulnerable, and welcomes the presence of refugees who enrich our country – all to the betterment of American security and prosperity.

I look forward to your questions.

Chairman MAST. I thank each of you for your opening statements. I am now going to move to questioning. I am going to begin with Chairman Emeritus McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me commend you for this noble effort. There is a reason why it hasn't happened since 2002. As Ranking Member Meeks mentioned, we worked together on State authorizations but not a full-scale. Oftentimes the Senate is the problem, even if we can get it through the House.

But I do think it is important, because you know, when the diplomats fail, we get a war. That is what this committee is all about. This committee has the authority, the obligation to deal with issues of war and peace. And I have often thought why cannot this committee pass an authorization like the national defense authorization bill that the Armed Services Committee passes.

Instead, about 25 percent of the NDAA comes out of this committee. So we use that vehicle to pass our authorizations. But if we fail to authorize, then we do abdicate our Article 1 responsibilities. And we also don't have the proper capabilities to do the oversight that is necessary.

If we authorize something within State, whoever is in the executive, it makes it more difficult for the executive to act against the Article 1 branch of Congress, no matter whether that is a Democrat or a Republican administration. And it is the Congress acting under its constitutional responsibilities.

So again, I applaud you for this. I think this is going to be a healthy discussion. And I guess my question-and last, I have to say, just like the NDAA, it will be impossible for us to pass a State authorization, both House and Senate, if it is not bipartisan.

And that is true with most legislation. In my 20 years as-you can have messaging bills, but if you really want to get things done, especially on an authorization like this, I think the NDAA is a good model to examine where House and Senate bipartisan work together to get a good piece of legislation done.

But Mr. Chairman, we don't have to rely on the NDAA to do all of our authorizations of State. And that is what has happened since 2002, and it is a difficult process.

So I want to ask all three of you, in the limited time, what are the long-term risks to our U.S. global leadership if Congress continues to operate without a regular reauthorization of the State Department?

Mr. JEFFREY. I will start, Congressman. Without your input into a tightly organized Department of State, it will not reach its potential to coordinate, which is its core purpose: military power, economic power, values, and our partners and friends around the world into a coherent effort to advance the safety and the prosperity of the American people, which is the core goal.

The military puts great effort into this in a way that, having been in both institutions as a career officer, I don't see to the same degree in the State Department. Anything you folks here can do to help that would be much appreciated.

Mr. MCCAUL. Let me give a good example, Mr. Chairman. Under the first Trump administration, Mike Pompeo set up an office to deal with emergency contingencies in response to what he foresaw happening in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the Biden administra-

tion eliminated that office. So when Afghanistan fell in a disastrous way, that office was not there to respond. And you know why? Because it wasn't authorized by Congress. Any more thoughts?

Mr. HALE. No, I think that is an excellent example. In addition to what you have said and what Jim has said I would say that one of the problems also is that the State Department tends to go on autopilot when it hasn't gotten the direction that it needs. And that is a natural bureaucratic instinct, but it needs to be fought all the time. And I think the annual authorization process can help make sure that the State Department is actually changing as events change and as requirements change.

I think the more fundamental thing in my mind is that the longer the State Department goes without an authorization bill the more detached it is from the will of the American people. And so we need to make sure that Congress is playing its role to wake us up and hold us accountable—when I say us, it is on longer me, but I am in the organization I was part of for my entire adult life—and responsive and that we have an opportunity also to tell our story as to why we are—why we want to do things a certain way and have that debate with the authorizers, the appropriators.

Mr. McCaul. My time is expired, but excellent point about the will of the American people. Otherwise, it is acting in an autocratic way without the will of the American people. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you. I now recognize Ranking Member Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you. And I actually don't disagree with almost anything that Mr. McCaul has said. In fact, that is a big concern of mine because what we have seen before us is not reform. It is abandoning decades of bipartisan support for centering human rights and democracy and our foreign policy without consultation, without engagement, and without any regard for Congress' constitutional role as a coequal branch of government.

To this day Secretary Rubio refuses to follow the law and consult with Congress. And we have no reason to believe that will change. In the weeks ahead we fully expect him to endorse the next chapter of Project 2025 which will—closing hundreds of critical offices and potentially dozens of overseas posts, gutting the department's workforce, and slashing the budget, all of which will leave America weaker and more isolated. In fact, China and Russia will continue to celebrate as they have done so almost every day since January 20.

And you know what Mr. McCaul said, I have a long track record working with any administration that wants to strengthen our national security and works in good faith toward that end. But obviously this is not business as usual. Donald Trump has taken a wrecking ball to our foreign policy, treated our allies as adversaries and our adversaries as allies, threatening to invade some of those allies, and launched a trade war that is hurting our economy and our constituents.

So I would love more than anything to have a good-faith effort to reauthorize the State Department and I would welcome discussion to that end. But you know what, the State Department officials came to brief staff earlier this week only after their—but it was after their reorganization had been set into motion. And pro-

grams were cut and after the firing notices were—started going out. That is not consultation. That is to me insulting.

And while I want to thank the chairman and my majority colleagues for arranging that belated briefing, Secretary Rubio's messages could not even answer basic questions like what offices should be closed, or how they arrived at a 15-percent domestic staffing reduction. So I think that there should be more consultations.

Let me just ask you these questions. You can answer yes or no. Do you believe Congress must be meaningfully consulted on major State reorganization or changes to USAID including ending the vast majority of congressionally appropriated foreign assistance? Yes or no?

Mr. JEFFREY. Yes.

Mr. HALE. Yes, sir.

Ms. ZEYA. Yes.

Mr. MEEKS. And another yes or no. Do you believe that sweeping changes like this, especially on items mandated in law, should be done—should it be done by an executive order or should you have to come to Congress?

Mr. JEFFREY. There are legal issues here, Congressman, that I am not confident to get into, but again I will go with my first answer. When appropriate and when it is under law Congress must be consulted.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Hale?

Mr. HALE. Yes, if you want a sustainable decision I think it requires legislation and consultation with Congress.

Ms. ZEYA. I believe it absolutely requires consultation with Congress and a clear-cut connection between the ends and the means, which I am not seeing in this plan.

Mr. MEEKS. And also on top of all that, Secretary Rubio's cuts are already underway and the White House is reportedly readying a rescission of more than \$9 billion from the State and Foreign Operations budget. Would the practical impacts of these cuts on our ability to advance U.S. interests globally be significant, or would they be detrimental?

Mr. JEFFREY. I would have to see what the specifics are, Congressman.

Mr. HALE. I agree with Jim's answer. I would want to see the details. I do believe an organization the size of the State Department could definitely use some serious reform.

Ms. ZEYA. I come out differently on this based on what I have seen so far in press reporting, a 50-percent cut in State's operational budget combined with the 80-percent-plus cut in foreign assistance from USAID. I think this has devastating consequences with respect to our own security and prosperity and our ability to project leadership. I would just note that the PRC is already filling that gap—

Mr. MEEKS. That is my next question.

Ms. ZEYA [continuing]. and we are seeing China increase its diplomatic spending. I have seen by over 8 percent for 2025, over 6 percent last year. And so again, to what end are we retreating from the field when our greatest geopolitical challenger is doubling down?

Mr. MEEKS. OK. Now just to indulge the chairman, just to have an answer with the two of you about that, what was just mentioned about our ability to compete with China. Significant or detrimental?

Mr. JEFFREY. I will draw on a article in the Economist from March. And the Economist, as I think you all know, is a very internationalist, globalist, engagement-oriented platform. The death of foreign aid. It says that three-quarters of all foreign aid is in development, economic, political assistance. And it basically says there is very little evidence that this produces any results. And goes on to say the idea that aid buys soft power is unconvincing, too.

Now anything in print can be challenged, but I would have to say my own experience on the ground beyond humanitarian assistance, which is critical; beyond security assistance, equally critical—all of the things we are doing to try to change societies, whether to compete with the Chinese or push back on the Russians, I haven't seen a whole lot of success. And I have been responsible for some of the largest ones, Congressman.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you.

Mr. HALE. I will draw on one chapter of my experience in Pakistan as Ambassador there. I inherited the Kerry-Lugar-Berman aid pipeline, which frankly in hindsight I think was an experiment that proved to not have really succeeded in achieving foreign policy goals. There were some good things that were done with it, but for the most part the Pakistanis didn't want the assistance. They blocked a lot of it. And I don't think that if you had a objective measurement that it really changed the—either the growth of violent extremism in that part of the world or the cooperation of the Pakistani authorities to U.S. policy.

In contrast, the Chinese were spending 50 to \$60 billion in Belt and Road Initiative programs in Pakistan at the same time. They got a lot of credit for it. But over time it turned out as people discovered these were not grants like ours. They were loans. And the business plans were not—didn't make any sense. There was a lot of favoritism and corruption in it. And now they have a debt overhang that they can't deal with. So the Chinese approach also soured.

So I am not sure that I want to—while not ignoring the fact that resources matter, that the amount of money we are spending versus what the Chinese are spending in any given country may be a starting point for a conversation, I don't know that it necessarily reflects an outcome of the way to measure exactly the best way the United States can influence behavior. Because aid does not change policies. It can enable a partner who already is in agreement with us to do the things we want, but dangling aid isn't going to make somebody do things that they don't otherwise feel is in their national interest. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you. I appreciate those answers. I now recognize—

Ms. ZEYA. Is there time for—oh, sorry. OK.

Chairman MAST. I now recognize Representative Wilson for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And indeed thank you each of you for being here today.

And, Ambassador Jeffrey, we are grateful for your successful service as Special Representative for Syria with the first Trump administration where you led efforts to enforce the Caesar Act to hold terrorist sponsor and Bashar Assad, war criminal Putin, and Iran accountable.

Ambassador, you were ultimately successful of the—providing the assistance with Turkiye and Saudi Arabia. In December Bashar Assad abdicated and fled to Moscow. In December a badge of honor I received is I was condemned by the Assad regime as an enemy of the State, which I recognize I was. And now he is gone.

Last week I appreciate that Congressman Corey Mills and Mike—and Marlin Stutzman visited Damascus as Syria re-achieves independence. There is such opportunity for the people of Syria to restore freedom. The U.K. last week lifted sanctions.

With that in mind, what do you think American policies should be to assist the people of Syria?

Mr. JEFFREY. I gather that you are looking at me, Congressman.

Mr. WILSON. Yes.

Mr. JEFFREY. First of all, it was the Syrian people who overthrew Assad. What we had was effective policy done by several administrations with the full support of Congress working together with partners and allies that enabled the Syrian people to take that step. So I think it is a good example of what we are all trying to strive for today.

I think we need to, as this administration is doing and as the Biden administration in its last days did, reach out slowly and carefully to the new government and take steps as the new government responds to our and other partners' legitimate security concerns. I think it is on a good path, Congressman, but time will tell.

Mr. WILSON. Well again, it was your efforts that I think helped make this successful. So thank you so much.

And indeed, Secretary Ambassador Hale, allies purchasing American defense products are experiencing undue delays in delivery for products that they have already paid for. For example, Taiwan had bought so much capability to defend themselves, but for years it has been held up, and then going through the foreign military sales process. In some cases the delays have been so significant that allies and partners are forced to look elsewhere.

Thankfully, Congressman and Chairman Mike McCaul and now Chairman Brian Mast are champions for reform assisted by Ranking Member Greg Meeks. And, secretary, what changes do you believe should be made to streamline the process?

Mr. HALE. I wouldn't assert that I have any great authority or ideas on that. I support the idea of streamlining it. Certainly I share your concern about the delays that we have witnessed over time. I had to deal with this myself in Lebanon when I was Ambassador there. They were dealing with a tremendous ISIS threat and we wanted to rapidly provide assistance to the Lebanese authorities. And we were able to do that. It took a lot of hard work by an embassy, frankly, in our defense attache, myself, and the teams back here. So it can be done.

But if you have ways in which you think we are able to streamline this while making sure that of course the money is not diverted into areas that are inappropriate or corrupt, by all means

we should do that. Once we know we have a policy, it shouldn't be hard to figure out what we are going to do after that.

Mr. WILSON. Well, hey, I want to thank you. You indicated Ambassadorships in Islamabad and Beirut. My goodness, you really are selected for interesting places.

But on a positive note, there has been change in Lebanon, too. And so what can we do to work together, hopefully in the spirit of Syria, with Lebanon?

Mr. HALE. Well, I was also Ambassador in Jordan. So that was the garden spot for me. Yes, on Lebanon we have an opportunity that is rare in life. There is change underway. No one would have dreamt a year-and-a-half ago that we would be able to deal with what we are dealing with here. The worst thing we could do is abandon the Lebanese to themselves. They still need help. The central government is very weak. The moderates there, their families and people have been assassinated by Hezbollah over time. It is hard for them.

So we need to keep the pressure on Iran. That is our role. Our role is not to tinker with the Lebanese reforms and steps. We should encourage that and help nurture it. But what America can do is make sure that whatever else we are doing with Iran we continue to hold them accountable for the support of Hezbollah and make sure that they know that we demand the disarmament of Hezbollah.

Mr. WILSON. And indeed the Trump administration has maximum pressure on the head of the snake, the octopus. And Tehran should be on notice that in—for the people of Iran we are for them. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Wilson.

We now recognize Representative Jacobs.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to our witnesses for being here. I am actually really glad we are convening this hearing today. I will be honest, when I worked at the State Department I was incredibly frustrated with the long-time career diplomats who were very resistant to change. And I think that that mentality has contributed to the department's ineffectiveness over the years. I think reform is absolutely needed in the State Department. In fact, I passed bipartisan legislation to help address risk aversion and the bunker mentality at our embassies and other reforms: how we do security assistance, how we do foreign assistance. So that is why I am so disappointed that this reorganization effort has become a partisan exercise marred by chaos and without regard to the law.

Between the leaked proposal we have seen to slash the department's budget in half, the commitments to cut staff by 15 percent, despite the department now having to take on what is left of USAID programming, and reports that the department will significantly downsize its diplomatic presence abroad, taken together I actually don't think these reforms will lead to a more effective State Department, which is what we really want. The reality is we do need to think more strategically about what our national security priorities and interests are in a multipolar world.

But, Chairman Mast, I just fundamentally disagree with you that human rights and our values aren't part of that because I

think our power is derived from our ability to build international coalitions. And to do that we need to address our values and build our coalitions around that.

So first I want to focus on an area of ongoing reform that I think we can learn from. Chairman Emeritus McCaul and I, my good friend, introduced a reauthorization for the Global Fragility Act. This focuses on important reforms for how we get to align policy and programs, more robust monitoring, and evaluation.

But Secretary Rubio's reorganization proposal which shut down the Conflict and Stabilization Operations Bureau, which I actually worked at, which is leading the implementation—and look, we can have a separate debate on the best way to house the kind of conflict expertise in the department. We led a GAO review of CSO under the Biden administration. But, Secretary Zeya, as Under Secretary of State you oversaw the work of CSO and the Global Fragility Act. Can you discuss the importance of maintaining the Global Fragility Act team led by an assistant secretary as required by law to actually implement GFA and meet its statutory obligations?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Representative Jacobs, and thanks to you and Representative McCaul for your bipartisan leadership on the Global Fragility Act.

This is exactly the kind of State modernization that I think we should rally bipartisan support for. And I saw this firsthand in my role as under secretary visiting GFA partner countries: Mozambique, Cote d'Ivoire, as well as Haiti. And what I saw on the ground was a shift away from open-ended assistance commitments where implementation is defined as spending money and really focusing on measuring results, evidence-based approaches, and course corrections.

And it is very sad to me that this effort is now being potentially extinguished just 2 years in when it is starting to bear fruit.

It is about integrating State Department efforts with our colleagues at DOD, with USAID, but also with international partners who have followed our lead particularly in coastal West Africa where we have four embassies working together in an integrated way I have never seen. But you have got the international financial institutions, the EU, and the Brits coming in behind to focus on the same areas.

And I do want to make a point about human rights and security and hard security. Representative Wilson mentioned his visit to Syria. I was a human rights officer in Syria under Hafez al-Assad. At this point our support for pluralism, for inclusion of women in Syria's transitional government and process, that is absolutely a guarantor of security. And Syria is a diverse country of many faiths. We cannot allow it to fall into a majoritarian system that oppresses so many of Syria's people after the immense suffering they have had. It is also why accountability is so important so we can finally achieve accountability for the Assad regime's horrific crimes.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you. I really appreciate that. And I think one of the really innovative reforms in the Global Fragility Act is being able to assess the effectiveness of U.S. policy in a single country across all of our activities done by all different agencies. And I

know that sound simple, but actually GFA is the only capability we have ever had to assess whether or not our policy whole-of-government in a country is actually achieving its goals. So I do hope that Secretary Rubio will maintain that function.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Jacobs.

We now recognize Representative Smith from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for calling this important hearing. And welcome to our very distinguished panel.

I am the prime author of the bipartisan Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. And among some of its provisions, or dozens of mutually reinforcing provisions, we established a tier system: Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3—Tier 3 for the most egregious violators—not doing anything or complicit in human trafficking within their country—in the areas of prevention, prosecution, and protection.

I have been very concerned and I have held dozens of hearings over the years with both administrations, all of the administrations, and we keep getting from the TIP Office Ambassador-at-large and from people in the TIP Office how there is almost like a hand-to-hand combat when certain nations are put on Tier 3. And many of our bureau chiefs, especially the assistant secretary for the region, argue don't do it. There are other equities that we need to be concerned about.

And my argument has always been get it right. What you do on the sanctions piece, which is prescribed in the law as well—prescribed I should say—is purely up to the administration. But getting it right on the facts should be non-negotiable. And yet the most egregious example there was during the Obama administration when Reuters broke the story that there were more than a dozen nations that got artificially inflated grades because of other issues. So I had two hearings on that. And I said don't do that. You still have the victims.

Now I am concerned that we get the integrity right on the process. And ditto for the International Religious Freedom Act. So call it the way it is. What we do on the sanctions piece is something that the Secretary of State and the President can negotiate.

And I am wondering what your thought are now as we are going through this whole revamping. And Secretary Rubio I do believe is very strongly committed to both religious freedom and to trafficking issues. How do we ensure the integrity of the process, getting it right? Those bureaus need to be as independent as possible in my opinion. The TIP Office is made up of wonderful people who work overtime. And each embassy as you know, Mr. Ambassador, tender all of the data back as to what is going on in that individual country. How do we ensure that those—and there are other offices as well. But religious freedom and trafficking in persons. How do we ensure the integrity of that process? Yes, please?

Ms. ZEYA. Thanks so much, Representative Smith. I would say from my own experience I have seen how the TVPA effects change on the ground in the tier ranking system. And I would say as my role as under secretary I enjoyed very close collaboration with my counterpart, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and colleagues from regional bureaus in really focusing on the countries

that we were seeing a degradation in conditions, but also recognizing opportunities for progress. I want to highlight two.

Together the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons working with civil society and the private sector worked tirelessly to successfully eradicate child and forced labor from the cotton industry in Uzbekistan. That might sound like an issue far away in a land that doesn't matter to Americans. It does matter to the U.S. cotton industry who cannot compete against forced labor-produced products.

