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**REVIEW OF RESOURCES, PRIORITIES AND PRO-
GRAMS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 STATE
DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:35 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Risch, Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Perdue, Barrasso, Menendez, Boxer, Cardin, Shaheen, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Mr. Secretary, I know you have been doing a lot of traveling around the world and have a lot of important issues to deal with, and we appreciate very much you coming in today to talk about your budget.

As you know, the purpose of this hearing is to learn more about the State Department's fiscal year 2016 budget request. I know that these hearings also become a time, in many cases, to talk about public policy issues. I think you know there may be some questions about the AUMF and other issues that you are dealing with at this time. So we appreciate you answering all of those.

One of our top priorities is to complete a State Department authorization that helps the Department become more efficient and effective within a sustainable budget. Chairman Perdue will be taking on that effort. We met yesterday with Heather Higginbotham from the State Department, and had a good meeting to launch the authorization process. And I think all of us want to make sure, as we are dealing with the many crises around the world, that the State Department is set up in a way to leverage our efforts and to ensure that we are doing on a daily basis everything we can to continue to pursue our national interests. And that is the purpose of doing the authorization.

Obviously, the President has sent forth a budget that increases spending \$74 billion, and I think all of us understand that is not where we are going to be. I know you are here today to talk about your component of that, but we all know that that is not where the

budget is going to end up. It is going to be at a greatly reduced number. So we know we have some challenges in front of us, and we appreciate again you being here for us to be able to talk with you about those.

The State Department is also proposing some increases in foreign aid, not just in State ops. And yet, in many cases, there is difficulty in trying to evaluate the effectiveness of the aid. Again, I think that is one of the important reasons for having an authorization. Our overseas contingency operations funding still compose about 14 percent of spending, and at some point I think we all know we have got to move away from funding through OCO to getting things on an enduring budget. And again, that is something that through the budget process we are going to look closely at this year.

I do have four things I would like to highlight. The State Department right now has an over-reliance on OCO and carryover balances, and I think there is a great concern that those carryover balances create a lack of discipline within the Department. The budget's misalignment with strategic planning efforts such as the quadrennial diplomacy and development review process—those not being linked up seems to miss an opportunity to make sure that we are aligned properly. We have a massive increase in peace-keeping that betrays previous agreements with the United Nations on the U.S. share of funding. And we have a failure to reprioritize resources in line with the Asia rebalance. There has been a lot of discussion about that, but it is very difficult to see the resources that are being put forth to deal with it.

So we look forward to your testimony. I know there will be a number of questions not just about the budget but other activities that you have been dealing with. We thank you for your service to our country. We thank you for taking time out to be with us today.

And with that, I would like to recognize the distinguished ranking member, Senator Menendez.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back to the committee. I see you have a big binder there, so hopefully it has all the good answers that we want to hear.

As we meet, it is a challenging time for State's budget and for the Nation. Negotiations are continuing with Iran even as it perpetuates the war in Syria. ISIL is expanding its territory and sphere of influence in the Middle East and North Africa, and Putin has again reneged on his commitments to solve the Ukrainian crisis. At the same time, China is rising, pressing for its own political and territorial advantages. In Africa, Ebola has caused nearly 10,000 deaths and remains a threat due in part to a lack of an adequate medical infrastructure and delivery system.

So we have many challenges in the world, and I know that the State Department is at the forefront of trying to meet those challenges.

The fact is that world history has taught us that no matter what the threat or challenge, dealing from a position of weakness is al-

ways a greater provocation than dealing from a position of strength.

So I appreciate your total engagement, as evidenced by the fact that in 306 travel days, you have logged over 700,000 miles to 59 countries, and we will be looking forward to being able to hear what we have accomplished in some of that travel.

I just want to take one or two moments to talk about one or two issues as a framework.

On Iran, I stand second to no one in my desire to see a negotiated solution that rolls back and dismantles Iran's illicit nuclear program. But a deal that allows Iran to continue as a nuclear threshold state, gives it relief from sanctions, potentially allows it to go from being a threshold to an actual nuclear weapons state is no deal at all. I am very concerned about the news that is leaking from the negotiations and that this entire deal will hinge on inspection and verification regimes while leaving Iran with the vast majority of its nuclear infrastructure. And if the facts—and we do not know whether they are facts or not, but various reports suggested in a matter of time that is far less than anybody would have envisioned.

