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Testimony for Senate Foreign Relations Committee,
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian
Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues
Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Priorities for the Western Hemisphere
Thursday, September 7, 2023, 10:30 a.m.**

Thank you, Chairman Kaine and Ranking Member Rubio, and distinguished members of the sub-committee for the opportunity to speak with you about the Administration's proposed FY 2024 budget for the Western Hemisphere.

The Western Hemisphere is experiencing its most pivotal moment in the last 30 years. The ability of the United States to advance its national security interests in response to regional and global challenges requires a clear articulation of our approach to the Western Hemisphere. The Department's FY 2024 budget request demonstrates our sustained engagement in support of the President's long-term vision for a secure, middle-class, and democratic hemisphere – in contrast to the transactional approach of our strategic competitors.

The Department's economic policies and programs in the Western Hemisphere focus on working with the region to create equitable and sustainable growth, support workers' rights, and root out corruption.

Funding for initiatives that the White House announced at the Ninth Summit of the Americas will further enhance regional economic integration and shared well-being, including through the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity. Countries in the region also want us to present a viable alternative to PRC economic engagement. It is vital that we answer their call. To respond effectively, the United States will deploy the full toolkit at our disposal.

Most countries in the Western Hemisphere view the United States as the natural partner on matters of governance, rule of law, and human rights. Citizens welcome our engagement and consultation with diverse stakeholders to advance regional support for democracy. Bolstering democratic institutions and support to civil society, democratic actors, and independent media helps us push back against democratic backsliding, corruption, and the false narratives perpetuated by illiberal regimes.

Our proposed budget uses diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance strategically to build security partnerships. We help our partners analyze the risks of working with strategic adversaries. And we help them develop safeguards against cyber-attacks, illegal resource extraction, and other illicit and problematic activities. We work with our partners to combat transnational criminal organizations and gangs and protect American lives by combating the illegal production and trafficking of fentanyl, cocaine, and

other drugs. These investments are vital to our neighbors' safety, prosperity, and democratic future – as well as our own.

This budget request prioritizes comprehensive solutions to address the political, economic, and security challenges driving forced displacement and irregular migration. We request \$979 million for the State Department and USAID to implement the U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America in alignment with the United States-Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act. The budget also includes \$184 million in bilateral and regional assistance for programs that advance lawful pathways, integrate refugees and migrants, and stabilize the communities hosting them. Of this amount, \$51 million for the Americas Partnership Opportunity Fund will help countries take responsibility for long-term migration management through sustainable public planning and community-based solutions. Additional funds used to message directly to prospective migrants will raise awareness of ongoing U.S. border enforcement, the dangers of irregular migration, and the availability of lawful migration pathways.

The budget includes more than \$291 million for Haiti to address longstanding food insecurity, political instability, and gang activity – and advances the objectives of the 10-year plan to implement the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability in Haiti. Efforts to combat gang

activity focus on enhanced training and equipment for the Haitian National Police. We also focus on improving health and education outcomes, advancing economic and food security, and improving the independence and accountability of government institutions, including by creating the conditions for fair and safe elections. In coordination with the interagency, we will continue to evaluate assistance options to support a multinational force. We seek to build a more stable and economically viable Haiti, working with Haitian actors to find a way forward.

Finally, the budget includes \$370 million to build climate resilience through programs that contribute to protecting biospheres like the Amazon, advancing clean energy solutions, enhancing food security, building early warning and response systems for natural disasters, and improving enforcement to combat environmental crimes.

Our budget priorities for the Western Hemisphere envision a hemisphere that thrives together to benefit the American people. I look forward to your questions and comments.