This is why I am so concerned about subsuming this office which really enjoys unrivaled global leadership on this mission to end human slavery into the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. The legal definition of human trafficking does not require movement across international borders. So I am quite worried that that is a downgrade that will really undercut efforts to end exploitation of some of the most vulnerable people at a moment when we are really making progress.

I have also seen in the case of allies, like the Republic of Korea a downgrade to Tier 2 really produced a tremendous amount of effort and engagement, where we saw improvements where they were able to move back up to Tier 1. So the ranking system I think has had a very positive effect, although many didn't like it when it came out, in effecting change.

Mr. JEFFREY. If I may briefly add to this. I was Ambassador to Albania, and boy, this was one of my top priorities. I haven't been too kind to soft power in my statement and some of my comments here today, but this is an example I think for the committee to look at where soft power can work. Because first of all, it reflects values that across the board Americans believe in, because this is terrible stuff. Second, it is something that is concrete that you can get governments to stop without changing their whole outlook to the universe, their philosophy, their religious background, and everything else. Much of what we do is broad. I have got to look like Denmark or you to look like Washington, DC.

This is very specific. We monitor it closely. And you bet I was always trying to get Albania raised one level higher. And you can bet I was beaten down because we had concrete standards to go by. That is what the secretary should continue to enforce because it represents the will of not only the Congress, but the American people.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Smith.

Representative Castro?

Mr. CASTRO. Thanks, chairman.

I have served on this committee for—well, since I got into Congress in January 2013 and have always supported a comprehensive authorization of the State Department. Doing so is a core responsibility of this committee and is our best opportunity to strengthen American leadership and diplomacy. And this committee has in recent years been successful in passing and enacting authorizing legislation to do just this.

I have had the opportunity to contribute meaningful legislation now enacted to strengthen the State Department, USAID, and the Foreign Service. In drafting this legislation though there is always a balance that we strike. The language must be specific enough to

set direction of the department, but flexible enough for our diplomats and foreign assistance professionals to implement the laws in an ever-changing international landscape. This has for decades been a careful balance built on trust and good faith between each Congress and each administration.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration has abused this relationship and dynamic. Congress has for decades authorized specific programs and agencies: USAID, the Interamerican Foundation, the US African Development Foundation, The United States Institute of Peace, the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Bipartisan laws have established each of these agencies and their programs. Laws continue to direct funding for these agencies and their programs.

In each of these cases the administration has directed the agencies to reduce operations to, quote, “minimum required by statute,” essentially closing the agencies down. They have abused the flexibility afforded by the law to essentially terminate these programs. And authorization to do something without a requirement that it specifically be done is being interpreted as permission to ignore congressional intent and refuse to undertake the activity.

In the current environment if the Congress wants a law to be enacted, it seems the language must be very specific and bind the hands of our diplomats so that they have no flexibility.

So I wanted to ask Ambassadors Jeffrey and Hale, how effective do you think our diplomats would be if the laws provide the Department little to no flexibility because the Congress cannot trust the President of the United States to faithfully execute the laws of the United States?

Mr. JEFFREY. The Secretary of State and his or her subordinates need a considerable amount of flexibility to carry out the intent of Congress. I don’t want to get into what is the middle of a very partisan and hot debate. What I would say is it is very important that Congress not just authorize an activity or an agency, but State what the goals are in general terms. We can then operate in terms of what the military calls troops-to-task to figure out how to do that, what the procedures are, what kind of people we need. But general guidance in some detail is always good to know which direction you are going. And again, the Trafficking in People—it was very clear that Congress wanted us to put an end to this. And we have done a pretty good job.

Mr. CASTRO. Ambassador?

Mr. HALE. Yes. No, I would agree very much. And I would also underscore, would State the obvious that the world changes. Foreign policies needs to be nimble, and adroit, and able to respond to emerging problems that we didn’t anticipate. Maybe we should have; maybe we shouldn’t have, but we didn’t.

And we need to be able to have a consultation with you all here on the Hill about those emerging and changing threats, and opportunities as well and make sure that we have the flexibility we need, but also we are connected to you. And it is not just a matter of when you are—have your confirmation hearing or when you are called up for a very formal event, but the ongoing consultations of members and staff.

Mr. CASTRO. Sure. Well, USAID, the Inter-American Foundation, the U.S African Development Foundation, the United States Insti-

tute of Peace, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation have all been established by law and have existing valid authorizations, yet the administration has moved to eliminate all of these entities. It has abused and exploited the difference between the spirit—or the gap between the spirit and the letter of the law. And so far this committee and this Congress have allowed the President and the administration to do that. Perhaps we will see in the coming years, but forever resetting the balance of power and control between the executive branch and the President and this Congress, that is going on in real time right now. This committee and this Congress are surrendering influence and control over our diplomacy to the President of the United States. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Castro.

Representative BARR.

Mr. BARR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this very important hearing. From ceding Congress' authority to the executive branch this entire exercise is about Congress reclaiming its important role in authorizing and reauthorizing the State Department.

Thank you to our Ambassadors for your service. I just returned from a bipartisan CODEL to—from our embassy in Tokyo. I thanked our incredible Foreign Service personnel there in that spectacular embassy there and thanked them for their service. And I think our Foreign Service personnel who are forward deployed in embassies and missions across the globe and who do a great job representing our country and our values overseas—they deserve a reauthorized State Department that reforms in some cases the department, that in some cases economizes the department, rethinks and reimagines and modernizes the department, strengthens and in some cases refocuses the department. I think our Foreign Service personnel and our diplomats deserve that. And that is what this entire opportunity presents.

I would like to take my time to clear the air on some negative press that this administration has received for this much-needed reorganization of the State Department. Critics have argued that cuts and reviews undermine American soft power and damage alliances with our allies, but our own Secretary of State and other senior officials have said that is not true. Secretary of State Rubio recently stated we are going to be involved in those things, caring about human rights, but it is going to be run at the embassy and regional level, not out of some office in Washington, DC.

Speaking on the America First trade agenda, Secretary Bessent said America First does not mean America alone. To the contrary, it is a call for deeper collaboration and mutual respect among trade partners.

Tammy Bruce, spokesperson for the State Department on reorganizing USAID, said that don't mistake a change for indicating that something is gone. It was never about us abandoning our commitment to funding of any kind, but it is going to look different. And now it will. It will actually be going to be within a functional framework.

Secretary Rubio said about diplomacy in the Middle East: This is not a President that is looking to start wars. He is a President that is looking to stop the Houthis and prevent—prevent them. That is why we have been focused on Ukraine and that is why we

are having talks with Iranians. We are committed to achieving a peaceful outcome that is acceptable to everyone. We want to achieve a peaceful resolution and not resort to anything else.

Ambassador Jeffrey, do you see the need for consolidation and more streamlined processes at the State Department and more focus? And how could it be actually beneficial to advancing American foreign policy?

Mr. JEFFREY. Yes, I do. I think first of all it is important that whatever this or any administration does it reflects a general thrust of policy that we can be sure the next administration, regardless of Republican or Democrat, will follow.

When we deal with countries and they say yes to something we are asking, they are making an investment, just like people do in the stock market. And they are investing in an assumption that there will be returns on this. It is somewhat transactional. And thus predictability and consistency are important. So anything that streamlines the organization or makes it more efficient will help.

Again, the devil is in the details on what you throw overboard, but there is a lot of stuff that needs to continue. Again, focus on the operating elements of the Department of State. Those are the geographic bureaus, those are the people who—even though they are only assistant secretaries, they spend much more time with the Secretary of State than most other people in the building and they are his or her operating arms. They are very important to empower.

Mr. BARR. Well, I do think that refocusing and reorganizing really could enhance morale among our diplomats and give them additional mission and purpose.

One final question about China in this new era of great power competition. Where should the State Department focus its efforts with respect to competition with the PRC and should we think seriously about some of our diplomatic efforts that actually push would-be partners into the arms of China, like our—the previous administration's efforts to push against the domestic law in Uganda that actually encouraged China to build a Belt and Road project there?

Mr. HALE. Well, I was involved when I was under secretary in a major reorganization effort to confront the problem that we faced in China because the organization—while their—Washington consensus, as they say, had shifted and recognized the problem, the bureaucracy had not. And so we took the positions that were liberated out of Baghdad, Basrah, and Kabul as circumstances changed there and assigned them to the China team.

A lot of people wanted them to be sent to China. And I was one of those arguing, and successfully so, against too much of that. Instead we needed those resources and those people, which are our main resource at the State Department, to be on the front lines where we were dealing with the invidious Chinese influence. And that included international organizations as well as different countries in the world. And you mentioned one of them.

And so that is—and we did a—I think a pretty impressive exercise in gathering data to understand exactly what the nature of the Chinese threat was in every country in the world, both business, security, public diplomacy, all the different categories of influence,

and decide where were the countries where frankly it was too far gone, that resources were wasted there. Where were the countries where there was competition and where was the competition needed? And then to make sure that our country teams in each of those places had the resources and the strategy to deal with it.

Because how you deal with China and Thailand is going to be different than how you deal with it in El Salvador.

And then to proselytize with our people to make sure they understood that whatever you were doing before, now China was at the top of your list. And I think we made great inroads.

Mr. BARR. Well, I have great respect for our diplomats. And that is exactly why I support this reauthorization process to continue to strengthen the department. I yield back.

Mrs. BIGGS. I now recognize Representative Titus.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you. Well, while we are hearing about devastating cuts that are coming from the other side of the aisle, I would like to talk about maybe some productive ways that we could enhance the mission through the State Department.

One of those I believe is establishing a diplomatic reserve corps. That is an initiative that I believe would make the State Department more agile and better able to respond to crises around the world more quickly. And I am going to be introducing a bill that establishes such a corps.

Ambassador Jeffrey, you have been a career Ambassador in Iraq, in Turkey. You mentioned Albania. You have been a deputy national security advisor. Would you speak to the advantages of having such a reserve corps?

Mr. JEFFREY. I think they are extraordinary. I have seen how it works with the military. It is what kept us afloat in several conflicts, rotating people in and out. It also give the secretary flexibility without having to expand dramatically the personnel and the costs of the department because as you can see, that is not appreciated by everybody, here or in the country as a whole.

A reserve corps would be much cheaper and in some respects more flexible because these are people who are ready to go in an instant's notice. In many cases we have tried variants of this on an experimental basis before and I think it proved its worth. So I would strongly support that. Because there will be surges. We are going to be involved in the kind of thing we did in Iraq and Afghanistan sooner or later, one way or the other. We have been doing so through the history of the Foreign Service and the U.S. Government.

Ms. TITUS. Doing well by doing good or vice versa. Well, thank you. I am glad to hear you say that. And I hope my colleagues will pay attention to that. That would meet some of their goals of being more efficient and also serving the mission.

A second question is that if you look at Senator Rubio's comments during his confirmation hearing, he said preventing crises is a lot cheaper and a lot better than dealing with crises after the fact. Now, I happen to agree with that, but when I look at the State Department reorganization, I see that the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations has disappeared. I don't see it on the new organization chart. Looks like it is going to sunset according to the fact sheet. I think this bureau is very important. It plays a

role in atrocities prevention, implementation of the Global Fragilities Act, conflict mapping and analysis, support for peace negotiations. But it is gone. I mean, where has it gone? Are these technical capacities going to exist elsewhere in the State Department?

Would you address that, Ms. Zeya?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you. Absolutely. The Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations has evolved really into the premier player supporting high stakes diplomatic negotiations, including the achievement of a cessation of hostilities agreement in Ethiopia that ended the devastating conflict in Tigray. But they have also helped our efforts to stand up a temporary political authority in Haiti. They have supported diplomatic efforts on Sudan. And as we have discussed, they are the government lead on the Global Fragility Act, a bipartisan effort to pursue evidence-based locally led approaches to better prevent and end conflict sustainably.

So from an oversight perspective, I think there are a lot of questions as to what consolidation means, and there is a real imperative to ensure that the United States does not lose this tremendous reserve of expertise that is making a difference in an effort to slash and consolidate.

And on the overall point of consolidation, I want to say that the world is so complex that you simply cannot concentrate it in the hands of six regional assistant secretaries .

The functional bureaus of the Department of State are absolutely operational and strategic. One of the ones that I oversaw, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement stood up a coalition of more than 160 countries to fight the scourge of synthetic illicit and fentanyl.

So this is really a moment for all players on the field not to take out our team members in a short-sighted effort to streamline that undercuts our interest.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you very much. And I yield back.

Mrs. BIGGS. [Presiding.] The chair now recognizes Representative Jackson from Texas.

Mr. Jackson from Texas. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I appreciate your time.

For over 20 years, Congress has failed to properly reauthorize the State Department, which has allowed the Federal bureaucracy to circumvent congressional oversight.

If Biden's State Department proved anything to us, it is that these bloated agencies must be kept in check or Federal bureaucrats will act on their whims, independent of the needs of the American people.

Thankfully, President Trump and Secretary Rubio have already taken decisive action to restructure the Department of State to better align with our foreign policy objectives and put citizens of the United States first.

Both sides of the aisle have argued that Foreign Service performance evaluation and promotion process has lacked objectivity and transparency.

The issue is largely due to the previous administration's obsession with DEI where former Secretary of State Blinken released a 5-year diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility strategic plan to

“ensure that the Department of State is a leader in the governmentwide efforts to advance DEIA goals for Federal workforce.”

Fortunately, President Trump and Secretary Rubio are working to ensure that all Foreign Service recruitment hiring, promotion, and retention decisions are based on the individual’s merit and merit alone.

Ambassador Hale, what can this committee do to ensure that Foreign Service personnel education and promotion processes are based on merit even after the Trump administration is completed?

Mr. HALE. Well, I think this is a core concern. We are a meritocracy. The Foreign Service is largely based on—staffing is largely based on the Foreign Service exam that is competitive. And we are pledged to the concept of up or out. In my experience, however, in my career there was a lot of up but there wasn’t much out. And my data may be—and undoubtedly is old, but when I was in the office, the data generally was about 0.5 to 1.5 percent of the Foreign Service each year was separated basically for non-performance.

I suspect there was probably more people than that who were not meeting the standards that objectively would be required. A part of the problem was that the promotion process produces a list where, you know, the bottom third of the lower performing staff. But then the next number you come into is how many positions do we have to fill. So the cut goes deeper than the cutoff mark for people who are really not performing by any objective standards. So the retained people who frankly really aren’t capable, which is where streamlining can become very important.

So we not only look at the people, but also look at the positions and make sure that the positions we have are really things we need to be doing.

I personally don’t get all that cut up in the reorganization charts. I am not saying they are not important, but what is important is filling those boxes with people who can do the job. I mean, A, filling them, which we have seen is a problem in some administration. And then B making sure, as I said at the beginning, that they actually have the skill set needed and are held accountable to their performance and that they understand the mindset of the Foreign Service should be. That we are policymakers. We are there to provide our expertise and knowledge and advice. Decisionmakers are other people. And when decisions are made that we salute smartly and implement those policies rather than—but he also has to make sure we have a climate inside the Foreign Service and the civil service that enables dissent and creativity, which is going to produce the best policies we can have.

Mr. Jackson from Texas. I agree with you on that. And I also think that recruitment and retention are going to be important as well, obviously, and I think that a merit-based system will help with the recruitment and retention and fill some of those boxes you were talking about.

I have one more question real quick in my remaining time here. Consular officers play a vital role in our national defense adjudicating who receives a visa to come to the United States and who is denied entry.

Ambassador Jeffrey, given the important role of the consular affairs office in maintaining the security of our borders, is there any merit to moving the consular visa adjudication function from the State Department to the Department of Homeland Security? And if not, why not?

Mr. JEFFREY. As I indicated in my remarks, I will support that because the policies first, the policy is determined by Homeland Security, not the State Department.

Second, we have more people from other agencies at our typical embassy than we do from the people at the State Department. So just because there would be more DH people and a few less State Department visa offices, that would not be major change in how embassies work or deal with.

But the third thing is, and it gets to the question you posed today, but one reason that we are having a hard time evaluating on merit Foreign Service offices is that we don't know what their core skill is. The Marine Corps is well aware of what its purpose is, every marine a rifleman. The idea should be every Foreign Service officer a diplomat.

But over the years the accumulation of functions has led to us thinking our people are managers. Now management is fine. I have got a Master's in Business Administration. But the core skill is diplomacy. And the visa function, unlike taking care of Americans abroad, which is a core consular diplomatic function, the visa function is a managerial function. It almost never involves dealing with the host government. We keep the host governments out of it just like they keep—you know, we don't have any say as a government in Germany or other countries letting Americans travel there. So I think that it would be cleaner and it would streamline how we look at ourselves if that function were to go.

Mr. Jackson from Texas. Thank you, Ambassador. I appreciate your input, and I yield back. Thank you.

Mrs. BIGGS. [Presiding.] Thank you. I now recognize Representative Dean for 5 minutes.

Ms. DEAN. I thank you, Chairwoman, and I thank Ranking Member Meeks for organizing this hearing today. And I thank you Ambassadors and Secretary for your years of service and, of course, for your expertise that you are offering us today.

As we review what has been a very chaotic time, lots of people are confused. And I have to admit whether I am speaking to folks from USAID here in the United States or abroad or I am speaking to folks from State Department here or abroad, having just come back from Denmark, Jordan, Israel, with Ranking Member Meeks, folks are confused. And I want to lift up the people who have worked for USAID, many of them dismissed with zero notice, not even able to take their own belongings, their own personal photos of their work, dismissed with such utter disregard. And now what is going on with the Department of State.

I want to lift up the people who have worked in the Department of State. I am utterly impressed to a person with their dedication to diplomacy to service to this country and the same for USAID. So unfortunately since his return to office in January, President Trump has chosen to attempt to overpower foreign partners rather than engage in strategic diplomacy. His administration claims their

policies will bring safety, security, and prosperity, many of the points that you brought up, Madam Secretary to America. but all that I have seen thus far is a reeling economy, weakened relationships with our allies and emboldened adversaries.

The cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, an approach to foreign aid, has always been the 3D approach, defense, diplomacy, development. Unfortunately, we have seen a Secretary of Defense for example who repeatedly compromises national security to no account.

Shuttering of USAID under this administration, an agency that saves millions of lives and builds goodwill for America, builds our own national security. And now this drastic set of proposals and rapid changes to the State Department, which you said Madam Secretary, will hobble diplomatic strength and create a void that our adversaries are obviously taking a close look at and probably enjoying.

Like USAID, as I said, State Department is filled with some of the most knowledgeable in foreign affairs, national security, and humanitarian work. It honors expertise and takes years to cultivate. And yet Secretary Rubio, and it's baffling to me, does not advocate for the very department he is tasked to lead. I don't understand that. Proposing further personnel and budget cuts that will exacerbate and damage and DOGE has already done great damage.

Maybe I will start with you, Madam Secretary. You pointed out so succinctly the three points in your testimony and in your written testimony as well. Do you think that what we are seeing here with the cutes to the State Department has followed a critical analysis of where we could be streamlining, where we do have duplication of efforts, where we have talented people that we need to make sure stay there or grow there? Have we gone through that process, and did I just miss it?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Representative Dean. I have seen no sign of such a process or even a strategy. And I do so appreciate your words commending the sacrifices and the commitment of former USAID colleagues as well as former State colleagues.