On Cuba, I think the deal was one-sided. The regime has not changed tactics. In fact, it is flaunting its success in the negotiations. Last week's congressional visits, which did not include any visits with human rights activists, political dissidents, or independent journalists, were followed by the arrests of more activists across the island. In Havana, 70 members of the Ladies in White were arrested. Several dozen more were arrested for accompanying them. Prominent civil society leaders, Antonio Rodiles, Angel Moya, as well as independent labor leaders, Alexis Gomez Rodriguez, Pavel Herrera Hernandez, were also arrested. On the same day, in eastern Cuba, over 90 activists from the Cuban Patriotic Union were arrested in Santiago. Another 13 Ladies in White were arrested in Santa Cruz, along with Sakharov Prize winner, Guillermo Farinas. But that is not all. One of the Ladies in White was actually splashed with tar. Clearly the regime has not changed and, if anything, it seems that they can do this with impunity notwithstanding our engagement.

And finally, on Ukraine, the most recent diplomatic efforts seem to have only emboldened Putin. Since Minsk II, there have been hundreds of cease-fire violations and the city of Debaltsevo has fallen under rebel control. Putin's forces now threaten Mariupol, which could provide a land bridge to Crimea, and his intentions are clear. On February 9, the President said that providing lethal defensive weapons is one option being considered by his team. I look forward to hearing whether this option is more likely, given the failure of Minsk II. It is something that this committee in a bipartisan fashion sent to the President, signed by the President. I hope that we will help the Ukrainians be able to defend themselves. You know, sending them night vision goggles and being able to see your enemy does not do very much for you if you cannot stop them. And that is where we are at right now.

I do want to say one very supportive thing in addition to recognizing your most recent comments on Ukraine, which I applaud. For the past several years, I have complained, cajoled, encouraged,

pleaded, and pushed in every way I know how the United States needs to direct additional resources to foreign policy priorities in our own hemisphere. And the budget request for Central America focuses on the right priorities and is a very good start. We need to work with these countries and help create opportunities, which is in our own national security interests.

I look forward to discussing those and other issues with you.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

And again, we want to thank you for being here. I think you know the drill. Your comments will be entered into the record, with no objection, your full comments. If you could keep your comments to about 5 minutes, I know there is going to be robust questioning. And with that, thank you again. We look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Menendez and my good former colleagues. And I guess one person that I did not have a chance, Senator, Senator Perdue, to welcome this great committee. I am delighted to be have a chance to be here to share an important dialogue.

I appreciate the comments that both of you have made. I am not going to pick up on all of them now because I am confident that during the questions, we will have a chance to dig into most of the things that you raised. And I will summarize to try to maximize our time and respect yours.

But I want to just make it clear that since leaving the perch up there that you sit in, Senator Corker, as chair and having spent—what—29 years on this committee, beginning way over here, even further than my friend Ed Markey, I watched a lot of events unfold in the course of my service on this committee and in the Senate, a number of wars, major debates. It is interesting for me to see now serving as Secretary the reality, the degree to which what we choose to do is really important. And how the Congress acts makes just a gigantic difference to the sense of unity of purpose about our country. And this is about our country. It really should not be about party, the old saying that, you know, foreign policy concerns and national security interests should end at the water's edge.

And what has come home to me more than anything is the degree to which we, the United States, are privileged and sometimes burdened with the responsibility of leading. I mean leading, making things happen, stepping in where others do not or cannot or will not. And I will say to you that I believe we legitimately—I mean, you may disagree with how we are doing in Libya at this particular moment or you may think something more should have been going on in Syria. But I will tell you I cannot think of a time—and I hear this from former colleagues; from former Secretaries—when we have had to deal with as many explosive, transformational moments historically than now.

