

Testimony of Frederick Barton
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Chairman Udall, Senator Corker, and Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you today. Thank you for your support in creating the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), and to President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton for giving me this opportunity. Public service is a family commitment, and I am grateful to my wife, Kit Lunney, our daughter, Kacy, my late mother Nancy, and my father Bob, who served this committee at the end of his career, for their encouragement.

The State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) concluded that "we must be faster, more innovative, and more effective than [the] forces of instability and we must be flexible enough to adapt to rapid changes that occur in conflict." To strengthen our coherence and cohesion in preventing and responding to conflict and crisis, Secretary Clinton established CSO.

Its mission is to prevent countries' descent into crisis and speed their emergence from conflict, thereby contributing to a more peaceful, just world. If we succeed, our investments will save the lives of both local civilians and Americans. Our work will also save money by avoiding expensive military interventions, and help produce resilient societies that contribute to the global economy.

CSO will build on the valuable conflict-related work of its predecessor, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), and other parts of the U.S. government. This work has ranged from helping to facilitate South Sudan's referendum on independence to supporting efforts to stamp out the Lord's Resistance Army, from working to allay ethnic violence in the Kyrgyz Republic to helping the Transitional National Council take charge in Libya. CSO is now looking at engagements on Kenya, Burma, Syria, and northern Central America.

In its engagements, the Bureau first asks: “What is most needed?” And then: “What can the U.S. do?” Too often in conflict we begin by deploying costly tools regardless of whether they are right for the situation. Critically, solutions must be driven by local dynamics and actors. As Secretary Clinton has said, our job is to “work to make sure a government’s first obligation is to its own people.”

CSO will improve our effectiveness by driving a rigorous four-step engagement process. We must start with an inclusive, joint, independent *analysis*, driven by local voices and avoiding pre-determined answers. Second, that analysis should lead to a *strategy* that identifies a few main priorities. Third, *resources* – funding and personnel – should be directed to address these priorities, consistent with U.S. interests and capacity. And finally, the process must include ongoing, transparent *measurement, evaluation, and adaptation*. That includes applying lessons that we have learned in places like Afghanistan and Iraq.

We must partner with those who will make us most effective, building inclusive teams from the start, making timely decisions, and ensuring we are all moving in the same direction. CSO works with its sister bureaus in the Undersecretariat for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, and depends on close partnerships with USAID, the Department of Defense, and others. It goes without saying that CSO must act as an accessible and responsive partner with Congress.

As I met with more than 200 stakeholders in the Department, on the Hill, and elsewhere, I learned that CSO faces real pressure to prove itself. If confirmed, I will focus on three goals for the next year: Bring high-impact engagements to a few strategic places where targeted prevention and response can be most effective; add innovation and agility to the approaches we use; and build a respected team and trusted partnerships.

CSO is already expanding its ability to deploy while shrinking its overhead, simplifying its structure, consolidating offices, targeting efforts on key countries, and building a stronger leadership cadre in the Civilian Response Corps. The Corps is becoming more flexible and conflict-focused.

In the last 10 years, we have learned the hard lesson that conflict in even the most remote state can have a serious impact on our national security. In over 17 years of work in more than 30 of the world’s most unstable places, I have seen that nothing

is more wasteful to human potential than violent conflict. If confirmed, I will bring to the job my personal dedication to help the U.S. expand the course of peaceful, democratic progress for people around the world and ensure our security here at home. Many lives – within and beyond our borders – depend on a more timely, efficient and organized response.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.