I just want to share two quick stories about USAID's impact and who they are up against. I was in Kyiv last October where USAID literally was keeping the lights and the heat on.

The night before my arrival, 150 drones rained down on Kyiv. They were Iranian provided, part of this axis, including Iran, the DPRK, and China also supporting Russia's continued illegal aggression against Ukraine.

They tried unsuccessfully to destroy Ukraine's electric infrastructure. And it was USAID experts working in partnership with the Ukrainian government who were able to literally keep the population from freezing to death. That is one sign of their impact.

A second is one the, I mentioned, fentanyl and counternarcotics efforts that are—you know, fentanyl is the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 49. People may not realize that USAID, working in partnership with the State Department is literally clawing back rural territories formerly under the control of Clan del Golfo. And it isn't a siloed approach. It isn't just security. It is security and development. And it is human-centered security that meets the needs of the population and does not leave

them to be preyed upon by the narcos and some of the world's worst criminal organizations.

Ms. DEAN. I thank you very much because that is a passion of mine. Opioid addiction has touched my family. I have a son in recovery, 12 years in recovery. And the fentanyl crisis that is stealing at this point 87,000 lives a year is something that we must pay attention to. And I have to admit the President has talked about caring about fentanyl. So why would just disregard where we are making progress?

With that, I yield back.

Mrs. BIGGS. [Presiding.] Thank you. I now recognize Representative Self for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. SELF. Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, this is an opportunity to get the State Department right, I hope. And I will tell you I am going to start with a quote from Clausewitz. "War is a mere continuation of policy by other means."

I am convinced that we are—we call it great power competition. I am not sure that is what it is. I think we are in a hybrid war now. You may remember just a couple of days ago in Spain, Portugal, and southern part of France there was an outage. Siemens Security now says that it was a cyber attack. It was on the stated equipment, and it caused cascading failure across two countries and part of another.

I want to pick up on something that Chairman Emeritus McCaul said because in your written statement, Ambassador Jeffrey, you talked about the DOD combatant commands need to be aligned with the bureaus. I am of the opinion, and I would like your opinion, State Department and DOD need to work together in the national interest of the United States across the world because policy in the State Department simply is acting in our national interest and eventually to preclude war between great powers.

So I think that this committee ought to inform the NDAA because we ought to have a coordinated national policy for where we are going as a Nation, which would include the backup of hard power to any soft power that we exercise around the world.

China is certainly on the march and they are making moves toward Taiwan. I just returned from Europe. And one of the points we were making to our European allies is when they build infrastructure such as pipelines, they need to be coordinated with the war plans that General Cavoli is putting in place in NATO and turning NATO into a legitimate warfighting organization.

So yesterday, I held a hearing in the European Subcommittee on the Cyberspace and Digital Policy Branch of State Department. So I would ask you, Ambassador, for your thoughts on this and particularly the digital policy here because it is a part of the hybrid war that we are in now.

Mr. JEFFREY. Thank you, Congressman, and thank you for the Clausewitz quote. It is one of my favorites.

Flag officers are responsible for the other means. That is their business. Our job is the continuation, that plug-in between policy and what the military is doing in the field, the things they blow up, the territory they hold, the territory they seize.

And I found the military is very willing to listen to diplomats in the State Department. But the procedures, be it on the digital ac-

count, be it on emerging technologies, be it on new threats, the channels have to be clear cut.

It is very hard to have two battle buddies, and most of our combatant commanders and most of our assistant secretaries are in that situation. And it undercuts the immediate understanding the sort of mind meld that you get in the field.

For example, when I was in Iraq, later in Syria, I had a three or four star military counterpart in only one and those officers only had one. It was me. And it worked very, very well. So I do think that that is important.

In terms of the new threats, again, we bring the civilian side, which is often very important on these emerging military technologies, again cyber, digital, all of that stuff, we can bring that to the table. And we can reinforce what the military is doing.

Mr. SELF. Very good. So for the two Ambassadors, where would you put cyberspace and digital policy, organizationally in the State Department, where would you put it?

Mr. HALE. I think it is really hard, actually. You can have pros and cons for any of the conceivable ideas that I have seen. There was a movement to put it under P where I served. I didn't think that was a particularly wise idea, partly because I knew I didn't have the skill set, frankly, as undersecretary to really grapple with the cyber threat. It was beyond my experience zone.

So I think the first thing, not to skip your answer. I will come back to it. But the first thing is to make sure we actually have people who can handle it, you know, have the background. We are diplomats as Jim said first and foremost. We also have to have the technical competence to deal with the subject matter at hand. And I don't believe we have been training people to deal with a cyber threat.

I would put it in the T family is forced to make a decision. Because, again, I think you are more likely to get the kind of people who have the frame of mind to deal with it. It is global in nature, of course, and so that is where I would put it.

And, I know time is of the essence, but I would just reinforce in my experience the coordination with the Foreign Service and embassies and combatant commanders has been superb. And it works far better in the field than DOD-State relationships do back here. Not that they are bad, but overseas, I think because we are all in the front lines of whatever we are dealing with, the cooperation and communication is really outstanding.

Mr. SELF. Very quickly, Ambassador, do you have an idea on CDP organizationally?

Mr. JEFFREY. Yes. I would agree with David. It should be one which counter the global bureau's offices, probably T. But the key thing is those are the kind of global things I like because they provide technical expertise. It is a worldwide problem. It spreads beyond any regional bureau. And they provide support to us like the kind of terrorism people do. They don't try to do our job for us or take it away from us or compete with us. And that is very important.

Mr. SELF. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. [Presiding.] Thank you, Representative Self. Representative Bera.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, this is my 13th year on this committee. And, you know, why I have always enjoyed the Foreign Affairs Committee in the past under the guidance of Eliot Engel, Ed Royce, is, yes, we will have heated debate, but when we are out there abroad, we are representing the United States of America. And I think we are all proud as Democrats and Republicans of who we are as Americans and what we have accomplished.

When I am out there, I do travel a lot both on this committee as well as on the Intelligence Committee. And I see our brave men and women out there Foreign Service officers, aid and development folks in conflict zones and refugee camps, and I have the utmost respect for them as I do for our men and women in the military uniform as well and what they do to both provide the goodwill abroad as the people of the United States, but also to protect our services.

So to the three, I do thank you for your service. If I look at the accomplishments of the United States, I am incredibly proud of what we did post-World War II in creating a world order that created relative peace and prosperity for 75 years, ending the cold war without actually going to war with the Soviet Union.

Many of you were there on the front lines. And that was the military and our diplomatic corps working together. It wasn't Democratic or Republican. You know, we have had throughout that time Democratic and Republican administrations. We had a Congress, but we didn't go one way or the other.

So I don't think, Mr. Chairman, you will find a lot of resistance to doing a State Department Authorization Act. But what I would urge is let's do this in a bipartisan way. We can't make this a Republican Authorization Bill or a Democratic Authorization Bill.

Look, we are in the minority. I won't say let's meet at the 50 yard line. We will go to your 40 yard line. But if you take us to the 10 yard line, to your end zone, we are not going to be able to do this.

And the challenge there is there is going to be a day when the Democrats are back in the majority. I hope that is in 2026, Chairman Meeks, and if we do this together, then we can actually have something enduring. We are not going to get it all right, but we can get it, you know, mostly right. So we are not constantly every two, 4 years going back and forth. That doesn't serve our interest well. That doesn't serve the world's interest well because this is a different world.

We are in the 21st Century now. We have got to do this together. We have got to think about this. You know, I would not go about a reorganization the way President Trump is, but it is what it is. It is creating an opportunity for us to build something better that is more reflective of today's world, you know, where we have programs that no longer make sense, great. But that doesn't mean, we should retreat from the world. We should take the best minds, folks like all three of you who have been on the front lines, use your expertise, tell us how we could do this better, what worked, what doesn't work. But we should do it in this committee as Democrats and Republicans working together so in 2 years, if we have the gavel, we are not undoing everything and starting from scratch.

Let's do something that is lasting that gets better each time. Let's reaffirm who we are as the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Chairman McCaul talked about what we do. Yes, we pass Authorization Bills, but we always attach it to the NDAA. There is so much that we should have jurisdiction over as the foreign Affairs Committee that goes into the Pentagon budget.

That is not to knock the NDAA. But the NDAA is going to be a trillion dollar bill. We don't have to spend more money. We just have to take some of what is in that trillion dollar NDAA, pull it back into our budget, pull it back where it belongs in the State Department Authorization Bill. I am willing to work together.

If we do this in a bipartisan way, we can keep the divisive stuff out of this. You know, we are going to need a State Department. We are going to need aid and development.

I got time to spend with my good friend Joe Wilson. Every time he says War Criminal Putin, it makes me feel really good. But the real work is going to be, I hope, President Trump is successful in finding a cease-fire that is good for the Ukrainian people, but we are going to have to do a lot of work diplomatically to then make sure there is enduring peace.

What is rebuilding Ukraine going to look like? You know, when Joe Wilson talks about the Butcher Assad, the Syrian people have a real opportunity here, but it is going to take diplomats. It is going to take Democrats, Republicans, a strong diplomatic corps to give them the best chance at success and peace.

So, again, I am not going to ask you questions. Thank you for your service. Thank you for all those Foreign Service officers, but there is a real opportunity in this disruption. It is not how we do it. But if we work together as Democrats and Republicans, meet at the 40 yard line, we are going to like some things. We are not going to like some things. But we do this together in this committee, I think we can have a lasting State Department.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Bera. And I will just comment on your comments as well to say this State Department reauthorization, from building this process in the committee from the ground up has been about really looking at where this process has been done at this pedantic drum beat. You know, looking at Armed Services and saying, how did they get that accomplished every single Congress? How did they get that done? And make it an expectation that there is not appropriations for Armed Services without the authorization of Armed Services going on.

Certainly if they can do it with a budget 10 times the size of what our budget is, then we should certainly have the ability to do that with the scope for what we have to deal with in terms of programming there.

Every member, Republican, Democrat, will have that opportunity to submit their ideas, you know, to a portal for this to say this is what I want in a reauthorization. This is what I want to prioritize and deprioritize, and so 100 percent member driven process and the process to build out doing this.

What is our focus in doing this has been to literally hire on staff from Armed Services because they have that muscle memory of doing that NDAA year after year after year that we want to say, hey, we need to create that muscle memory of doing that here on

Foreign Affairs year after year after year, Congress after Congress. So your point has been reflected on now and has been reflected on in the past. So I thank you for your comments.

Representative Kim, you are recognized.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you, Chairman Mast. And I also want to thank Ranking Member Meeks for holding today's hearing and thank you to our witnesses for joining us today.

As it has been stated, in 20 years, we have opportunity to, you know, work on reauthorizing the State Department. So as my colleague and ranking member on the subcommittee that we both serve on, I agree with him that we need to work together and find bipartisan reforms that will continue to strengthen our U.S. leadership on the world stage and also make sure the U.S. is remaining the partner of choice, you know, in the world stage, you know, with our allies and partners who depend on our leadership.

The State Department over time has struggled to find its purpose and its most important authorities and functions have been absorbed by other agencies. This is especially true when it comes to the economic State craft.

In 2012, President Obama proposed the consolidation of six agencies, including USTR, Commerce, and others, to bring coherence to our economic State group, craft, portfolio, but that effort failed to materialize.

So I want to ask you, Mr. Hale, is bringing USTR back into the Department of State as it was before 1961, is that a good idea? Why or why not?

Mr. HALE. I definitely believe that there is a need for greater integration and coordination of our international economic policies and resources and agencies. I am not wedded to any specific proposal on doing that. You would be a better judge of me, of the reality that there are important domestic, political factors in play here that would have to be, you know, weighed.

I certainly believe that I understand why a President wants to have a cabinet ranked member, you know, of his team dealing with trade. But I have witnessed firsthand where the separation of the agencies has not allowed us to do the best job possible.

And USTR in particular suffers, if I may say so. They are very capable people, but it is a very small agency. And the bandwidth is such, I can only imagine how they are dealing with the amount of attention being focused on tariff and trade policies right now.

So I would encourage not just thinking about what our embassies can do to better integrate, but how the State Department can incorporate some of these.

And third, you know, there has been a lot of tinkering with the National Economic Council and having like an NSC equivalent to deal with national economic and international strategies. I haven't seen it really work the way the NSC works where it is a really functioning, demand driven organization where the President's leadership is clearly understood by everyone involved. That could be improved.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you. You know, in 1979, the Foreign Commercial Service and Foreign Agricultural Service were pulled out of the State Department, weakening our ability to advocate for American business overseas.

So Mr. Jeffrey, should FCS and AFS be brought back into the Department?

Mr. JEFFREY. Absolutely, Congresswoman. One of the core jobs of any embassy team led by the Ambassador is to promote American business, not just big ticket items such as military sales, commercial aircraft, energy projects, although those are always at the top of the agenda, but any kind of American business, American farming initiative in a country usually does, get the support of the Ambassador on his or her team.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Mr. JEFFREY. Thus, they should be under the——

Mrs. KIM. I appreciate that perspective. You know, in 1999, I want to talk about the USIA now. The U.S. Information Agency was dissolved and its component parts pushed into the department and created undersecretary for public diplomacy. And so international broadcasting elements like Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Liberty, and Voice of America, they were all merged into Broadcasting Board of Governors and BBG and its successor organization, the USAGM, that we are talking about today, were notoriously dysfunctional and desperately needed reform. That is widely accepted as fact.

So should these organizations be put under the State Department's umbrella or be reconstituted as Federal grantees? Mr. Hale, can you answer that?

Mr. HALE. Well, in my mind, they are foreign policy tools. So they are best led by the foreign policy agency, the primary agency which is the State Department.

I would also though question, you know, in my background in the Middle East, the big question was the introduction after 9/11 of the Middle East broadcasting Enterprise. And I thought it was built on a false premise in that we, you know, Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, was fundamental during the cold war in filling a vacuum because the Soviet Union wasn't allowing any other news sources to come in. We were able to do that.

That is not the problem in the Middle East. There are news sources there. We can get an American official or American voices on any platform we want. It is a question of content.

So I wouldn't be spending money on building platforms to try to compete with Al Arabiya or Al Jazeera. I would be thinking about how we can use our talent to make our case on those and other platforms.

Mrs. KIM. Talking about content, very briefly, Chairman, if USAGM is not replaced with some new organization, are we ceding the information space to our adversaries because content-wise, we are not winning the information war?

Mr. HALE. Yes, definitely. And I experienced this as undersecretary in talking all around the world with our Ambassadors about what they needed.

And we have plenty of PD resources in the Middle East and South Asia. We didn't in Europe. And they were—China was eating our lunch so to speak. And so, yes, but content, not necessarily replicating platforms.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Kim. Representative Olszewski.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, Chairman Mast, and Ranking Member Meeks for convening this hearing. Thank you to all of our witnesses. I appreciate my colleagues' flexibility, this committee flexibility as I bounce between here and a markup today.

I also want to just say I very much look forward to engaging with Secretary Rubio. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your help in facilitating that in the weeks ahead.

As I have said many times before, this administration has the right maybe even the obligation to explore reforms and to ensure policies that align with its foreign policy goals. However, I do question some of the administration's recent actions in advancement of these objectives.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, Representative Kim, for leading an amazing bipartisan trip to the East Pacific recently where I had the opportunity to see firsthand how many of our allies are losing confidence in America's commitment as this administration guts critical foreign aid funding and diplomatic programs.

Our partners are confused and they are concerned about why the U.S. is voluntarily ceding influence to the region to China. Why can't we be stronger? We are being asked often. And we know that we can't be stronger if we are isolated.

I will continue to be the drum with my colleagues on the importance of showing up and standing with our allies.

What also concerns me is a lack of clarity from the State Department on how it plans to administer development assistance. We know that humanitarian programs are critical to strengthening stability in developing countries. But as the first Trump administration's own journey to self-reliance framework recognized, lasting stability requires also addressing root causes, including weak governance, infrastructure gaps, and economic exclusion.

Discarding the very long-term development tools needed to prevent recurring crises and creating durable markets for U.S. goods is short-sighted in my opinion. It fails to provide countries with the support they need to transition off of U.S. assistance, a goal I think we all share.

That being said, without development programs, partner countries will be unable to take on the kinds of projects that the DFC aims to finance alongside the U.S. private sector. Countries cannot simply transition from receiving humanitarian assistance to absorbing large scale private sector investments. There must be a middle phase that builds capacity, provide technical assistance, and grows economies.

I will start with you, Undersecretary Zeya. Can you talk a little bit about why development assistance is such an integral part of U.S. foreign assistance, and how can we use State authorization to protect programs that drive long-term sustainable growth around the world?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Congressman. I absolutely agree with you that we cannot neglect that middle phase and, you know, make the choice of just security and humanitarian assistance.

What is development assistance? It is addressing the root causes of instability, which can threaten our own national security and prosperity. It is supporting health system that have put us on the cusp of eliminating HIV AIDS as a global scourge. And all of those gains are at risk of loss given some of the chaotic cuts that have been executed.

But it is also about accountable governance, responsible governance. If you look at the migration challenge in this hemisphere, the toxic governance in Venezuela and Nicaragua, and Cuba has resulted in unprecedented out migration. We simply cannot afford to not care about the human rights situations in our own hemisphere and elsewhere.

And look at who is cheering the removal of USAID from the field, you know, our biggest adversaries, Tehran, Beijing, Moscow. That should tell you something about the impact of these efforts and that this is not something to discard entirely because of objections to a handful of particular programs.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Thank you for that. And with my remaining time, a question for everyone about the human impacts of this reorganization. Reports are suggesting a 15 percent reduction in U.S. based State Department personnel and the near total elimination of USAID and about 20,000 total. We are talking about real Americans, real impact, real work.

This question, again, is for everyone. Does the State Department have the expertise and staff to take on these USAID foreign assistance functions, programming implementation and oversight, and what areas would the State Department need to staff up in order to handle that transition appropriately? Without adequate staff, will that impact the accountability in light of that first question?

Ms. ZEYA. I mean, the quick answer is no across the board. And whether it is disaster response, where I think we saw a disastrous outcome with respect to the earthquake in Burma where our team on the ground was fired and leaving a vacuum for the PRC and others to come in.

With respect to famine response, I mean, it is very important to recognize the decades of technical expertise and operational leadership, which is very different from a lot of the assistance managed out of Washington, the teams in the PRM Bureau and PEPFAR have done a phenomenal job.

But it doesn't add up to terminate the people with that expertise with no hope or no clear path to be reintegrated into a new entity.

Mr. HALE. To my mind, the concept of integrating AID into the State Department, which, as was mentioned, goes all the way back. I was working for Madeleine Albright when she tried to do that in the mid-1990's.

It isn't so much that you are going to find people who are current Foreign Service officers at the State Department who are suddenly going to be able to do USAID workers work, by the way much of which is done by contractors not by direct hire.