And I just want to respectfully suggest to all of you—and I will say this at some point and I will talk it at length. I hope I can get a chance to do so in classified session where I could say more about

it. But we ask for 1 percent—1 percent of the Federal budget. One percent of the total budget of the United States of America goes into everything we do abroad. All of our efforts for our citizens, our visas, our embassies, our counterterrorism, our aid, our assistance, everything, 1 percent. But I absolutely guarantee you that well more than 50 percent of the history of this era will be written off that 1 percent and off the things we do or do not choose to do in terms of foreign affairs.

And when you look today at the challenge of Daesh—ISIS—when you look at the clash of modernity with opportunity and culture and youth populations and bad governance, corruption, all the challenges that are out there, we have got our work cut out for us.

Now, we are leading in putting together this unprecedented coalition. I say unprecedented because this is the first time in anybody's memory that anybody knows about five Arab countries, Sunni, engaging in proactive military operations in another country in the region, Syria, in order to go after a terrorist organization. And we have five major channels of effort, on foreign fighters, on humanitarian, on countermessaging, on counterfinancing, on the kinetic, all of which are geared to try to win this. And we will win it. I am confident of that, providing we all make the right choices. We certainly have the tools.

In Iraq, we worked diplomatically to implement the President's policy to make certain that we did not take over that effort before there was a transitional government in place. And I am telling you we spent an amazing amount of time and hours and good diplomacy to help the Iraqis to make their own decisions about their leadership for the future, to transition away from Maliki to Prime Minister Abadi and a new inclusive, proactive, capable governance.

We got, as you know, last year all the chemical weapons out of Syria. No small feat, particularly when you consider that if we had not done that, they would be in the hands of ISIL today.

We have been leading the effort to curb Ebola. We took the risk. President Obama took the risk of sending 4,000 young American troops to build the infrastructure so we could deal with that. It was risky at the time he did it because nobody had all of the answers. But it worked. And America led an effort to bring people to the table to help keep this from providing the 1 million people dying that were predicted if we did not have the response that was provided.

In Ukraine, we have worked hard to hold together a complex array of partners in the sanctions, and the sanctions have had a profound effect. The ruble is down 50 percent. Russia's economy is predicted to go into recession this year. There has been a capital flight of \$151 billion. They may be able to pursue this short-term goal of stirring the waters of Ukraine, but in the long term, Russia is writing itself out of the future as a consequence of the choices it is making, falling behind in technology, in production, and a whole lot of other things.

The fact is on Iran, sure, it is controversial and may have some risks. But we are daring to believe that diplomacy may be able to provide a better alternative to ridding Iran of the possibility of a nuclear weapon than war or then going first to the threats that lead you to confrontation. So we are trying. I cannot make a pre-

diction what the outcome will be, but we are leading in that effort to try to help make that happen, together with our P5+1 partners.

In the Western Hemisphere, the Senator from New Jersey mentioned what we are trying to do.

In Korea, we are working—North Korea—we are working with the Chinese. We have been able to make certain changes I would rather talk about in classified session.

On Afghanistan, we rescued a very complicated election process, negotiated a BSA, got a unified government, and now we are working on a transition with the potential even of some talks taking place with the Taliban.

On global trade, we are pursuing two of the biggest trade agreements in memory: 40 percent of GDP in the TPP and 40 percent of GDP in the TTIP.

And the Asia Rebalance.

In Africa, we hosted the summit of African leaders.

AIDS and PEPFAR we have continued. We have ramped up. President Obama made a deeper commitment, and the result is that we are on the cusp of perhaps having the first AIDS-free generation in history in Africa.

And in China, we came through with a historic climate agreement by which both of us have agreed what we can try to do within our executive powers to lower emissions and to begin to prepare to get an agreement in Paris this December. And that is leadership because by getting the two of us together and leading in that effort, we have about 45 percent of the world's emissions at the table agreed to reduce in a way that leads others to the table.

So I had more prepared comments. These comments I am giving you are not the prepared comments, and I will submit them all for the record, Mr. Chairman. But there are other policies we need to talk about, and I am prepared to do so.

But I want to just make the point to all of you. Sequestration. I was here when it happened, and I do not like it. And I did not like it then and I do not like it now. Sequestration is depriving the United States of America, the world's most powerful nation on the face of the planet and the world's richest nation. It is institutionalizing the notion that Congress is either unwilling or incapable of making a decision and choices. And it is arbitrarily winding up doing things to our budget that historically knocked our GDP down and lost a lot of jobs, not to mention that it deprives us of making the decisions about what we are going to do to make that 1 percent—or hopefully more—have a greater impact in providing for the security and protecting the interests of our country. So I would plead with all of you to think about how we are going to meet this moment of challenge.

I will end on this. We had a counterterrorism summit this past week, last week, which really underscored how big a challenge this is. It is a generational challenge. My parents, our parents' generation rose to the challenge of World War II. We spent the then-equivalent of about \$3.—whatever—\$9 trillion. Today maybe about \$30 trillion. But we rose to the occasion. We did what we had to do to beat back fascism. And I think it is a legitimate question to ask whether or not the rule of law, the norms of behavior that we fought for for all those years since World War II, that we are going

to do our part to uphold them and to make it possible for other countries to not be subjected to the fascism and dictatorship and tyranny of a group like ISIL that rapes young girls and imprisons people, women, and burns books, and destroys schools and deprives people of their liberty, burns pilots, cuts off the heads of journalists and basically declares a caliphate that challenges all of the nations in the Middle East and elsewhere and threatens all of us with violence.

So we face a challenge, and I hope everybody here will stop and think about all of the components of how we respond to that. It is not just kinetic. The next Secretary of State will be back here with a new acronym. The next President will be asking you to deal with somebody somewhere unless we start to think about how the world joins together to drain the pool of recruits that are readily accessible to people with such a warped and dangerous sense of what life ought to be like.

So that is what this meeting—that is what these discussions about the budget are about. And I hope we are going to kind of pull ourselves together in a way that facilitates my visits with a lot of leaders around the world when I walk in and say how are you doing on your budget, and they look at me and I can tell what they are thinking. Or we say to them, hey, we ought to be doing this or that, and we advocate democracy. And we have to say, well, how is yours working. I have been asked that.

So it is up to us, and that is my message for my opening statement. And I look forward to the hearing.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kerry follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding America's international leadership and the administration's budget request for the State Department and related agencies for the 2016 fiscal year.

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

It is with that guidance in mind that we submit our budget to you this year and ask for its fair consideration and approval. We do so at a time and in a world that is marked both by stark tragedy and by great promise, a world where America's role is critical as are the resources that only Congress can provide. So we ask for your help. America must lead, but cannot do so on the cheap. The money we devote to the entire range of foreign policy programming, everything from embassy security to our counterterrorism and nonproliferation initiatives, amounts to only about 1 percent of the federal budget, yet it may impact 50 percent of the history that will be written about this era. So we all have a job—to do everything we can, working together, to shape that history in ways that advance our Nation's interests and uphold the values of the people we represent.

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

- \$3.5 billion to counter the terrorist network known as ISIL, address the crisis in Syria, bolster regional security, and respond to the humanitarian catastrophe brought on by the crises in Syria and Iraq;
- \$3.1 billion in continued support for our democratic partner, Israel;
- \$639 million to help our friends in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova as they seek to strengthen their democracies, withstand pressure from Russia, and to integrate more closely into Europe;

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

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

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

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

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

To begin, our country's leadership is on display in mobilizing actions across the globe to counter and prevent violent extremism. Just last week, the White House convened a landmark conference to build solidarity and identify concrete plans to address both the immediate and long-term challenges. The United States is committed to helping countries in vulnerable regions to enhance their capacity to defeat

terrorist networks and to rebut the radical ideologies that drive those networks. We have also taken the lead in a robust international effort to combat the terrorist group known as ISIL. Frankly, coalition-building is a natural fit for the State Department—we're in the business of bringing other countries to the table to support mutual interests. And because ISIL is a threat to us all, this menace has galvanized a coalition with more than 60 members, a coalition that is as diverse as it is dedicated.

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

We are doing much; but we're still in the early stages of a multiyear campaign. Going forward, we must turn up the heat. Thus far, whenever our local partners have engaged the enemy on the ground with coalition support from the air, we have prevailed. And the fact is that ISIL's momentum—which some called unstoppable just a few months ago—has dissipated. A key supply line has been severed. Terrorist fighters can no longer mass and maneuver in large convoys due to coalition airstrikes.