It is that you need to do perhaps a better job than we have done to make sure that our foreign policies and aid policies are actually fully integrated, which overseas works reasonable well. In Washington, it doesn't work well at all. And you can cast blame in lots of different directions. I wouldn't blame people. I don't believe in

demonizing anyone. I work well with my AID colleagues and have tremendous respect for them. But that to me is what AID should be about.

To answer your question, of course, as it happens, is an office director for a certain geographical part of the world going to be automatically be able to be a manager for the aid programs as well? Of course not. You need to integrate these processes, not substitute them.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Thank you very much. I yield, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MAST. Representative Baird.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank our witnesses for being here today. You know, agriculture is important to me and it is important to our country. And we make a contribution from agriculture to USAID around the world and had the opportunity to go to Florida or to Africa a couple of times. So I am just setting the stage for my question here in a minute.

Sometimes those commodities end up being in the hands of adversaries used as fundable, used as money instead of really ending up—so my point is that this statistic from USAID is only 12.7 percent of that funding actually ends up in the hands of the people we intended it for. And so that is the question.

So now when you look at international organizations, the State Department contributes more than \$8 billion annually to international organizations. And if we cannot audit that or make sure that it is going to the appropriate recipients, then I am concerned about it.

So my question comes down to, going forward what do you think, with all of your experience, the actions should be from Congress in order to allow the government to have oversight mechanisms that are appropriate to assess the relevant information to ensure compliance from these different NGO's?

I want to know what we can do to make sure that those commodities or whatever we are providing through USAID is really getting to the people who need it because I understand the concern about PRC, but I am not sure we are being as effective as we should be with our USAID.

Ms. ZEYA. If I might jump in, Congressman, I would say this is why it is so critical to resource that oversight. And, you know, the dismissal of inspectors general at multiple agencies, including USAID, I think, that was a setback. But certainly we have to make absolutely sure that all of that taxpayer funded assistance is reaching its intended recipient.

I think the 12 percent was with respect to local partners who are, you know, the first recipient of this U.S. largesse. But I think you are absolutely right. But we have to, in this challenge funding environment, still have the manpower, the people, who can ensure the money is well spent.

And I think individual agencies have layers of support for that. But the 15 percent cut across the board in the department, it is going to be difficult choice, I think on the domestic side where those cuts are going to come out.

Mr. JEFFREY. I would just say that in my experience, most recently with Syria, USAID watched closely on diversion and who it was going to. And that is to be applauded. That is absolutely nec-

essary. And whatever the organization is, it is important that those functions, under whatever hat, and the people who know how to do that, continue to carry out those functions.

In terms of aid to international organizations, is the famous case of UNRWA and Gaza in particular, that is troubling. That is a special case. And it is something for Congress and I think the State Department to take a closer look at.

Mr. HALE. Well, sure, I agree. I think that it is, you know, beholden on all of us to make sure that there is accountability and the money is not wasted. It goes to the recipients.

I think there is also a deeper question, which is can we do a better job in measuring, actually, the impact that we are having. We have all of these sometimes grandiose objectives about our foreign assistance, which no one is going to disagree with. But is the way we are doing aid actually achieving those goals? And what is the process of measuring that and who is measuring it?

And my experience in government is that we end up measuring the things that we can measure because that is easier so you measure how many, you know, young women in southern Lebanon have been trained in English when that is supposed to be a means to an objective of transforming a society to make sure that there is, you know, 100 percent, not 50 percent of the population is employable and that they have access to things that make them more moderately inclined and more economically competitive. We don't measure that. We measure how many girls are going to an English program, which I am all in favor of.

The point is, we lost perspective because we lose sight of the objective that we have. And I won't name the country because it will be embarrassing. In one of my countries, I had an aid director come to me, she said, you know, it is 50 years of the USAID program in this country, we are going to have a celebration. Next year we are going to celebrate. And I said, no, we are not. I love the AID program. We are doing good stuff there. The country needs it. But we are not going to celebrate the fact that we have a forever AID program somewhere. And that is because we are not measuring the outcomes or the results in any meaningful way.

So in the authorization process, you can help us do that, wonderful.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. I thank you. My time has run out, and so I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Baird. Representative Amo.

Mr. AMO. Thank you, Chairman Mast, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

None of the public hearings this committee has held on reauthorizing the State Department, including today's, have had a witness who was a current employee of the State Department.

By comparison, at this point last Congress, we heard from seven current State Department officials, including the Secretary of State. So I look forward to seeing Secretary Rubio in this hearing room soon.

This committee does not appear serious at this point about a thoughtful reauthorization process. If so, I would invite and have

present current State leaders to be part of the public record so everybody can participate in the discussion.

Instead, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem content to once again rubber stamp President Trump and Secretary Rubio's half-baked plan to eliminate programs that save lives.

Well, let's highlight some of these harms. Ms. Zeya, could you provide one word answers to the following questions?

Would eliminating the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking and Persons help or hurt our antitrafficking efforts?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. Would it help or hurt our ability to rescue victims of human trafficking?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. Would it help or hurt our ability to identify and prosecute human traffickers?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. Turning now to the Office of Global Women's Issues, the branch focused on women and girls in peace and security processes. Would Secretary Rubio's elimination plan help or hurt women gaining leadership roles around the world?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. Secretary Rubio proposed gutting the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, which works to prevent conflicts that increase the risk of terrorism, trafficking, and smuggling. Would eliminating this bureau help or hurt our national security?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. Would it help or hurt our ability to combat terrorist acts?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. Last, this bureau funds work to document human rights abuses, war crimes and other atrocities. Would eliminating this bureau hurt or help our ability to prevent human rights violations?

Ms. ZEYA. Hurt.

Mr. AMO. So it is critical here. I know we just ran through that exercise, but there are clear decisions, clear contrasts. This plan puts us on the wrong side of those.

Now, on this continued frustration that I have around humanitarian aid, you know, I refuse to be silent amid the unlawful effort to shut down USAID. And let me underscore unlawful.

The reorganization plan completely eliminates USAID and calls for regional bureaus, the State Department, as we have talked about, to take over the development programming in their region.

For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, USAID had been working on improving education to promote economic growth and political stability in the region.

Ms. Zeya, you can take your time with this one. I don't need one word. But does the State Department have the expertise and staff necessary to effectively implement formerly USAID development programs like these education programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. And how does eliminating USAID harm our global development efforts?

Ms. ZEYA. Congressman, the short answer is no, it does not have the expertise and the resources.

But I would also make the point that it simply does not add up to take on such responsibilities at the same time you are making an unjustified, unexplained 15 percent to the domestic staff.

And we have talked a lot about the Foreign Service, which I was a member of proudly for three decades plus. But there is a civil service in the department, you know, over 10,000 strong, where there is a reserve of tremendous regional subject matter expertise.

And I make the point about overseas presence because there is—there has been a strong USAID presence overseas both Americans and locally employed staff members who themselves are incredibly capable, dedicated employees of the United States who have really specialized in areas where you simply cannot assign that to a Foreign Service officer or GS-13 and expect to have success, by the way, while you are cutting the hide out of those offices or eliminating over 130 offices at the same time.

Mr. AMO. Look, and my time is wrapping up, but I want to conclude with this. This reauthorization provides us with a great opportunity. And I am grateful that there is bipartisan agreement that we can use this moment to advance our interest, but not as we shoot ourselves in the foot when it comes to the expertise, the talent, the capacities that we have to make American interests meet the moment with our values across the world.

My time is expired, and I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Amo. And I would remind you it would be unconventional to have unconfirmed appointees come and testify before us. Additionally, I don't know if you were present, but Mr. Marocco did come and speak to us, testify before us as well, and Secretary Rubio is scheduled to come sometime later in May. I don't know the exact date offhand.

And I would just take the opportunity to thank Secretary Rubio for what is his commitment to the American people, which is to say very plainly that any dollar that goes out the door, whether to an American, a foreign company, a foreign NGO, a foreign non-profit, a foreign adversary, a foreign enemy, or anybody else, will meet the justification that it is better spent going abroad than staying in the pocket of an American. That is his standard. That he should be able to look somebody in the eye and say the dollar that came out of your pocket is better spent going to the Taliban or to some other continent or some non-government organization or somewhere else than staying in your pocket. That is the threshold that he wishes to meet, and I applaud him on that. And I recognize Representative McCormick.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for your testimony today. It has been 13 years since we last passed the State Department Reauthorization.

Since then, we have seen the organization go totally overboard in promoting radical ideologies worldwide and executing our disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, which I take very personally.

President Trump and Secretary Rubio are reforging a State Department that champions American interests and responsibility of steward's taxpayer's dollars.

Soon it will be our job to codify that, to make it permanent. I think when we talk about responsibilities and shifting responsibilities inside of our departments, Mr. Jeffrey, I wanted to ask you,

there have been discussions about making the Department of Homeland Security responsible for overseas visa operations instead of the State.

This is a critical matter, especially in my constituency, which is about 14 percent Indian diaspora, about 40 percent minorities, many who have family who come in and out of the United States. I just want to make sure that when we ensure the Department of Homeland Security takes over, that they are prepared to do so without any problems in the transition. Do you think that is possible?

Mr. JEFFREY. I can't get into the details of who they would have. As a basic principle, however, they own the policies. They work with Congress to develop our overall immigration policy. The Immigration Naturalization Act is under their purview. And thus, I think they should have people in the field who are doing that, just like other agents have people in the field.

Our rationale for that, Congressman, is that this usually doesn't involve high level country to country discussions because every country treats who comes in and out of its country as its own business. And for example, you may be issuing visas in Ecuador. The Ecuadorian government isn't going to be calling you all of the time to protest what you are doing or not doing. So you don't have the same level of diplomatic involvement. That is usually the litmus test for me of whether the State Department in an embassy should manage that through the State Department officers there or whether we should have other people out there.

Mr. MCCORMICK. So in other words, Rubio to execute this without losing any abilities or time but to make it a little bit safer for the American people?

Mr. JEFFREY. The devil is always in the details on any administrative change. They always bring with them turmoil in the short run. In the long run, the question is, is it a more rational way of applying our resources and our focus? That is a function that isn't central to protecting the American people in terms of threats from abroad. Well, actually it is, I'm sorry. It is a very important mission. But it is one, again, that is technical in nature and that follows very specific laws, again, that DHS, not the State Department, puts out.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Okay. Great. Mr. Hale, million dollar question for you. Based on your experience, what specific changes can we make to the State Department through this Reauthorization Bill that would have the biggest positive impact on our national security and diplomacy. I know that is a big question. But if you can hone it down to what is the one big bite we can take out of this that would make us better?

Mr. HALE. Insist that the Foreign Service actually goes back to basics. Whatever organizational chart you look at, you know, is going to reflect certain transitory values. But the Foreign Service has to do its basic core function of diplomacy.

And so as you write this authorization bill, I would ask you again, as I said at the beginning, to be persistent and not just, you know, once you have written a bill, you are done. It is also about the continued engagement to make sure the Foreign Service actually have the training and the skills and the leadership needed to

fulfill whatever mandates you have given to the authorization process.

And I would say the biggest, to get really to your question, to me the biggest gap right now that I see when you look down the horizon that we are not ready for is the growing importance of science and technology in the work of diplomacy.

We are never going to be scientists. We are never going to be, you know, that person. But we have to have much greater fluency in the substance of science writ large, I am talking about everything from cyber to pandemics than is the case today.

Mr. MCCORMICK. As a member of Cyber on HASC, as a member of Science, Space and Technology, and as a member of Foreign Affairs, I couldn't agree with you more. Thank you for that summary. We didn't even coordinate. For that, I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative McCormick. Representative Stanton.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Our goal as a committee should be to make sure that the State Department is efficient and effective in driving U.S. foreign policy. And I would hope to have a frank, serious, and informed conversation here today about where we should be doubling down on our strategic investments and where we could do away with bureaucratic bloat.

But then last week, Secretary Rubio unilaterally announced a drastic reorganization of the State Department without any input from the U.S. Congress.

It is part of a troubling pattern of this administration sidelining or completely going around the co-equal legislative branch and the people we represent.

While there is no question that American foreign policy has made serious mistakes over the decades, in nearly every case those failures were made worse because administrations hid the truth from Congress or they rushed decisions before the American people could weigh in.

For all the Trump administration's talk about avoiding the foreign policy failures of the past, it is charging full speed into that same pattern.

On the anniversary of the fall of Saigon, we should be learning from some of America's most painful foreign policy disasters, not repeating conditions that caused them.

This reorganization is just the latest blow to the tools of American soft power, diplomacy, development, humanitarian leadership that have helped counter threats from Russian, Iran, and China for decades, that have boosted the Arizona economy by attracting foreign tourists, industry giants, and the best and brightest foreign students, that have reduced the flow of fentanyl by coordinating law enforcement across countries, that have helped reduce migration by helping people stay in their home countries instead of overwhelming our southern border even beyond what is already happening.

No global challenge lends itself to quick or easy solutions, but each of them demand principled, consistent American leadership.

Right now, the most dangerous lie we can indulge in is if we disentangle ourselves from the global economy and our humanitarian

commitments and withdraw from our strategic alliances, that will somehow return America to greatness. It won't.

America's interests are global. Arizona's interests are global. And our security and prosperity depend on the strength of our alliances.

Ms. ZEYA, why is engagement with Congress important, not just from a constitutional perspective, but from a practical one?

Ms. ZEYA. Well, I think, as one of my panelists mentioned earlier, it keeps the work of the State Department grounded with the will of the American people. But it also, that consultative process, what Secretary Blinken often called, you know, being present at the takeoff, not just the landing with respect to policies, I think it produces better outcomes.

And when you look at, you know, U.S. humanitarian and human rights policy and the through line, the continuity, you know, it is built upon one bipartisan initiative after the other, whether it is the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 or the Global Magnitsky Act of 2016. And we have talked about the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the International Religious Freedom Act.

I seriously doubt that the Department of State, which I served proudly for most of my adult life, would have come up with those initiatives on its own without the leadership and the direction from the U.S. Congress.

Mr. STANTON. A followup question. Do cuts of the kind proposed by Secretary Rubio signal an understanding of what is required to effectively compete with China, Russia, Iran, and other adversaries?

Ms. ZEYA. I don't see that strategy in what has been presented so far. And, you know, I will give you a small example. In addition to being an undersecretary, I was the U.S. special coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Now this is a role in which we have had decades of bipartisan support. It is supporting preservation of the unique religious cultural linguistic traditions of the Tibetan people, but it is also about preventing a certain PRC effort to coop the succession of his Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

Tibet is considered a core issue for the CCP. It is a focus of attention where the repression has taken on the enormity of over a million children in government-forced reeducation, so-called boarding schools.

The future of that position is completely unclear on that org chart. We were a small office. We were able to rally greater international support, devote attention to an issue that is coming to the fore with the Dalai Lama turning 90 this year. If we walk away from roles like this, it is literally a free giveaway to the CCP.

Mr. STANTON. That is a very powerful answer. I ran out of time. So with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

Representative Moylan?

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today and for your efforts to reauthorize the State Department—a long overdue task. And despite Secretary Rubio's excellent leadership, the State Department is in desperate need of reauthorization. Between budgetary constraints and overlapping objectives, the Department clearly needs Congress to undertake this belated process.

Guam is at the forefront of many defense-related conversations, but it is important to recognize our role in other sectors of international relations. I want to commend the Guam Visitors Bureau and the Guam Economic Development Authority for serving as part of America's face in the Pacific. While these local agencies work tirelessly to promote positive international relations, I'm glad these committees seek to reauthorize the State Department because there are many areas of U.S. diplomacy to improve.

One of the problems we must address is the reform of foreign assistance programs. This February, the committee explored options to enhance the role of U.S. assistance in USAID. The conclusion was obvious: cut the wasteful funds and keep the strategic valuable parts.

As we contend with China, reauthorizing the Office of Foreign Assistance, the Global Partnership, and the Development Finance Corporation is imperative to enhance U.S. soft power.

Similarly, the reauthorization will strengthen U.S. foreign policy from an economic perspective. During an East Asian and Pacific Subcommittee roundtable, it became evident that the State Department is undermanned in the economic sphere. Without doubt, developing relationships with other countries through economic tools can make the U.S. presence in the region more visible and effective. This also fosters mutual beneficial relations, while creating opportunities for the U.S. private sector, allowing Americans to feel the positive effects of our diplomatic efforts.

Ambassador Hale, considering China's massive Belt and Road Initiative, how do you evaluate the current move by the administration to scale back these programs and the workforce? Based on your experience as a career Ambassador, what would be the most effective framework to plan, implement, and access foreign assistance programs under the Secretary of State?

Mr. HALE. Well, we definitely need to make sure that we have the resources and manpower needed in order to deal with the Chinese—our competitive relationship with China across the globe; no question about that.

I would say, though, as I said earlier, that we also need to measure the impact not by the amount spent, but by the results that we have achieved, and then, finetune whatever it is that we are doing.

Our methodology is very different than the Chinese methodology, and to try to compete on the same terms that they do, you know, they have a state-directed economy. So, they can send whatever resources they want all around the world. No one is going to say no.

The United States is a private sector economy, of course. So, no one at the State Department can sit and tell Bechtel where to spend their money. We need to help them, enable them, make sure that there is a level playing field; that the Chinese aren't eating everything up, but that is a little bit different.

And so, I wouldn't necessarily say that dollar-for-dollar is the way to measure it. And, you know, we also have a Parkinson's law, the bureaucratic principle that work expands to the number of people you assign to do it. Right? What is it we want to do? is the starting point, not how many people are we going to get to do it.

And so, I would argue—now, I will give you an example out of my career. When I was Director for Israeli-Palestinian Affairs, you know, we had a certain—a pretty big office. I went overseas. I came back 5 years later as the next-rung-up in the bureaucracy, Deputy Assistant Secretary.

My enterprising successor had doubled the size of the office of the Israeli-Palestinian Affairs in 5 years. The work hadn't changed; our interests hadn't changed; our programs hadn't changed. They were all busy people doing busy things. Did we need it? Who was there making the judgment? What are the results?

And so, I would ask us to always bear that in mind.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you.

Ambassador Jeffrey, we just have a few seconds here.

As previously mentioned, an East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee roundtable determined the economic offices at the Department of State have been undermanned. Based on your career at both the State Department and the National Security Council, do you agree on this conclusion? What economic tools would you like to see fixed and reauthorized?

Mr. JEFFREY. In terms of the economic side of the State Department, I'm not so sure we have too few offices. I think that they need to be better integrated into what other parts of the U.S. Government who have interests abroad—from the Department of Agriculture, USTR, we talked about earlier—that is something that needs to be worked on more. That can be through training. That can be through assignments in other agencies, which we try to do, but it is very hard in the bureaucracy.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Ambassador. I'm sorry we have run out of time.

Mr. JEFFREY. Pardon?

Mr. MOYLAN. We ran out of time.

Mr. JEFFREY. Okay.

Mr. MOYLAN. But thank you for your comments. Thank you to the panel.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

Representative Jackson?

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. Thank you, Chairman.

I thank each one of you for your participation.