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

Success will also be more likely if America is able to speak with one voice in our determination to defeat ISIL. Earlier this month, the President transmitted to Congress a draft Authorization to Use Military Force that provides just such an opportunity. As someone who served on Capitol Hill for almost 30 years, I welcome this step and look forward to discussing all aspects of this very important proposal with you. The approval of this authorization would provide a clear and powerful signal of American unity and resolve.

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

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

In Pakistan, the United States is working with the government to counterterrorist groups that threaten our shared security. Last month, I met with the country's leadership for our annual Strategic Dialogue and found—in the wake of the December 16 terrorist attack on the military school that murdered 132 children—a vigorous commitment to take on and defeat violent extremist groups. In recognition of our long-term engagement with the Pakistani people, we're also helping to promote development, energy security, health, and education.

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

Closer to home, in Europe, we have been steadfast in supporting Ukraine's recently elected government against illegal intervention by Moscow and violence from the armed separatists that Moscow backs. Working closely with our international partners, we have approved targeted sanctions—including against Russia's financial, energy, and defense sectors—that have imposed a clear cost on the Russian economy and brought Kremlin leaders back to the bargaining table. The package of measures signed earlier this month to implement the September 2014 Minsk Protocol mandated a cease-fire and the pullback of heavy weapons. We have called for

full implementation of the Minsk documents, including the withdrawal of all foreign equipment and troops from Eastern Ukraine, the full restoration of Ukrainian control of the international border, and the release of all hostages. To date, neither Russia nor the forces it is supporting have come close to complying with their commitments. If that failure continues, there will be further consequences—consequences that would place added strains on Russia’s weakened economy.

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

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

In our own hemisphere, we are requesting \$1 billion to help our friends in Central America make the difficult reforms required to address the region’s interlocking security, governance, and economic problems. In recent years, the combination of limited educational and employment opportunities, epic levels of violence, a lack of sufficient investment, and corruption have held these countries back while also spurring attempts at illegal migration to the United States. An estimated 6 million young Central Americans will enter the work force in the next decade. If opportunity isn’t there, our entire hemisphere will feel the consequences.

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

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

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

Mr. Chairman, American leadership has also been evident in the fight to halt the deadly spread of Ebola—and it was a team effort. The State Department, the U.S. military, USAID, the Department of Health and Human Services (including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps), state and city governments, civil society, citizen volunteers, and Members of Congress all contributed. Together, we worked with international partners and with the brave communities and caregivers of West Africa to confront and contain this virus. The struggle won’t

be over until new infections are reduced to zero. But consider that 5 months ago, experts predicted that the number of active cases in West Africa would be 1.4 million. The actual level is less than 2 percent of that number. This is still a terrible human tragedy—but it is also an impressive demonstration of what international partnerships can accomplish. We have committed over the next 3 years to build on these partnerships, through the Global Health Security Agenda, to strengthen health systems in these vulnerable countries to prevent a tragedy of this scale from happening again.

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

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

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

Our global presence does something else: it creates jobs. Through our contributions to international financial institutions like the World Bank, we don't just lift the economies of low-income countries; we open markets for American businesses. Foreign policy is economic policy, and so the State Department is fully geared toward helping American entrepreneurs to build prosperity at home and across the globe. To that end, we're pursuing ambitious, 21st century trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership that will establish landmark labor and environmental standards and help our manufacturers, farmers, ranchers, and service providers to increase what they are able to sell abroad.

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

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

As we have learned through history, the success or failure of America's international leadership is not only relevant; it will be a determining factor in the quality of the lives of our citizens. Foreign policy can help our workers to find a job or

lose one; it can start a war or forge a peace; it can safeguard our families or expose them to grave risk; it can enable us to look forward with confidence or it can place a shadow over the future in which our children and their children will grow up.

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

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

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

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

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

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we appreciate those opening comments. And I know that people understand this is more of a budget hearing, but since you have moved into other policy issues, I am going to feel very free to move into those also.

I would just ask a question. I assume if we only spend 1 percent of our budget on State Department and foreign aid operations, you would think we need to do that in the most efficient way possible. Do you agree with that?

Secretary KERRY. Of course, obviously.

The CHAIRMAN. And I would think you would support then an authorization being put in place. We have not done one since 2003. We actually did not do one the entire time you were chairman for reasons that I am not aware of. But you do support that now as head of the State Department. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. We actually made a run at an authorization bill, Mr. Chairman. I would have loved to have passed one. In fact, the last authorization bill I think was passed—I did it when Senator Pell was chairman, and he deputized me to try to get an authorization bill through and we did.

And I am delighted to see you take this bull by the horns. We have not seen a State authorization, I guess, enacted into law in 2002. It lapsed in 2004. There are the reasons of the way the Senate came to work that literally made it impossible to do. So I would love it if you can do it.

The CHAIRMAN. I hear that, and I think that probably we will spend a lot more quality time, if you will, with Heather and others in the Department. I know you are dealing with a lot of other issues. We had a very good meeting yesterday, and I do sense that you support that and we appreciate that very much. And I am

aware of the history regarding some of the complications, and certainly that was not meant as a criticism.

Let us move on to then. I spent the last week in Baghdad and in Erbil up in Kurdistan and Ankara talking with Turkish officials along with ours.

You have sent a request for an authorization for use of military force—the President has. But it is your belief today that the administration has the legal authority to conduct operations against ISIS with existing authorities. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. That is correct.

Secretary KERRY. We are looking for a separate authority under the AUMF.

The CHAIRMAN. But you believe that you have the authority.

Secretary KERRY. We believe we have the authority under the 2001. That is the testimony that I gave you in December. Absolutely. And we do believe that.

The CHAIRMAN. So one of the things that I know people are going to be looking for, if you are asking for a separate authorization—I know there is some debate among the committee here as to whether you do or do not have the legal authority. You believe you do. But one of the things that people are going to be looking to is, is there a real commitment by this administration to deal with ISIS? And I have to tell you, as I look at the authorization and I visit Turkey and understand what is happening in Syria, I have to ask this question. Do you believe that it is moral? Do you believe that it is pragmatic to spend a lot of money training and equipping people in far-off places to come back into the fight in Syria and not protect them from the barrel bombs that Assad will be dropping against them? Do you believe that is a moral place for us to be in the country and a pragmatic place for us to spend money training people and yet not protecting them from the barrel bombs that Assad will be dropping on them?

Secretary KERRY. I think it goes beyond morality, frankly, Senator. I think it is a matter of practicality. If we are training people and they have a goal and we are committed to the goal, I think it is important for them to be successful. And I think it is important since the Title 10 program that we have now joined into together, which is going to train folks partly to go after ISIL particularly, it seems to me that if Assad were to attack them or somebody attacks them in the course of the time that they are going after ISIL, that is part of the fight. And so we need to provide that.

The CHAIRMAN. So our authorization should actually authorize the administration to go against Assad when they are doing things that take on the Free Syrian opposition that we are training.

Secretary KERRY. That is not what I said. Assad is an entirely different component of this which then raises all kinds of challenges with respect to the management of the coalition itself. What I said was they have to be authorized—the authorization is such that defending those who are engaged in the fight of ISIL, it seems to me, is an important part of defeating ISIL. But that is a debate as to how that is implemented that is taking place in the administration right now. The President has not made a final decision on

that. I think we need to be discussing that as the AUMF comes together.

But what is important is that the President have as much leeway as possible within the 3 years that he has asked for to be able to get the job done. Now, he has asked for 3 years partly because when he came in—

The CHAIRMAN. If you could—I understand about the time limit.

Let me just say this. On the ground and dealing with those people that we want to bring into this coalition in a more serious way, the fact that we are not willing to talk about an air exclusion zone above Aleppo or we are not willing to provide air support for Free Syrian folks that we are training against ISIL, by the way—this is what this Title 10 program is about—makes it appear that we are not serious in this effort, and it makes many of us on this committee concerned about the administration's commitment to this effort. And you can understand why that is the case.