To Zeya, I would have a question regarding our critical health programs, such as PEPFAR that has been demonstrably extremely successful. It saved millions of lives. This network has saved millions. It has provided a strong health system that protects Americans domestically and abroad by detecting and responding to health threats before they can spread, as a core American value.

But in recent months, we have been seeing—we have seen concerning decisions that have undercut America's global strength and put people at risk, whether through staffing shortages, funding delays, or unclear direction amid the evolving State Department reorganization.

I have gone to several countries most recently and one of the pains that I have to hear is that there's food in the vans. There is HIV medicines. There is malaria vaccinations. We have employ-

ees that are stuck abroad. They cannot return home, American citizens, and they cannot distribute the food.

Given this over-looming success of these programs and their vital role in our global strategy, how do we ensure that the integrity, effectiveness, and bipartisan support are not only preserved, but strengthened?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Congressman. I think you have explained well, you know, what some of the chaotic impacts have been of the decisions we have seen since January.

And I would just add on this point, that these health programs are not a giveaway. This is all about the well-being and the security of Americans. You know, if we learned anything from 2019, it is that pandemics know no borders and the impact can be absolutely devastating from an economic and a personal perspective.

So again, with PEPFAR on the cusp of, by 2030, eliminating HIV/AIDS as a global scourge, to pull the rug out under from lifesaving antiretroviral programs, but also, I mean, it's come up a few times today with respect to the inherent dignity of all human beings, including LGBTQI+ persons, the delivery of these lifesaving programs to these communities is absolutely critical in our public health approach.

But it isn't just HIV/AIDS. It is mpox. It is malaria. It is Ebola, which I was part of an effort under the Obama administration that helped contain the spread of Ebola in West Africa through a multi-country, U.S.-led effort.

So, all I can say is that I hope they take a hard look at the impacts thus far; they consult with the partners whose own operations have been decimated by this lurching effort, but also with the communities that have benefited from this for years, and try to turn it around.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. Thank you.

One other question I would have for you, DEIA and fellowship programs, I was startled to see a group of students in my office one morning that had their scholarships cut from their Foreign Service careers, and they were primarily African American and Hispanic students.

Very specifically, at one point in my life I served on a Fulbright program and a scholars program. And so, it is just very clear that black students have been cut out, eliminated, from careers that have been introduced into Foreign Service.

What have you seen to be the value of such fellowship programs, particularly targeting and being inclusive to bring in minority students? The Fulbright has not been touched. That primarily has a lot of Caucasians students, but the Payne and the Rangel Scholarships that have been outstanding African American members, those scholarships have been targeted and cut. Can you please elaborate? Is this consistent with our values?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you for raising this. These fellowships, which include the Pickering, Rangel, the Payne Fellowships, they have long been the subject of deep-rooted bipartisan support.

And I just want to say, these are not DEIA fellowships. These are not quotas. They are all about merit, but they are also about casting the net more widely, so that more bright students from across the country—you know, in terms of geographic representa-

tion, in terms of different backgrounds, you know—have the opportunity to consider, and also the financial support, to be able to pursue their education at the undergrad and graduate level and contribute to the Department. And over more than two decades, I have seen some incredible diplomats come through that program.

I was, frankly, shocked by the cutoff and the impact, not only on the students involved, but on our Department, as this has, I think, been a proven magnet for great talent and excellent diplomats.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. Well, Zeya, I thank you so much for contribution and your continued support.

And under the Students for Fair Admissions Act law that was adhered to by the U.S. Supreme Court, diversity, equity, and inclusion is legal in the United States Armed Services. Someone in the administration needs to read the law. If it is good in the war room, if it is good at the United States Military Academies, it is good in the classroom; it is good in the workrooms.

So, we need to make sure we enforce the law. There is nothing wrong about having diversity—E pluribus unum, out of many, we are one. There is nothing wrong with having equality, the 14th Amendment. There is nothing wrong with having inclusivity and accessibility, so people that have different abilities, that may need a wheelchair ramp or other things, can have access and have inclusion.

Thank you for your years of service and continued success.

I yield back, Chairman.

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

Representative Davidson?

Mr. DAVIDSON. Thank you, Chairman, for this important hearing today and, frankly, for the alignment with the objectives the administration has laid out, which is really basic: that America's resources should reflect America's interests and when we use the State Department.

It has been shocking, as a Member of Congress, to get here and say my suspicions have matched reality; that a lot of times, our Nation's diplomats are working at odds with the people that sent me here to represent them. And then, when Congress has weighed-in, they have evaded every kind of accountability.

So, the mission alignment of agencies and bureaus at State are consistently out of line with what they should be doing. So, the correction that Secretary of State Rubio and, frankly, Chairman Mast are trying to accomplish are long overdue.

We authorize our Defense Department year-in and year-out via the NDAA. The idea that it is not possible for the State Department to be authorized ever, if not consistently, is absurd. The Constitution only authorizes the government to use the powers delegated to it in law, and unauthorized programs go against the spirit of our Nation and our Constitution.

So, I look forward to the State Department authorization process, because the mission of the Department is too important to be left to career, unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats that simply ride out administration after administration and pursue their own agenda.

Mr. Hale, in recent weeks, we have seen proposals circulating from the Rubio State Department outlining a total overhaul of their organizational chart that outlines missions and authorizes our Foreign Service corps.

One move that I applaud, and I am looking to codify in upcoming legislation, is to move the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement from the Democracy and Human Rights Branch to the International Security Branch of the State Department. It makes so much sense to me. And every year, thousands of Americans, often tens of thousands of Americans, every single year lose their lives to the fentanyl crisis. Foreign gang activity, transnational criminal organizations are killing American citizens, and countering this is part of the goal of INL.

In 2023, a GAO report concluded that, quote, “INL’s efforts to implement assistance to Mexico have been hampered by incomplete performance management efforts.” End quote. It went on to list issues with corruption, ineffective programming, and numerous systematic issues within democracy and human rights management.

So, moving this org chart to me makes sense. What say you?

Mr. HALE. I agree. I think it is a very successful bureau, by and large. I think it is a very valuable way to be functioning and to put our investments into that activity.

In my experience at least, in the countries I served in, the partners of INL are primarily in the security arena. So, I think it is a much more natural fit.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Thank you for that.

Mr. Jeffrey, in a 2025 press release, the State Department admitted to breaking the law by funding abortions in Mozambique with Federal tax dollars. This violates the Helms Amendment. Despite openly breaking the law, there have been no serious consequences. The nonprofit or non-government organization, funded by government dollars, it gave back a minimal sum of dollar and nobody was ever held to account. At least 21 unborn babies were killed with the complicity of our United States State Department and our tax dollars. They can give back the money, but they can’t bring back these lives. We know that it happened. So, we must have consequences written into our law.

That is why last month I introduced the Aid Accountability Act of 2025. My bill would permanently ban Federal funding from organizations that break the law and violate the Helms Amendment. The bill would also disbar Federal service workers who participate in this.

Mr. Jeffrey, what steps can we take in Congress to ensure that civil servants and non-government organizations comply with the laws we write?

Mr. JEFFREY. Well, civil servants are subject to the discipline of the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State has both criminal—that is, law enforcement and Inspector General—and administrative personnel tools that he or she can use to pursue anybody who has violated the law. In my experience, I have seen this repeatedly used, again, for those people who violated the law. So, I think that it is a question of letting the Secretary use those authorities that he has.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Thank you for that, and I hope Secretary Rubio does just that. Obviously, Secretary Blinken wanted it to happen. That's part of why it happened.

So, I thank Chairman Mast for this hearing today. We authorize DOD every year. It is time we do it for the State Department and make sure that Americans' resources advance America's interests, first and foremost.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Davidson.

Just for our witnesses, are you all good? You don't need a—we still have a number of Representatives to ask questions. Are you all good? You don't need a restroom break or anything?

Ms. ZEYA. Good.

Chairman MAST. Let me know if that changes.

Mr. JEFFREY. Roll on.

Chairman MAST. I'm happy to—say it again, sir?

Mr. JEFFREY. Roll on.

Chairman MAST. Very good. Don't hesitate to let me know. I know we have been going on for a while here.

So, we are going to go to Representative Schneider.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank the witnesses for your observations and sharing your insights today.

And I also want to thank the many men and women serving our Nation as diplomats, development workers, and in other critical duties around the world—oftentimes, in harm's way—who have dedicated their career to advancing our national interests, protecting our national security. I want them to know that their service and contributions are both recognized and appreciated.

I frequently say in this forum that American foreign policy is like a three-legged stool, resting on defense, diplomacy, and development. As former Secretary of State Jim Mattis famously said, "The less we are investing in diplomacy and development, the more we will have to spend on bullets for defense."

I believe that the fundamental mission that we are talking about for the Department of State in that effort to protect our Nation is to promote U.S. interests around the world and to help ensure/advance our national security. Do you all agree with that? Disagree with that view? Do I have a nod for agree?

Mr. JEFFREY. I agree, but having worked with the Secretary previously, General Mattis, in Fallujah and some other places, I would say what is important is the smart use of diplomacy.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Hold that thought. I agree. I think that is the key thing.

Mr. JEFFREY. And not the volume or the amount—

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Yes.

Mr. JEFFREY [continuing]. but whether it is smart and it is plugged into everything else.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Ambassador.

And I will say—and maybe I'm going out on a limb here—but I would argue there is broad agreement on this committee, both Democrats and Republicans, that the State Department needs smart reform, and that many of the changes we are talking about

are long past due. But reform has to support our national interests and protect our national security.

Reform done the wrong way or for the wrong reasons, done impulsively or haphazardly or out of spite and personal vendetta, is more likely to put our interests at risk and diminish our national security posture.

So, my question for the whole panel: does anyone think that what is currently happening at State, including mass firings of career professionals with years of experience and expertise and ending the vast majority of programs formerly under USAID, is strengthening U.S. global leadership or making the United States safer?

Ambassador?

Mr. JEFFREY. I think I'm not ready at this point to judge something that has already begun, but we haven't seen the endpoint. We don't know where Secretary Rubio will wind up on reductions of people, of money. He is going to come before this committee. I think you will have an opportunity to press him on that question.

But again, there is nothing wrong with cutting things. The Clinton administration eliminated almost half a million—

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I agree, it is the smart, I mean folks in the smart, and that is—

Mr. JEFFREY. Right. So, I'm going to fall back on my—it has got to be smart. Excuse to evade—

Mr. SCHNEIDER. And thoughtful and institutional—

Mr. JEFFREY [continuing]. the question.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Ambassador Hale?

Mr. HALE. I strongly support reform and cutting. I think there is a lot that can be pruned back. I agree, obviously—I don't know who would disagree in this context anyway—about it being done in an intelligent way and thoughtful way.

I also share, though, there is a level of frustration, because we have all seen this over many decades, that when new teams come into the White House and want to change and reduce government, they get beaten back. They get swallowed by crises and bureaucratic resistance.

So, I don't share—I wouldn't go about it the way it is being done, but I understand a little bit the impulse to be dramatic.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. But I think that is why it is so important for this committee, with our authority under Article I, to take the initiative.

Ambassador?

Mr. HALE. I agree,

Ms. ZEYA. I do not see how what has happened so far is advancing our national interests. I think how and what you cut is critical.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Right. So, in my last minute, let me ask some rapid-fire questions.

But would countries like China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea see the elimination or downgrade of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor as a smart move to the advantage of the United States or as a move benefiting their own national agendas? So, just a yes-or-no answer.

Ms. ZEYA. Absolutely, the latter.

Mr. HALE. Well, I don't see it being downgraded. I mean—

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Okay.

Mr. JEFFREY. I don't think that is on the top list of things the Chinese worry about us either doing or getting rid of.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. But will they see it to their advantage?

Because I ask the same question with the same countries, to the elimination or downgrade of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, as a smart move to the advantage of the United States or as a move benefiting their own national agenda?

Ms. ZEYA. It benefits our adversaries.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Okay. Would Russia see the elimination or downgrade of U.S. programs that document war crimes and support civil societies in Eastern Europe as a smart move to the advantage of the United States or a move benefiting their agendas?

Ambassador Jeffrey?

Mr. JEFFREY. Again, that is not one of the things that will move the dial on Russia's reaction to us. It is all about actual impact.—

Mr. SCHNEIDER. But does it benefit us or benefit them? Does it benefit us or benefit them to downgrade programs to document war crimes and support civil society—

Mr. JEFFREY. I have a lot of problems with how we define war crimes and how that is used.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Right. And I'm over time, but I will give the last two—a quick answer, yes or no?

Mr. HALE. I think we should be doing it, but I don't think it changes Russian behavior.

Ms. ZEYA. I think it does have an impact, and the Office of Global Criminal Justice has helped real-time accountability occur in Ukraine with convictions of Russians for war crimes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you.

So, Mr. Chair, I look forward to working with you on this committee to try to find smart reform that moves us forward, that protects our interests, keeps Americans safe around the world and here at home.

I yield back.

Chairman MAST. We will look forward to seeing your amendments, Mr. Schneider.

Representative Biggs, you are recognized.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you, Chairman Mast.

And I am grateful to our witnesses for being here today.

So, as a member on both the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I recognize the undeniable intersection between our diplomatic efforts and our activities in the space domain.

The United States stands at a pivotal moment where our leadership in space is linked to our economic vitality, our national security, as well as our scientific progress and our overall standing on the global stage. Given this reality, a central aspect of our reauthorization review must be the State Department's strategic role in shaping and implementing the U.S. foreign policy concerning the space arena.

In this context, the expertise and insights residing outside of government represent an invaluable resource. Effectively harnessing

these perspectives is not merely beneficial; it is essential for crafting forward-looking, space-related foreign policy.

Therefore, I would like to direct my first question to Ambassador Jeffrey. What specific strategies does the State Department, particularly through the Office of Space Affairs, currently employ to integrate the perspectives of non-governmental actors into both the formulation and the execution of U.S. foreign policy within the space domain?

Mr. JEFFREY. It is a great question, Congresswoman, but I would like to defer it to Secretary Hale, who I think did more with space when he was Under Secretary than certainly I did working on Syria. Is that Okay with you?

Mrs. BIGGS. That's great. Thank you.

Mr. HALE. Well, thank you very much, Jim, but I don't know that I did have much, anything to do with it. In my mind, it is one of those categories, though, of the emerging activities that backward-thinking, backward-looking organizational charts, authorization bills of the past, or the absence of them, is an impediment to dealing with the new challenges.

And so, that is exactly why what we are talking about today is so valuable and so important, is to make sure we are actually resourced for the new threats.

I don't know the answer to your question about how effective we are in integrating with NGO's. I would say the State Department is never going to be the lead on space. So, we're a very supporting actor. So, if I was in charge, I would say that our role should be to make sure that we are working with our other international partners to make sure our space policies are being effectively implemented and finding allies in that regard, and spotlighting the threats and challenges that, obviously, our competitors pose.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you.

Well, I will go to a more general question, and I will be happy to have an answer from either of you. But what concrete steps can Congress and the State Department take to more effectively and proactively integrate non-governmental expertise directly into the Office of Space Affairs for foreign policy?

Mr. JEFFREY. Having ducked your last question, I will try to take that, and Uzra wants to do it, too.

We work at every level with NGO's. They are a major source of the thing we are always out there searching for, which is information. They are a major source of influence on our host governments. We have to be careful because we don't want to be interfering in internal affairs, although in many ways we do.

So, I would say that there is a very healthy relationship. It has some tension between U.S. embassies, the State Department, and NGO's, both American and other countries, because they are major players on the international scene.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you.

Ms. ZEYA. And, Congresswoman, I would just thank you for highlighting the contributions and roles of non-governmental actors in international space policy. And we are facing, you know, a global closure of civil society space that affects academic, experts, universities as well. So, I think the State Department maintaining those

channels to non-governmental actors, recognizing this is absolutely 21st century diplomacy, is essential.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you, and with that, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Biggs.
Representative Johnson?

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

You know, I appreciate that you are trying to follow in the footsteps of Ranking Member Meeks and reauthorize the State Department, but this process that is being done is not being done in a transparent or bipartisan way. An org chart alone does not tell us how offices will be staffed and how technical expertise will be retained; whether budget and resource allocations will reflect the mergings of offices and restructuring of foreign assistance, or whether the remaining offices will have the independence and authority to do good work, regardless of which politicians are in office.

But Republicans have refused to hold even one hearing to date with Secretary Rubio to explain to the American people why they are dismantling vital agencies and programs. I understand from today that he, hopefully, will come to testify before this committee, and I hope, in fact, that that actually happens.

The administration has already slashed our interagency, regardless of congressional authorization or input, and reportedly, plans to downsize our global presence by closing dozens of embassies and consulates. This reorganization would have dramatic U.S. national security implications, constitutes an unjustified seismic shift in the U.S. foreign policy enterprise, and includes many proposed measures that would be illegal and without congressional action. Let me be clear: what has been proposed by Republicans and this administration would make us less safe and risk American lives.

The State Department, USAID, and its diplomatic corps have been the backbone of American foreign policy, advancing U.S. interests, strengthening alliances, and responding to global crisis. Democrats have never shied away from conversations about improving the existing system, but slashing the workforces; closing embassies, consulates, and missions, and dismantling key bureaus is reckless and cripples our ability to conduct diplomacy, counter China and Russia, and maintain our way of life.

The administration must engage with Congress, including testifying before us to explain and defend these plans to restructure the country's premier diplomatic agencies. Otherwise, this is not a serious or thoughtful process, and Democrats will not rubberstamp half-baked, dangerous challenges.

You know, I'm very concerned about just the lack of stability. I believe one of you testified in response to another member's question, just the ongoing nature of administration-to-administration. And I'm very concerned about what that does to the role of U.S. stability in the world, as to how people view us as a partner. And are we less stable? Are we less reliable? Are we subject to such broad changing whims? And it makes us, I think, an unreliable partner, and it is very concerning to me.

And also, I think this process of reorganization is appropriate. It is something we should absolutely do in a thoughtful, reasoned manner. But what has happened is the administration has taken a wrecking ball to our foreign policy, and then, we are supposed to

come back and take a look at it in the rearview mirror. And that is not how the process is designed to work.

The process should be: we should have people come in and testify regarding various programs and let us determine, have they fulfilled their mission? Did they never achieve the intended purpose? Have they exceeded their authority, or whatever the case may be? And then, this committee should be able to go through and decide and give directives: these are the programs that Congress chooses to fund. Rather than that, the administration has just obliterated them all, expecting this committee to rubberstamp it in full.

So, my question to you is, what would be the practical impact of a nearly 50-percent cut to the Department's budget request by the administration on the State Department's programming and personnel?

I think we are close on time. So, Dr. Zeya?

Ms. ZEYA. I would just repeat the point I made earlier, Congresswoman. It doesn't add up. And, you know, a 15-percent domestic staffing cut combined with a 50—5—0—percent operational cut, it is very hard for me to imagine how, you know, this conversation has been about meeting 21st century challenges, streamlining decisionmaking. Yes, absolutely, to be able to be more agile, more impactful for the American people.

There's a lot of explaining to do, how this could possibly happen with—it doesn't even attenuate. That is a—

Ms. JOHNSON. Right.