And I know that they are holding back—and you know this—what they are doing until they find out whether we are committed to doing those things that would actually allow these people to be successful on the ground. And if we are not willing at this front end to say that we are going to protect them, after they are trained and coming in, especially around the Aleppo area, which is likely where they will enter, if we are not willing to protect them, it speaks to the fact that the administration does not really seem serious about taking ISIS on as it relates to Syria.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, let me make it as clear as I possibly can. This President is absolutely determined to accomplish the goal that he set out, which is to degrade and destroy ISIS. Now, he has begun with a particular focus on Iraq because of the fragility of Iraq originally, because there is an army that is significantly trained and available but needs more training, and because there is an urgency, an immediate urgency, to try to restore Iraq in Anbar and in the Sunni province because of the impact on holding the integrity of the country together and ultimately driving ISIS out. That is what we believe we will do.

At this point in time, we have flown some 2,500 strikes, about half and half in Syria and Iraq. At least huge numbers of ISIL top leaders have been taken off the battlefield. Almost 1,000 ISIL fighters were killed in the course of the Khobani fight, which you may recall everybody heralded as the test of America's commitment, the test of the war. It was about to fall, and we, on the other hand, upped our strikes and negotiated diplomatically to be able to create a corridor to get the Peshmerga to come in and ultimately reinforce the people there and won. And ISIS had to admit it lost, and it admitted so publicly.

So I think we have demonstrated a powerful commitment. We have already reclaimed—we—the Iraqis and their coalition folks on the ground have already reclaimed about 30 percent of the territory that had been held by ISIL. And ISIL can no longer move as easily. They cannot drive in convoys. They cannot communicate the way they were. We have gone after their financing. We had more than 60 countries here for the counter violent extremism meeting. We have major initiatives underway to deal with the foreign fighters, the counter-finance, so forth.

So all I can say to you is every one of those things is a manifestation of the administration's total commitment to defeat and destroy ISIL.

Now, as you move out of Iraq, then there is more to do in Syria. We understand, Senator, that it is going to take more on the ground and more capacity to do that. As you have seen, there has been some discussion of an Arab force in the region. There is also a discussion going on about how fast we can train up some of our opposition to be on the ground. And there are additional efforts going on with respect to what weapons, what methodologies may be undertaken, and those are the purview of a classified briefing. I can guarantee you no one in the region will have any doubt about our commitment to defeating ISIL.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I can guarantee you—and I am sorry this has taken so long. I appreciate your full answer. But I can guarantee you that today there are concerns. There are concerns about those most majorly needed in this coalition because of the very point that I just mentioned. I think you know that. I know the White House knows that. And I just hope that very soon the White House will not only make statements but make agreements relative to what I just discussed so that those who are going to be working with us in this fight understand that there is a real commitment and that negotiations about the Iran nuclear deal and other issues are not in some way holding us back from making those commitments.

But I thank you for being here and I will turn it over to Senator Menendez.

Secretary KERRY. Just 10 seconds, Senator. I would just say to you I really think if we get into classified session, then we can go through more of this. I think you will have a sense of the upgrading that has been taking place and the pressure that we have placed that will answer a lot of those questions.

And I will be attending a GCC meeting this Friday—I think it is Friday—in London, and we will be discussing all of this with our friends.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, based on some recent press reports, which I have found on more than one occasion on this issue seems to have more meat than not—I often learn more about it through them. I want to share my deep concerns about where we appear to be headed in our negotiations with Iran if those reports are true.

The essence that I have gleaned from reading various reports is that one variation being discussed with the Iranians would place a 10-year regime of strict controls on Iran's uranium enrichment, but if Iran complied, the restrictions would be gradually lifted over the final 5 years. The core idea would be to reward Iran for good behavior over the last years of any agreement, gradually lifting constraints on both its uranium enrichment and easing more economic sanctions, which in essence in my mind does not make it a 10-year deal. It really makes it a 5-year deal if you are going to ease up on the ability of them to pursue enrichment capabilities.

Can you give us a sense? Are those reports accurate?

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am absolutely going to answer your question.

Senator MENENDEZ. And you are not going to take all my time to do it.

Secretary KERRY. I promise you unless the chairman might give an extra minute here.