Ms. ZEYA. That is an unprecedented cut and chop to U.S. diplomatic operations.

Ms. JOHNSON. I completely agree with you.

Ms. ZEYA. And we are talking about things like oversight, which are absolutely essential. How do you do that all with far fewer salaries paid and operations in place, when our adversaries are in maximum overdrive?

Ms. JOHNSON. Right. Thank you. I'm out of time.

Thank you so much, and I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Johnson.

I know it was before your time—you are a new member here—but there has been extensive opportunity to debate the merits of programs. And unfortunately, we have had person after person from the previous administration come here and literally lie to Republicans and Democrats, to our faces, about the programs that they said they weren't doing that they were doing.

"No, they don't exist." "No, these slide decks don't exist." "No, we weren't expanding atheism in Nepal," or in other countries.

And then, we would get the phone calls after the hearing saying, "Aw, sorry, we were wrong about that. We were, in fact, doing that. And sorry that we spent the last however long denying these things, that we were doing it."—but never apologizing. Never saying, "This is something that we shouldn't have been doing. This is not true diplomacy."

These are just the facts of what has taken place prior to your arrival here, and it is a lot of what brings us to where we are today, is the fact that there has not been oversight at the State Department and there has not been a comprehensive State Department reauthorization, unfortunately, which has really allowed these pro-

grams to continue, whether it is atheism in Nepal or drag shows in Ecuador, or transgender job fairs in Bangladesh—or take your pick of the thousands of programs that, unfortunately, the State Department is wasting American dollars on.

Representative Lawler, the floor is yours.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank you for holding this hearing today.

Certainly, as this committee gets about its important work, as chair of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, and with oversight over M Branch, I certainly am committed to and focused on the importance of a State Department reauthorization. I think the fact is this has been a failure on the part of Congress for many years, in both parties, to actually reauthorize the work of the State Department, to provide the level of oversight that is necessary.

And sadly, prior administrations have refused to cooperate. You know, we have had multiple hearings where we have asked administration officials for information. We had Samantha Power here, for instance, as head of USAID, and asked her numerous questions, and no answers provided about expenditures and programs that USAID was conducting itself. So, this hearing is immensely valuable, but, obviously, the work that we are undertaking is important.

Right now, the Foreign Service Institute is not a degree-granting institution, unlike many of its Service-related counterparts. What would be the benefits of accrediting FSI and why has this not previously been pursued? And what challenges might, in fact, persist here?

I will leave it open to any of you to engage.

Mr. JEFFREY. I will start with that. I never thought of that as an initiative—and, of course, the military does do that with their programs, but they are very different programs. The Command and General Staff Schools, the War Colleges, these are year-long programs. They are very academic. They are very focused on the core skills of the profession.

The Foreign Service Institute, aside from its superb long-term language training, which is in a separate category, basically, does short tradecraft courses. In fact, my main criticism with it is, other than the language training, most of it could be also offered to the Department of Transportation. It is all about process-y, managerial, get-along-with-each-other stuff. There is almost no training in the diplomatic tradecraft. There is almost no diplomatic history, the other things.

If you go to any military college or any military—

Mr. LAWLER. But would you push—would you push to actually ensure that it engages in that?

Mr. JEFFREY. Yes. I was actually—I did a 6-month course once, when we had it briefly, a model in the military 40 years ago. We then got rid of it.

If we took a look at how the military does it and those kind of courses that build long-term expertise in our profession, certainly, they should be accredited.

Mr. LAWLER. I think the importance of language training for our diplomats who will be interfacing with their foreign counterparts

daily cannot be understated. Foreign language training is one of the most crucial aspects of FSI's mission, as you mentioned.

How thorough is the foreign language training at FSI and what can they do better to better equip our Foreign Service officers?

Mr. HALE. I think the language program there is excellent. I'm sure everything can use a little bit of reform and making sure it is up-to-date. But I think it is one of the best things FSI does.

I would just—take your time, but I would followup on what Jim said. Where I think FSI falls down is not giving us necessarily in the Foreign Service the skills we need to do tomorrow's job. It tends to be backward-looking and the management stuff is very weak.

Most people, encounters with FSI during the course of their career is little, sort of computerized modules on things that are important, but routine—like how to keep your security, you know, your computer safe from—on security grounds and how to make sure you are living up to ethics rules; whereas, we need to understand better our core function—diplomacy.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Hale, can you describe how the Bureau of Counterterrorism's efforts integrate with broader national security strategies, led by the National Security Council or other agencies?

Mr. HALE. Yes. I think, you know, it was founded in the early seventies. It is one of those examples of an important international activity in which the State Department doesn't actually have the lead; our domestic agencies have that and they have their own relationships overseas, which are very important—intelligence and law enforcement and security. But it is very important that we have someone that is helping to coordinate that and make sure our embassies are on point and doing everything possible to defeat terrorism, and that they are at the table in their interagency discussions here in Washington. And I think they are well-staffed to do that.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Lawler.

Ms. Zeya, I was told that you had a hard stop at 1 p.m. I don't know if that is something that you need to—

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can stay an additional 15 minutes.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

Ms. ZEYA. Uh-hum.

Chairman MAST. We appreciate your testimony today. Thank you.

Representative Costa?

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

The efforts to make reform and to work together in a bipartisan effort I think is laudable, and certainly, I would encourage that.

The State Department reauthorization, though, that is being contemplated this time seems to be unilateral lacking any sort of input, or input that I can determine, from the Congress. We haven't passed a State Department reauthorization. As my colleagues have already noted in previous comments, when we have had reforms, significantly, they have been in the reauthorization of the national defense bill, which we tend to have bipartisan support.

And that has included efforts in the Cyber Diplomacy Act, which we heard about in Europe, which is more critical now than ever. We noted that in what occurred in the last day or two in Portugal and Spain and France.

Secretary Rubio said he was reversing decades of bloated bureaucracy, but I think, without the input—and I think there is a lot of bipartisan goodwill here, if we would just work together—that that would deal with some of the practices they would like to reform.

I want to ask a question, and, of course, former Chairman McCaul I think indicated that as well and talked about the hurdles that we face in the House and the Senate.

But, Ambassador Zeya, the Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights and Labor champions American values that include the rule of law and individual rights that bring us safer and stronger and more prosperous states. Having you previously worked at DRL, can you tell us why foreign assistance that supports human rights and the rule of law is so important for our own well-being and for trying to maintain stability around the world?

Ms. ZEYA. Absolutely. Thank you, Congressman.

The rule of law is the basis for order and stability in partner countries. And, you know, I would point out here that DRL has played a very important role in supporting non-governmental organizations, civil society champions, USAID as well.

But we have talked a bit about the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. They have also played a very important role on the issue of access to justice. Because in many societies, some of the vulnerabilities that violent extremists are able to exploit is the inability of government institutions to deliver justice, to deliver the rule of law.

Mr. COSTA. Well, and I think, you know, as President Reagan once said, if we are going to be that beacon of light on the shining hill, we need to stand up—

Ms. ZEYA. Right.

Mr. COSTA [continuing]. for human rights, as President Carter has also indicated during his presidency.

Ambassador Jeffrey, you led the United States in a diplomatic effort and engagement in the Syria crisis that was talked about earlier this morning and defeating ISIS. Why was humanitarian assistance such a key part of your diplomatic engagement? And what risks do we run in conflicted areas where the United States fails to deliver lifesaving aid in your view?

Mr. JEFFREY. It was absolutely essential. We continued aid with a Secretary level waiver because it involved at the time Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which is now led by the guy who is the prime minister, or the president rather, of Syria, because they were on the terrorist list.

But, nonetheless, it was so important. There were 3 million internally displaced people right along the Turkish border. If they had been pushed into Turkey and on into Europe, we would have had another crisis like we saw in Europe in 2015. The humanitarian assistance was absolutely essential to keeping them there. It was also essential to stabilizing the front militarily in that campaign.

Likewise, the assistance we are providing to our Kurdish-led battle allies in the northeast of the country fighting the Islamic State, but also denying terrain to Assad, Iran, and Russia. So, this was extremely useful and it was very, very effectively carried out by USAID.

Mr. COSTA. Well, thank you.

And, you know, the different tools in our diplomatic toolbox I think we can use, whether we refer to it as smart power or soft power.

The fact of the matter is that, Mr. Chairman, I would urge you to try to enjoin in a bipartisan effort, to include that we don't abdicate our role in terms of our checks and balances in this effort to reorganize.

Something that just bugs me right here recently is these cuts to a historical tool that we use called Voice of America, and other efforts to reach out to parts of the world. For the life of me, I can't understand why eliminating that makes any sense.

Any of you care to comment?

Ms. ZEYA. I would just comment here, Congressman, we haven't talked about the role of Radio Free Asia, which reaches—

Mr. COSTA. All of those hooks—

Ms. ZEYA [continuing]. hundreds of millions of listeners, particularly in closed societies like China and in multiple languages. And again, the abrupt cutoff of that information, which is penetrating societies where censorship—you know, a government firewall controls all information—it is really an incalculable loss.

Mr. COSTA. Would you all agree?

Mr. HALE. I agree in the case cited, where the platform is the only means to get the alternative information into those closed societies. I don't believe that that model works in areas such as the Middle East, where the problem isn't penetrating those countries today. They have very active media platforms which we can participate in. And so, I think it is very cost-effective to make sure that we are making sure that U.S. officials, American voices, are heard on those programs, but we don't necessarily need to replicate the model used against authoritarian, or totalitarian countries, actually.

Mr. JEFFREY. I was the liaison officer to Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty. At the time during the cold war, it was absolutely essential. Whether it is now essential today, given, as David mentioned earlier, the variety of different platforms that information is flowing around the world—I think what the administration, any administration, needs to do is, what is our message? Define and determine that, and then, figure out, what is the best way to get it out there? I'm not so sure it's VOA. I'm not so sure it's Radio Free Europe. What I am sure is we need to get our message out.

Mr. COSTA. I agree. Thank you for your service to our country.

And my time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Costa.

And I will assure the committee again, and you as well, because I know you were speaking about it, the State Department reauthorization, we are looking forward to being an extremely member-driven process. All of the members on both sides will have every opportunity to offer their amendments, their suggestions, their ideas,

and have the debate about what should be prioritized or not prioritized. And we look forward to your input as well.

Mr. COSTA. I look forward to that. Thank you very much.

Chairman MAST. Representative Kean?

Mr. KEAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I am very interested in hearing how Congress can play an increased role in foreign policy by regularly authorizing State Department functions, so that its mission and its structure are clear.

Back in February at a hearing held by this committee, I discussed with former Representative Ted Yoho how important it is to have bipartisan consistency and strategy in U.S. foreign policy. And I believe that it is important that America is a key leader in health innovation. And I believe that it is an important foreign policy tool that the State Department should use to America's benefit.

A key program, though, I want to focus on today is PEPFAR. Mr. Jeffrey and Mr. Hale, as Congress and this committee reauthorizes the State Department, what specific authorities or institutional reforms should we include to ensure that PEPFAR's mission, the global HIV/AIDS epidemic control, continues? And additionally, how can we use the authorizing legislation to strengthen PEPFAR's effectiveness within the State Department, as well as to align it with larger U.S. foreign policy objectives?

Mr. JEFFREY. I was in the National Security Council when we started PEPFAR back almost 20 years, and it is one of the proudest things we have done.

The first point is, it should continue. The second point is that it is not only of major humanitarian success, but also for global health systems' ability to react to epidemics and such, it is really, really effective as well.

I'm not so sure how it feeds into soft power/hard power, but that is not the point. It should be supported by Congress, if necessary, by specific legislation.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you.

Mr. Hale?

Mr. HALE. Yes, I agree with that, and I think it is perhaps most useful to cast it in terms of protecting our Nation. You know, it is better to fight Ebola in Uganda than in Milwaukee.

Mr. KEAN. So, following up on that, Mr. Hale, from your experience, how can we improve PEPFAR's effectiveness, as its functions are consolidated? And what can Congress do to ensure that the Department is able to manage PEPFAR's large operational footprint?

Mr. HALE. Yes, I'm not an expert on PEPFAR. So, you know, I hesitate to—I can't give a detailed answer. I would want to make sure that, as it is transitioned to the State Department, that the State Department is set up to management. And that may mean it doesn't look very different than what it looks like today.

Jim touched on a very important point about all of this, which is, you know, when I became Under Secretary, I was surprised to see the amount of assistance going to African countries. And when you dig down into it, you see that, for the most part, it is about building health infrastructures that do not exist, and without that—you know, it is not just shots in the arm. It is you have to

build a structure that is going to be durable to promote these health strategies.

Mr. KEAN. Okay. So, given PEPFAR's track record as one of the most successful U.S. foreign aid projects, Mr. Hale and Mr. Jeffrey, what lessons from PEPFAR's operational model should Congress seek to preserve as foreign assistance programs are restructured within the State Department?

Mr. JEFFREY. It was set up in a quite focused, targeted, administratively lean way with very specific goals that were concrete and understandable and a way to measure success, among other things, by the number of people whose lives were saved and people who were not, did not succumb to HIV. So, I think those are the guidelines.

Again, totally aside from the humanitarian side of it, from the administrative side of it, I think it was a very effective program. And I hope that, with all of this reorganization, we find a way to continue that program at the same level of competence.

Mr. HALE. I concur.

Mr. KEAN. And so, give PEPFAR's role in strengthening diplomatic partnerships and stabilizing fragile states, Mr. Jeffrey and Mr. Hale, how should Congress seek to accomplish PEPFAR's mission while also streamlining State Department activities?

Mr. JEFFREY. Again, ensure that—encourage, ensure, whatever verb we use, that the State Department doesn't neglect this as they move it around.

But the one thing I would raise not an objection to, but a question to, is we can't oversell these things. This program deserves to be continued for its humanitarian purposes—and as Dave and I both mentioned, protecting of Americans from epidemics abroad. Whether it buys us all of that much support in these countries, whether it feeds into our larger foreign policy, I'm not so sure there's a lot of evidence to that. It doesn't matter; it is worthwhile in and of itself. But we shouldn't oversell a lot of these things as buying us a seat at the table that we otherwise wouldn't get.

Mr. HALE. I think that is right.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Kean.

Ms. Zeya, did you want to take that chance to—

Ms. ZEYA. No.

Chairman MAST. Okay. Very good.

Representative Kamlager-Dove?

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you. I want to thank the chair and I want to thank our ranking member.

I also want to thank our witnesses for being here today, and I want to thank you, Ms. Zeya, for extending your time.

Given how massive this State reorg proposal is, however, I would much rather be talking to Secretary Rubio. It is his proposal and he should be here walking us through it.

I do agree with the chair that authorizing the State Department is an important function of this committee and reflects the critical role of Congress in shaping our foreign policy, but it is supposed to be a collaborative process—you know, Congress and the administration, input, not dictation.

DOGE and MAGA extremists have hijacked a bipartisan set of foreign policy priorities to advance a fringe agenda that would never receive bipartisan support. A reorg that axes the value-based bureaus at the State Department is a capitulation to the MAGA culture warriors who view democracy and human rights and the rule of law as part of a woke, liberal agenda, not as fundamental American values that distinguish us from our adversaries and make us a leader on the world stage.

The arbitrary 15 percent personnel cuts throughout the Department are further proof that Rubio's reorganization is a bending of the knee to Musk and DOGE and has little to do with improving the Department's efficiency or effectiveness. This slash-and-burn approach to our diplomatic toolbox reflected in this reorg will have real repercussions for Americans across the country.

Red and blue districts nationwide are gearing up to host the upcoming FIFA World Cup and Summer Olympics. And these issues are passionate to me because they are going to be happening in my district as well. And the billions in projected economic impact will disappear if this administration cripples the State Department's ability to process spectators' visas by shuttering diplomatic missions abroad or cutting the Department's budget by 50 percent. The question isn't going to be, who will want to come here? The question is, who will be able to come here to attend as fans, as spectators, as participants, as athletes?

The harm to my district and everyday Americans of this reckless approach to foreign policy is why I introduced the Defending American Diplomacy Act. My bill would require congressional input and approval if the executive branch wants to undertake a major reorg like this. And it shouldn't be partisan to say that Congress has the constitutional authority to exercise oversight, and will do it, to make changes like this to our foreign policy toolbox. It should be a no-brainer.

Many of us went on CODELs during this past recess. Many of us in our visits with other countries probably heard the same thing; that the United States is leaving a vacuum that China is rushing to fill. I know when I was talking to our international partners, they kept saying the same thing about the United States: promises made; promises unkept.

And it is so simple, I think, and easy to counter the PRC's influence by helping to feed malnourished children, by supporting educational programming, by providing lifesaving medicines—small things that make a big difference and they are real instruments in our diplomatic toolbox. And China is waiting for us to leave. They are saying, "Give me all that. We can do all of that and even more."

So, Ms. Zeya, in the few seconds that I have left, in your time at State, have you ever seen a major reorg like this take place with zero consultation from Congress?

Ms. ZEYA. No, I have not. And I was a young diplomat back in the day during the Clinton administration, where reinventing government, you know, significantly shifted State Department responsibilities, absorbed USIA, and the like.

I appreciate your underscoring the areas where U.S. values and interests intersect. And I would just add a few more longstanding responsibilities of the Department, such as supporting democratic

reformers; supporting free and independent media; supporting free and fair elections, but also new areas: supporting rights, respecting technology.

We have touched a bit on the creation of the Bureau of Digital And Cyber Policy. People may not realize it is a very close partner of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which has forged for over a decade policy leadership on internet freedom that directly counters Russian and Chinese efforts to create closed systems; remake the international order to their advantage.

So, the strategic value is not in conflict with our own values.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you.

And thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative.

And I would also inform the committee that there has been extensive consultation between the administration and members of the committee, and Members of the House. Just, truthfully, not many members of the Democrat side of this committee, and that is not meant to be a snide comment.

It is simply reflective of the fact that the last 4 years were spent with an administration that wasn't talking about the things that they were doing. They were lying about the things that they were doing. And even when this administration came in, they were looking to literally burn and shred proof of what they were doing at State Department and USAID.

So, I don't think it should be surprising to many that, yes, a large amount of the consultation that is going on is not going on with the people that were cutting the checks to do drag shows in Ecuador or transgender musicals, or transgender plays, or transgender operas, or any of the other things.

So, it is not that there is not consultation going on. It is just that there is no consultation going on with those that were lying and denying these programs.

I will now go to Representative Shreve.

Mr. SHREVE. Thank you, Chairman Mast.

And thanks to our witnesses. We may not have the Secretary of State, but we have some terrifically distinguished Ambassadors with us.

And, Ms. Zeya, thanks for spending a little extra time with us.

I'm a new member from Indiana and try to keep up with this hearing, as we are bouncing back with markup across the hallway in T&I.

A plug for my State: we have been blessed in Indiana with ag—corn, beans, pork—but there is more than corn in Indiana. We are a big pharmaceutical-producing State. Lilly is our State. Aircraft engines, automotive manufacturing is central to our economy.

And we have also produced some talent in this space. I interned a lifetime ago for Senator Lugar out here, whom some of you, too, may have worked with. Lee Hamilton was my Congressman back when I was in high school and I visited with him 2 weeks ago. So, we have got some bipartisan talent and a history of that coming out of Indiana, playing in this space.

Of course, one of State's core functions is economic statecraft and leveraging America's strength to advance our national interests abroad. It is part and parcel with what State is all about.

This administration's initiatives and this 119th Congress have been focused on rightsizing our Federal bureaucracy, and, yes, that includes the elimination of some ineffective functions and programs. The State Department is no exception.

Ambassador Jeffrey, in your view, would our American businesses buying close to home and more broadly be better positioned for success in international markets under the current decentralized structure that we have at State today or through a recentralization—a recentralization—of economic authority within the State Department?

Mr. JEFFREY. Under the previous organization and under the new organization that Secretary Rubio has proposed, you do have an Under Secretary for Economic Affairs and you have an energy and an economic bureau under them.

But that is also a huge responsibility of each of the regional bureaus and the regional bureau Assistant Secretary. And it is one of the core responsibilities of every Ambassador to both promote economic integration between country acts and the United States, and specifically, commercial opportunities for American firms. It is something we believe very much in.

And I think that the way that we have set it up is working well. The one change that I have proposed is that the Foreign Commercial Service, which is out there in the field with us and advising the Ambassador on how to help American businesses get deals, I think that should be put directly and officially under the Department of State. But beyond that, I wouldn't make any change.

Mr. SHREVE. All right.

Ambassador Hale, I'm sure you have a perspective on this with your globetrotting career.

Mr. HALE. Yes, I do. I think, overall, probably centralization would be the way to go. One of my pet peeves, frankly, is that the Foreign Commercial Service has not really stepped up to the game in most places where I worked. And if you talk to Corporate America, I don't think they are very impressed with the performance of our embassies and promoting business as a result.

So, if we can give our Ambassadors greater resources in order to help American business overseas, I'm all for it, and I think that means talking to American business about identifying what it is that they need.

The thing an ambassador can do is advocacy, but there is a lot of other work that needs to be done to help Corporate America have, you know, an even playing field, basically, is one of the goals.

The other thing I would make an observation on, because I don't think a lot of people pay attention to it, is that we have executive directors at the World Bank, the IMF, the regional banks. They are not very well integrated into our foreign policy team. They really value their independence, and I can understand to a degree why they don't want to be dictated to by a number of agencies, but the level of coordination is really absent beneath the seventh floor level at our State Department. And the seventh floor principals at the State Department don't have the time to give day-to-day guidance when a vote is coming up to the World Bank.

So, if we really want to deal with China and these problems, there needs to be better integration at that level as well.

Mr. SHREVE. Integration.

Ambassadors, thank you.

My time is expired. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative Shreve.

Representative McBride?

Ms. MCBRIDE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Chairman Mast, and, of course, Ranking Member Meeks, for both of your leadership.

And thank you, Ambassadors, for staying with us and allowing us to get to our more junior members.

The world is in upheaval—a fact that I believe every member of this committee can probably agree on. According to our Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, global conflict levels have nearly doubled in the last 5 years.

The Council on Foreign Relations predicted that 2025 could be the most dangerous year yet in the 17 years they have conducted surveys on global conflicts to watch.

That the current administration has chosen this moment to severely curtail our diplomatic and international development capacity is all the more baffling. More conflict globally makes the United States less secure. And an ever-shrinking U.S. presence globally creates an opportunity for China and Russia to fill that vacuum diplomatically, militarily, and economically.

I'm committed to working with my colleagues across the aisle to pursue policies that will make Delawareans and all Americans safer, stronger, and more prosperous. And while we can always do better, and while I believe in reforms to modernize our approach, over the last 101 days, this administration has left us less secure and less respected. Throwing out the alliances, organizations, and investments that fostered one of the longest periods of peace between great powers in human history is a tragic self-own.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how we can empower the State Department and our diplomatic servants around the world to best advance the interests of American citizens.

And I want to focus-in on a case study that I think helps to inform some of these conversations. In 2020, the United Kingdom eliminated their Department for International Development, merging it into their Foreign and Commonwealth Office. An independent watchdog said that that depleted their capacity for international development, and we recently have seen them transfer a large amount of their international development into their defense budgets.

So, Ambassador Jeffrey, I'm curious your thoughts around lessons learned from the U.K. experience and how we can make sure that we are protecting international development—it is a critical tool for us diplomatically—and avoid what we have seen in the United Kingdom, where there has been a depletion with the merger of those two departments in their international development capacity.

Mr. JEFFREY. No, again, I'm a fan of putting international development into, be it the foreign office in the case of the U.K., Australia, and other places, and do it that way, or as proposed now, putting it into the Department of State.

And the reason is there has to be an alignment of the development. Because regardless of who is doing it, it is always doing some good for someone, and therefore, it is hard to argue against. But the point is—and David has mentioned this several times—what are the effects of it? How do we exploit those effects? How do we build an overall program that contributes to the prosperity and the peace of the American people?

And I think that that is best achieved by putting it into the Department of State. Now, how you put it into the Department of State, how you preserve the skills that USAID was able to deploy—and I have seen them very effectively on the ground—that is a different question. But assuming that that is possible in this world—and it is—I think it would be better to put it in.

Ms. MCBRIDE. Yes, I certainly think in a perfect world in a vacuum, coordination is, obviously, something we should foster and we should foster it organizationally with reforms. I'm just very concerned that we will see a replication of what has happened in the United Kingdom, where they have found that their international development capacity has diminished. I mean, coordination without actual investment is pointless. And we have seen in the United Kingdom them throwing the baby out with the bath water. It has made it easier for them to deplete their international development budget, move it into defense, because it has been merged into these larger budgets.

And I am fearful that this administration will, similarly, use a consolidation and sort of an enveloping of this money into a larger entity as a means to eliminating these investments entirely.

The final question I want to ask both of you: in 2017, Secretary Rubio said, when he was Senator Rubio, "I don't want to see us move toward a foreign policy where human rights only matters when nothing else matters, when something more important isn't standing in our way." End of quote. I'm curious if you agree with then-Senator Rubio's points.

Ambassador Hale?

Mr. HALE. Yes, I think advocacy and promoting human rights is a core element of our foreign policy. Anytime our foreign policy gets too far away from our values, we go wrong.

That doesn't mean we can always accomplish the goal, but we should continue to have engagement of our partners across the world on this important topic.

Ms. MCBRIDE. Thank you.

Since we are out of time, I will just say I hope Senator Rubio is listened to by Secretary Rubio, but I'm, unfortunately, not particularly optimistic.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Representative McBride.

I will now recognize the vice chair of the committee. He and I have both deferred all of our questions until the end. So, I recognize Representative Issa.

Mr. ISSA. David, we saved the worst for last.

We couldn't have two more distinguished Ambassadors here with more regional history, in addition to your special assignments. But I'm going to ask a couple of questions that are more about how

many years you have watched the State Department than necessarily some of the earlier questions.

Ambassador Hale, you I think did a good job of explaining that Voice of America, Radio Free, fill in the blanks—we have everything everywhere as though it works everywhere. The idea that we would make a slimmer, targeted one, and one that nimbly might go from a place in which the truth cannot be gotten out any other way to another one—I'm going to throw one question in, not for a long answer, but just for conceptually.

When you can't get—when you can get in, like in the Middle East, finding the ways to get those messages in in a way that they are heard—I'm going to ask rhetorically—is still critical. The question is, is that disconnected from the State Department or is that integral, not only to the State Department, but to all the other portions that look overseas—the CIA, the NSA, all these agencies? And if we are going to reinvent Radio Free—fill in the blank—should we reorganize it, so that it can, in fact, target the people in what we modernly, you know, look at in social media, and so on, as influencers? Would that be pretty much—that is the new way?

Mr. HALE. I agree very much with the way you phrased it and the conceptualization. And to answer the question, I think it is a little bit haphazard at State. It really depends on whether there is a specific team dealing with a specific country or issue topic, and whether they have identified that in the way you thought of it, and they have the right people to advise them.

Because, by the way, the way you deliver a message in Saudi Arabia is going to—it may sound a little different than the way Washington would have thought; that you can say any people there—you can say, no, no; yes, we have got the policy, but this is the way to present it, so you are going to be more compelling to your audience.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

And I'm going to skip to not one that goes back to many of your earlier years, but sort of mid-career in some ways. Major General Charles Williams, the Director of OBO for the Bush administration, is it fair to say that we previously reinvented the building of safe and effective facilities, and then, we have since abandoned them, such that those cost-benefits, the speed to market, if you will, that occurred under his—controversial sometimes—but his leadership has been lost?

Mr. HALE. Yes, I think it is one of the most frustrating experiences I had, was dealing with that office over time. And part of it is, of course, they do cling to their independence because they don't want Ambassadors to be sort of telling them what to do. They are having their own motives, so they need to make sure they are doing things properly for—

Mr. ISSA. Everybody wants a new office.

Mr. HALE. Right, exactly.

Mr. ISSA. They want a gold office.

Mr. HALE. Right. But there are local realities, too. But, yes, I thought we had, basically, developed a concept that dealt with security challenges of the day. It was costly, but it kept our people safe. And so, I don't know why we have to keep reinventing that one.

Mr. ISSA. Secretary, would you—I imagine, Ambassador, you would also agree that getting the backlog of embassies and consulates that are effective and safe should be one of the reauthorization priorities over, if you will, continuing to run out of money long before we deal with the backlog?

Mr. JEFFREY. Absolutely. Ankara was a priority. It was attacked by a suicide bomber some years ago and he didn't get beyond the first line of defense. So, the system can work if you put effort and focus and resources into it.

Mr. ISSA. And my closing question—I always run out of time before I run out of the many questions on this—we all know the sort of biblical truism that “if you give a man a fish. . . .” It is clear that there were time, there were programs each of you understood and embraced that, in fact, for a time gave people fish.

But, Ambassador Hale, you, rightfully so, said: don't celebrate 50 years of giving out fish. We all talk about the Marshall Plan and how it took a ruined, unproductive Europe and got it on its feet.

As we rebuild aid of all sort, including the Trade Development Agency, which I was honored to be nominated to during the Trump administration, and so on, how much—where is the balance, in your opinion, between—and should there be a separation between the giving out of fish—giving of medicine, food, and so on—versus programs which claim to be about capability-building? And should we really define them differently, so that not all programs are equal?

Mr. HALE. Yes, I mean, I have said this before, but I want to emphasize it again. Whatever we do, the measurement is not the activity that we are doing. The measurement is the results that we are having, based on whatever our policy goal is.

And this has been the frustration I think for this whole morning, this discussion. There are people who want to measure success by how many dollars we have spent and how many people we have spending those dollars. That is important, but it is not the outcome.

And you can do things maybe with fewer people and fewer dollars, or maybe you need more dollars and more people. But I don't see that prism very often applied in the business I was in in the State Department. So, that, to me, is the key and it may lead you to more deeper involvement. That is what MCC was all about, was that kind of partnership to build capacity, which can be key.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, if I can close just with an observation?

Shortly after the pause in funding, I was in the Middle East and I saw two programs that I think say it all. Two people came in in two countries.

One tried to justify that, absolutely, we had to turn on the nominally \$100 per teacher that was, quote, “helping teachers do better work” in that country.

The other came in and said: we're halfway done building a water facility that will provide clean water in Jordan, as it turns out, to one of the driest and most water-resource-starved countries.

One was just sort of saying, “But money does good.” The other was saying you don't want to have a monument to a half-done

project sitting out there for years, so people can say, “America reneged and quit.”

Hopefully, as we go through reauthorization, but also, as we go through unpausing some programs with the Secretary, we will look at that question in that light of, was it nice to have or is it essential that we see and be given credit for the good work in some cases we are doing that changes lives?

So, Mr. Chairman, thanks for your indulgence and I look forward to your closing remarks.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Vice Chairman Issa. And truthfully, your closing remarks lead very well into the nature of my questions.

I have deferred my questions to the end. I really enjoyed hearing the testimony, the questions and the answers, and the dialog back and forth. And a lot of it goes to—and this is where it segues to my friend, Mr. Issa—the old sentiment that, if everything is priority, then nothing is a priority.

And for each of us, which nearly every member of this committee had questions, and every member of this committee that was here responded that they absolutely believe in the necessity for State Department reauthorizations. It is unanimous across everybody here.

I can tell you things that I think we should deprioritize, largely individual grants, like grants for sex change surgeries in Guatemala, or Sesame Street in Iraq for \$20 million, or to teach gender inclusivity through Ultimate Frisbee for \$100,000. I don’t know how many frisbees you get for \$100,000. Or helping Indonesian coffee companies become more gender-friendly for \$425,000. Right?

The point is, I could say there’s very specific individual grants and things that I disapprove of, and there are very specific programs that I say I prioritize these. I don’t know that there’s a number that we could put on it where it doesn’t scale to doing more and more great things, like Development Finance Corporation, or other things. And so, that is where the nature of my questions go to each of you, and we will do one in one, one in one, one in one, and see how far down the line we get.

But if we could just start, Ambassador Jeffrey, give me something that you would say, “I really think this should be deprioritized,” and juxtaposed, “something I really think that this should be on the high end of the priority list.” And then, likewise, Mr. Hale. And I would just love to hear you all, you know, give us the back-and-forth of where you would prioritize and deprioritize.

Mr. JEFFREY. Again, I will seek refuge in this Economist article because it is not only middle-of-the-road, I would say it is more on the progressive side normally, but its findings are quite dramatic. And it gets to Congressman Issa’s point, and that is, I both delivered symbolically, fish—and that was one reason for our success in Syria, the humanitarian programs—and I have been out there trying to teach people how, symbolically to fish. That is very hard to do.

That gets to David’s point, what are the effects? Do we really know what supply chain, what managerial models, what will actually make that work, not just in Country X, but in Village Y or in District Z?

I have spent 9 years in Turkiye and 9 years in Germany. I speak both languages well. I don't begin to really know how those societies tick, as an outsider. It is very hardkinds of broad development social/political assistance, and claim that we are really seeing effects.

There is where I would de-emphasize and I would focus, again, on humanitarian assistance, giving people fish. Keep them alive, so that they can eventually figure it out for themselves, and security assistance.

Chairman MAST. Representative Hale, or Ambassador Hale?

Mr. HALE. Yes, I would say that you do have to tailor what we are doing to the specific theater that we are operating in. And so, what you want to do in Mexico may be very different than what you want to do in, you know, Vietnam.

But, to me, where it is easiest to demonstrate the link between outcomes, inputs and outcomes, is things like the security sector; globally, law enforcement, the same thing. It is harder to make that link, but I know in my bones that it is extremely beneficial to America to invest in education, and particularly, to expose as many people as we can through American educational tools, including universities that are overseas, like AUB or AUC.

And economic assistance that is linked to developing a robust private sector to the extent we can in a country, if they are actually committed to doing it. Because that is where we are value-added.

To talk about competing with China, it is not how much money we spend. It is, how do we make sure that these countries are able to compete on their own and not be penetrated by China?

I would get rid of, to the greatest extent possible, the things that are, you know, basically, building new governance structures for countries. It has been we have tried and failed. So, that whole world of democracy-and state-building I think is of limited utility.

Chairman MAST. Thank you.

And I think, you know, some of what you have said today, I have really enjoyed, again, the dialog, the testimony. And I think a lot of it goes to we are looking to build partners. We are not looking to build permanent dependencies. And that is something that we shouldn't celebrate. That is something that we need to be reflective of, you know, what is the duration that this dependency has been going on? Has the dependency decreased? Has the dependency only increased?

And if we are not reflecting on those things in every Congress and allowing Representatives to review these programs that are being undertaken by the executive branch and the State Department, and evaluating their effectiveness, then not only I think are we setting ourselves up for failure in diplomacy, but we are also failing to be good stewards of the people that fund every single program, which is the taxpayer of the United States of America.

Again, I will thank you all for your testimony. I'm going to go to my closing remarks.

And simply, I know we have had all of the members of this committee depart, but I have assured all of them numerous times that, as we talk about State Department reauthorization, it is going to be a member-led process, absolutely.

We have been having many conversations with the administration, to this point about direction and things that we have rooted out in oversight over the years, and why things should change in this place or that place. And we are going to continue to have those dialogs with the administration right up until the point that this bill is written and beyond.

And they are going to continue to work from their lane and doing what they can to make sure that they are good stewards and making sure that what we do in foreign policy is foreign policy that works to put America first; that it makes sense for Americans and makes us the partner of choice for these countries, and not a pariah with these countries that we are undertaking diplomacy in.

And assure these members, you know, every member, that there will be portals and opportunity for every single one of them to input their amendments, their ideas, their thoughts, whatever it is that they want to add or detract from in this bill. And we look forward to making sure that we hear from each and every one of them, and hopefully, find that no members are silenced or precluded from offering the policies that they want to put forward, as sometimes takes place with minorities. They sometimes don't want to participate because, then, they had to say they were a part of the process, and I hope that is not the case of what takes place here.

I do thank each of you for your valuable testimony.

And I do thank, again, all the members for their questions.

And members of the committee may have some additional questions for each of you witnesses, and we will ask that you respond to those questions in writing.

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

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:47 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD



Chairman Brian Mast

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

Brian J. Mast (R-FL), Chairman

April 23, 2025

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held at 10:00 a.m. in room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

DATE: Wednesday, April 30, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: 2172 RHOB

SUBJECT: The Need for an Authorized State Department

WITNESSES: The Honorable James F. Jeffrey
Retired Career Foreign Service Officer
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable David Hale
Former Under Secretary for Political Affairs
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable Uzra Zeya
President and CEO
Human Rights First

*NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

By Direction of the Chair

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date April 30, 2025 Room 2172 RHOB

Starting Time 10:07 Ending Time 13:47

Recesses ☐ (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Mast, Rep. Biggs

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Need for an Authorized State Department

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attached

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.)*

Rep. Baumgartner, Rep. Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 13:47

Meg Wagner
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

Committee on Foreign Affairs
119th Congress

ATTENDANCE

Meeting on: The Need for an Authorized State Department

Date: April 30, 2025

Representative	Present	Absent	Representative	Present	Absent
Chairman Mast	X		RM Meeks	X	
Rep. McCaul	X		Rep. Sherman		X
Rep. Smith	X		Rep. Connolly		X
Rep. Wilson	X		Rep. Keating	X	
Rep. Perry	X		Rep. Bera	X	
Rep. Issa	X		Rep. Castro	X	
Rep. Burchett		X	Rep. Titus	X	
Rep. Green		X	Rep. Lieu		X
Rep. Barr	X		Rep. Jacobs	X	
Rep. Jackson	X		Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick	X	
Rep. Kim	X		Rep. Stanton	X	
Rep. Salazar		X	Rep. Moskowitz	X	
Rep. Huizenga	X		Rep. Jackson	X	
Rep. Radewagen		X	Rep. Kamlager-Dove	X	
Rep. Davidson	X		Rep. Costa	X	
Rep. Baird	X		Rep. Amo	X	
Rep. Kean	X		Rep. Mfume		X
Rep. Lawler	X		Rep. Jayapal	X	
Rep. Mills	X		Rep. Latimer		X
Rep. McCormick	X		Rep. Olszewski	X	
Rep. Self	X		Rep. Johnson	X	
Rep. Zinke		X	Rep. McBride	X	
Rep. Moylan	X		Rep. Schneider	X	
Rep. Luna	X		Rep. Dean	X	
Rep. Shreve	X				
Rep. Biggs	X				
Rep. Baumgartner		X			
Rep. Mackenzie	X				

MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER
5TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

124 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4705
(202) 225-2006

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4705

April 14, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

I commend your efforts to realign U.S. foreign assistance under a unified strategic framework. The integration of USAID into the Department of State represents a major shift in how we advance American values and interests abroad. If executed thoughtfully, this transition offers a chance to eliminate duplication, clarify priorities, and strengthen the impact of our foreign policy.

At the same time, I want to share a few considerations that I hope will inform the immediate next phase of the Department's planning and implementation between now and July.

First, as the United States navigates intensifying global competition—especially with the People's Republic of China—our **civilian soft power tools are indispensable**. From the Sahel to Southeast Asia, USAID has been on the front lines of humanitarian response, democratic transition, and post-conflict stabilization. Where we step back, others step in—and they do not share our values or interests.

I recognize that parts of USAID's footprint can and should be streamlined. But I urge you not to discard the Agency's **expeditionary and field-based DNA**—its ability to mobilize, operate in austere environments, and deploy rapid, locally tailored programming through mechanisms like localization grants, the Disaster Assistance Response Teams and the Office of Transition Initiatives. Those capabilities are not easily replicated within the traditional State Department model, which was built for diplomacy to project policy to world capitals, not decentralized, multi-year and multi-billion dollar program management.

Rather than grafting USAID's functions onto a diplomatic structure that lacks the operating posture to sustain them, I encourage the Department to consider standing up a **purpose-built expeditionary capacity**—one that draws from and retains the best of USAID's experience but is integrated into the Department's strategic and security framework from the ground up.

Second, I want to better understand how the Department is **managing the operational risk** associated with the sudden loss of so much field and technical expertise. The March 28 Reduction-In-Force memorandum referenced a forthcoming **independent hiring process** to support ongoing operations. Can you provide additional detail on:

- The **timeline and scope** of that hiring plan;
- Whether any **expeditionary, technical, or program management staff** from USAID are being prioritized for retention or rehire;

- How the Department is ensuring continuity of mission-critical functions during the transition, particularly in conflict and disaster settings.

I fully support the goal of modernizing our foreign assistance posture and making it more accountable to U.S. interests. But I believe strongly that those interests are best served by **building forward—not starting from scratch**. Let's retain what works, stand up what we need, and ensure that America continues to lead not just with diplomacy, but with decisive and agile action on the ground.

Thank you for your leadership. I look forward to supporting this effort and working with you to build a next-generation foreign assistance platform worthy of the challenges we face.

Sincerely,



Michael Baumgartner
Member of Congress

**“The Need for an Authorized State Department”
House Foreign Affairs Committee
10:00 AM, Wednesday, April 30, 2025
Rayburn 2172
Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)**

As a Senator of Florida, Senator Rubio was a staunch supporter of promoting American principles abroad such as democracy, respect for human rights, and sending assistance to the most vulnerable populations in the world, especially in the Western Hemisphere. In promoting such principles, the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) served as the essential American soft power tools to implement them. As Secretary of State, he has consistently alleged that he is committed to making “America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.” Secretary Rubio now claims that the State Department is “bloated, bureaucratic” and “ beholden to radical political ideology.” With this insular sentiment in mind, he announced a drastic reorganization of the U.S. State Department without any consultation or cooperation with Congress. As a Professional Staff Member who served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for ten years and a proud senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I know firsthand how the structure of the State Department is curated to address the dynamic challenges facing the world and its most vulnerable populations.

A Russian-led illegal and unjust invasion of Ukraine, a two-year war in Sudan with no end in sight, and approximately 52,000 Palestinian civilians killed in Gaza as Israel continues its offensive attacks. Instead of providing robust humanitarian assistance and appointing and sending U.S. Special Envoys to end such crises, the Trump Administration has taken a wrecking ball to the world premier aid organization and now dismantled critical offices at the U.S. State Department.

Indeed, there is a need for an authorized U.S. State Department. Such a process includes advice, consultation, and cooperation with Congress, which Secretary Rubio promised. Instead, the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee calls all members to attend a hearing after the reorganization has been announced and confirmed. I whole-heartedly disagree with the Trump Administration and Secretary Rubio’s reorganization of the U.S. State Department and find his backtracking of commitments to Congress despicable.

The reorganization demonstrates the U.S. State Department subsuming the essential USAID. For over six decades, USAID has effectively led U.S. humanitarian and development efforts and has served as a powerful tool to counter malign influence globally. USAID bolsters U.S. national security priorities, saves countless vulnerable lives through critical public health programs, employs thousands of U.S. employees, and helps deliver billions of dollars in American agricultural products to food insecure populations around the world. The U.S. government has been the single largest humanitarian assistance donor, consistently providing nearly one-third of the total humanitarian assistance worldwide. Foreign assistance has served as a core foreign policy principle for the U.S. since its inception as a global power and in return makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

In addition to the Department subsuming USAID, the reorganization plan eliminates the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and realigns offices that previously reported to the Under Secretary. Prior to the reorganization, nine bureaus and offices

reported to the Under Secretary such as the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations Office of Global Criminal Justice. Secretary Rubio has accused the bureaus and offices as “radical causes at taxpayer expense.” However, the Office of Global Criminal Justice and Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations worked to hold perpetrators of atrocities accountable and prevent them from recurring. Who is going to ensure that the Rapid Support Forces are held accountable for committing atrocities and a genocide in Sudan? Who is going to ensure that the war criminal, Putin is held accountable for kidnapping and indoctrinating thousands of Ukrainian children? Who is going to ensure that China ends its horrific genocide against Uyghur Muslims? It won’t be the Chinese, Russians, or Iranians who are so desperate to fill the gaps that the U.S. will create by dismantling USAID and reducing the structure of the State Department.

In my years of public service, I have never witnessed such an abhorrent Administration that single-handedly weakened the U.S. presence on the global stage and hand our soft powers over to war criminals and dictators such as Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping. My colleagues and I will not sit idly by as the Trump Administration destroys the lead development and diplomacy agencies in the world. We are going to fight every way we can in the courts, in public opinion, with the bully pulpit, and in the halls of Congress.

House Foreign Affairs Committee
“The Need for an Authorized State Department”
April 30, 2025
Ambassador Hale
Rep. Baumgartner

Before coming to Congress, the Middle East helped shape my career. I studied there as a young man, served in Baghdad with the Department of State during the surge, and embedded with an Afghan counternarcotics team in Helmand. On my first trip abroad as a member of Congress earlier this year, I returned to Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Some things have changed. Some haven't.

But one lesson is clearer than ever: American leadership can't be built on one-off deals or illusions of grand bargains. It takes showing up, keeping promises, and leveraging our partnerships.

That means we need a State Department that is purpose-built for the challenges and competition we face in every corner of the globe — not one that gets bogged down in bureaucratic stalemates.

I welcome Secretary Rubio's efforts to better align our foreign assistance with our diplomacy and long-term strategy. But while I support reform, I am deeply concerned that the scope and speed of some proposed cuts risk flushing out critical expertise and expeditionary capacity — capabilities that take years to build and seconds to lose.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I request unanimous consent to enter into the record my April 14th oversight letter to Secretary Rubio, seeking information on what steps the Department is taking to preserve critical USAID field capabilities and operational expertise.

I'd like to focus my questions on the Middle East. If America steps back from this region, others will fill the void. Nowhere is that clearer than Foreign Military Sales (FMS).

On my CODEL to Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE, I saw firsthand that reliability is the foundation of American leadership. Foreign partners who invest billions of dollars upfront in U.S. systems — and wait years for delivery — increasingly question whether we can still be the security guarantor of choice.

If we fail to fix FMS, we risk ceding ground to China, Russia and others who are eager to fill that vacuum. Modernizing FMS isn't charity for our allies — it's about restoring America's credibility and securing our long-term interests.

Question 1:

Ambassador Hale, drawing on your deep experience in the Gulf and Levant, how important is it for U.S. security assistance, including Foreign Military Sales, to be not just available but predictable and responsive? Based on what you've seen, what are the strategic risks if we don't

modernize FMS and our partners turn elsewhere? And what specific reforms to State Department processes would you recommend?

Answer:

I do not have great expertise in the FMS process; I was DCM and ambassador in countries mostly reliant on FMF, where an active U.S. role in the contracting process is probably necessary to assure U.S. assistance is not wasted (although the process could be streamlined). It is my opinion that we should favor and encourage Direct Commercial Sales instead of FMS to the extent possible, which retains the government's ability to control export licenses and conduct end use monitoring without inserting itself as the general agent and contractor for sales of arms and defense equipment. There is an overall impression is that DCS is faster and more flexible. There may be purchasing countries that lack the administrative capacity, or have corruption concerns, where a simpler variant of the FMS process may offer levels of assurance that secure the sale. I also experienced one instance in which a third country provided the funding for a U.S. equipment purchase by another country, and the FMS contracting gold standard was an essential reassurance to the third country's leaders that the money would not go awry, and secured a transfer favorable to U.S. security interests. I suspect those instances will be rare. From a U.S. interests point of view, I don't see an argument that FMS is inherently superior to DCS.

Question 2:

Ambassador Hale, apart from authorizing the State Department to lead our immediate foreign affairs interests, Congress has deliberately created independent establishments like the Wilson Center, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the National Endowment for Democracy to serve enduring American foreign policy interests — institutions intentionally designed to project our values across administrations and through the decades. As we consider reforms to modernize and streamline State operations, what role should these independent instruments of American influence and ideals — which Congress intended to endure beyond any one administration — play in our oversight and reauthorization today? I agree with the assessment you provided in your testimony that the effectiveness of these institutions should be measured by whether they materially advance U.S. interests—not merely by their existence or funding levels. Do you have thoughts on, or examples of, foreign assistance functions that are better administered independently of the State Department?

Answer:

The Wilson Center and USIP filled a gap in the world of think tanks: they were non-partisan and did not try to project particular, political points of view. That will be a real loss, as other organizations are unlikely to be able to serve as unbiased platforms for informed, professional, unemotional policy discussion and debate, sought after by Americans and foreign leaders and advocates. Moreover, the benefits came at fractional costs for the USG. A surprise for me was how little U.S. foreign affairs agencies made use of these platforms. Perhaps exposure to 60-90 minute public discussion of policy was too much for some Executive Branch officials -- in contrast to congressional members and staff, who were eager participants and audiences for our

events. I was also struck that foreign affairs agencies, in my experience, did not tap the enormous expertise available to them at these think tanks for off-the-record briefings, "Red Team" exercises, or tasking of research papers. Our agencies can get stuffy, stovepiped, and arid -- fresh ideas could improve policy by testing assumptions and bringing outsiders into the discussion.

Question 3:

Ambassador Hale, you bring a rare breadth of experience — from negotiating Middle East peace frameworks to leading missions in Pakistan, Lebanon, and Jordan. Based on your career across fragile states and complex diplomacy, how do institutions like the Wilson Center or USIP contribute uniquely to sustaining U.S. strategic influence and thought leadership — in ways that traditional diplomatic or public diplomacy missions, no matter how skilled, often cannot?

Answer:

These organizations were highly respected overseas and their events seen as uniquely bipartisan and committed not to any one point of view but to ensuring a balanced, rational, and rich discussion of the widest range of issues relevant to American foreign interests. In my experience, foreign leaders at many levels -- from government, opposition, legislatures, NGOs, academia, the business world -- viewed these bodies as "must do" stops when engaging Washington, thereby enriching discussion, debate and understanding of these issues in our nation and theirs. If we are only left with think tanks that associate with one party or the other, we will be much the poorer for it. America's global power arises from the strength of our military, economy, and values. At minimal cost, the Wilson Center and USIP served as formats to discuss how those sources of power were knitted together to make our nation a force for good in the world. They engaged in-depth with American and foreign audiences without partisanship to discuss how best to advance American interests and global stability.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD: REPRESENTATIVE BAUMGARTNER
“The Need for an Authorized State Department”
April 30, 2025
Ambassador Jeffrey

Question 1:

Ambassador Jeffrey, during your leadership roles in the Middle East, how critical was America’s role as a security guarantor — and how much of that role depended not just on our military presence, but on the timely and reliable provision of equipment and support through systems like FMS? What specific reforms to State Department bureaucracy would you recommend to improve that responsiveness?

ANSWER 1:

As most recently seen in America’s intervention halting escalation of India-Pakistan fighting, the United States plays a central, unique role through its security guarantees and diplomatic engagement in maintaining a secure world. This is vital not just to the populations immediately impacted, but to fellow American citizens, as a world at war such as 1914-1945 either drags our country in or leaves it vulnerable to aggression coming from Eurasia, and particularly in the nuclear age we cannot afford such outcomes.

FMS programs reinforce our overall diplomatic and military presence tools to maintain our security guarantor role. Aside from the benefits to American firms, such sales augment the ability of our partners to defend themselves without massive US troop deployments, the preferred solution in all but the most dramatic of conflicts, as we operate collective security “by, with, and through” our partners and allies.

To make FMS more efficient, and in particular, to operate more quickly, most of the layers currently in the ponderous State Department, Defense Department, Congressional authorization process should be removed. (Pursuit of the “perfect” at the expense of the “good enough” standard in accountability, legal, humanitarian and other considerations vastly slows and complicates the most simple of sales.) Congress as a whole should have one “bite” at the apple; the tendency of individual members or staffers to informally placed holds ended; and the entire State Department FMS bureaucracy should have a time limit on processing with Presidential appointee level officials at State authorized and required to sign off if those limits have been passed.

Question 2:

Ambassador Jeffrey, during your leadership in Iraq, Syria, and across the Middle East, how essential were independent tools like the Middle East Broadcasting Networks in helping the United States compete in the information domain — not only against authoritarian regimes, but also extremist movements like ISIS? In your experience, is this a capability that Congress and the Administration should preserve? If so, can a fully

centralized State Department structure effectively replicate what mission-driven institutions like MBN accomplish?

ANSWER 2:

I did not see a significant impact by MBN per se. I did see considerable effects from overall administration public affairs efforts, through State, DoD, and White House briefings and statements broadly covered in the region by commercial media, by media appearances by Washington-based officials, and by our local embassy staffs, through a broad variety of international and regional media. Those efforts should continue through whatever media platforms which polling and experience shows are most widely followed and influential in the region. I thought that the efforts by the GAC and other prior administrations to combat rapidly disinformation put out by our enemies both terrorists and Iran were effective, but understand the concerns many in congress and the larger American population have with excesses leading to potential censoring of Americans' freedom of expression. The specific bureaucratic model is less important than the skill, wisdom, and presidential support that the individual in charge, be it the Secretary in a centralized system, or an institutional leader, brings to the effort.

Question 3:

Ambassador Jeffrey, you expressed skepticism about the general effectiveness of soft power, yet you pointed to programs like the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and certain humanitarian assistance efforts as examples where soft power has been effectively employed. Is it your position that soft power initiatives should, at a minimum, meet the following criteria?

- Clear Objective: The initiative must have a well-defined and achievable goal.
- Technical Feasibility: The goal should be solvable through technical expertise and practical measures.
- Alignment with American Values: The initiative should reflect values broadly held by the American public.
- Clear Expectations for Partners: It should set explicit expectations for what the U.S. anticipates in return from partner countries.

ANSWER 3

Absolutely. I would add a fifth bullet:

- Accountability: Objective measurement of (1) goal achievement, (2) expected partner response, and (3) alignment with values broadly held by the American public, both by the administration executing the initiative and congress.

Question 4:

Beyond TVPA and select humanitarian programs, what other foreign aid initiatives do you believe meet these criteria? Which ones clearly do not?

ANSWER 4

As per my answers to Questions 1 above and 5 below, security assistance including FMS is a form of “hard power” which if effectively managed serves our and global security. It should be subject to the Question and Answer 3 criteria but beyond that should be generally assumed to meet the intents of a given administration and congress.

Other programs which I saw meeting the above criteria for example in Iraq were:

- Support for the Central Bank to promote stability of the Iraqi currency. An obviously important goal within our larger Iraq policy, attainable through technological support in which the U.S. was expert, sought by both the Iraqi government and people, and with a quantifiable measure of success: the dollar-Iraqi dinar exchange rate.
- Backing for the development of the Iraqi oil sector. While such backing, once successful, led to some competition with US oil exports, it opened opportunities for US firms, helped lower global oil prices, allowed Iraq to pay for its own defense and development rather than rely totally on the US and other international donors, was strongly desired by the Iraqi government and people, and again with a quantifiable measure of success: oil production statistics.
- Funding for the administration of the Iraqi January 2005 “Purple Finger” national elections. This was desired by the Iraqi people, the US administration, American people, and international community, was build on proven Iraqi capabilities (the long in place food distribution system as the base for electoral materials distribution, monitoring and collecting), and with measurable outcomes (numbers voting, rate of verified election irregularities and fraud).

Question 5:

Additionally, you testified that the U.S. should not overstate the influence that even effective soft power instruments have with foreign governments. You suggested that to the extent we pursue such initiatives, we should treat them as ends in themselves—not as tools for strategic leverage.

Is that a fair summary of your position, or are there categories or examples of strategic assistance that this committee should prioritize, preserve, or strengthen?

ANSWER 5:

Security Assistance including FMS and what was known as ESF programs are a form of hard power and generate real effects (especially military programs), host government appreciation and response, and thus influence.

Humanitarian assistance broadly defined to include health, food, disaster relief and some forms of early recovery are ends in themselves from the standpoint of saving lives (and in

the case of health in some cases protecting the health of Americans from foreign-generated epidemics). They generate good will among populations and government officials; as I mentioned in my testimony that does not get you a “seat at the table” you otherwise would not have, but promotes understanding, trust and good relations among officials, which are often lubricants of diplomatic success. Finally, these are relatively “simple” discrete programs to administer, thus cost effective and usually measurable, meeting various of the criteria in Question/Answer 3.

The third category, broader development or economic assistance, which makes up traditionally a large part of American and overall international community assistance, is problematic. At the 50,000 foot level, as the Economist in the March 8 article I cited in testimony argues, it is hard to see macroeconomic let alone political development successes in recent decades from the huge inputs. The complexities (and huge costs and bureaucracies) attendant to understanding let alone “tweaking” extraordinarily different societies, political systems and economies, lack of accountability, and vague definitions of success, all violate the criteria in Question/Answer 3.

But the examples I cited in Answer 4 are all part of this third category, and programs similar to them, meeting the above criteria, can be useful in case by case application in: (1) achieving clear objectives; (2) winning cooperation and trust from host governments and political forces for so doing; (3) advancing the interests of the American people assuming advantages of having cooperation and trust with the state involved, and assuming there are objective benefits of those programs (e.g., increased Iraqi oil exports reduced overall gasoline prices and impacted those earnings Russia which gains for its exports to fund war in Ukraine.)