But I just wanted to say—because you raised the issue—strike that. It was raised by the chairman. So I will wait and come back and I will not chew up your time.

The answer is the proverbial do not believe what you read. And I am not going to go into the details of where we are and what we are doing.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Since you are not going to go into the details, could you fathom doing something like that?

Secretary KERRY. Let me make it clear to you. We are looking for a deal that will prove over the long term that each pathway to a bomb is closed off. There are four pathways. One is through Natanz with enrichment. One is through Arak through plutonium production. One is through Fordow through enrichment that is partly underground. And finally, the other is covert. Covert, of course, is the hardest. You need to have verification and intrusive inspection to be able to find covert.

President Obama has made the pledge that Iran will not get a nuclear bomb.

Senator MENENDEZ. I have heard that pledge, and I believe that that is what he means. The question is for how long, under what set of circumstances, and when you let Iran ratchet back up and, in essence, give some future President maybe no choices but to pursue a military action—and it is very hard to try to get a global community together again when the sanctions have been released.

Secretary KERRY. Sure.

Senator MENENDEZ. So I get you are not going to give us the specifics. But I want to raise my saber with you that I thought—and every time we have talked, we were talking about a 20-year timeframe. Now we are talking about a 10-year timeframe, if it is true, and with relief in the 5 latter years of the 10 years. If that happens to be in the universe, that is problematic, and I just want you to take that back with you because I think it is really a great problem.

Secretary KERRY. But the only thing I would say to you, Senator, is, first of all, I have told you it is not true. But secondly, I am not going to go into what is or is not the situation.

But the one thing I would say to everybody on this committee—the Bush administration, George W. Bush administration, had a policy of no enrichment. And Iran in 2003 had 164 centrifuges. With a policy of no enrichment—that would have been for 5 years, 6 years—they moved up to a place where they now have perhaps 27,000 centrifuges, 19,000 installed and you know the numbers that may be running. What happened? Who did what? Where was that administration with respect to the enforcement of a no enrichment policy?

So guess what. They learned how to enrich. They are now enriching. And the question is whether or not one can now create a system where they have a peaceful nuclear program like other people who enrich that is manageable, controllable, verifiable, accountable, sufficient that they are living under the—

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I am certainly not an advocate of what the Bush administration did. I criticized it during its period of time that Iran was pursuing this program, and that, in fact, the world was not responding in the aggressive way that we needed to which has now put us at this threshold position.

Secretary KERRY. I know.

Senator MENENDEZ. But I just want to leave with you, because I want to move on to another subject, that if the parameters that are out there—you have said they are not true. Fine. It could be elements of it that are not true. It could be elements of it that are. If those are the parameters, that is problematic.

Let me move to Ukraine. Putin took Crimea. He took Donetsk. He took Luhansk. He took Debaltseve. While he has paid somewhat of a price—and you mentioned it—in terms of sanctions, the price has not changed his behavior.

The question is under the Ukrainian Freedom Support Act, we gave the President significant powers. We supported an effort of, yes, sanctions but also helping the Ukrainians be able to defensively protect themselves and I would argue change Putin's equation where there are consequences beyond economic sanctions to his continuous engagement. He is on a process that he is going to have a land bridge to Crimea, and when that happens, for all our talk of not forgetting Crimea, it will be gone.

And so the question is, Is the administration ready to assist the Ukrainians in providing them with the wherewithal to defend themselves as the Ukrainian Freedom Support Act, passed by a broad bipartisan vote in the Congress, provides for?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, that is under active consideration. I think you know that.

Senator MENENDEZ. I do not know that, but I am glad to hear that.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it has been written in the New York Times and elsewhere that this discussion is going on.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, you just told me not to believe everything I read. [Laughter.]

I do not know when it is good and when it is bad.

Secretary KERRY. Of course, but it is the New York Times. Right? [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, that is a whole other thing.

Secretary KERRY. What I wanted to say is that I just talked over lunch with the German Foreign Minister who had just finished meeting in Paris with the Russian Foreign Minister, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, and the French Foreign Minister. And they had a discussion about where they are in the implementation of Minsk. Whether or not the very aggressive breaches of the Minsk agreement are going to now be shifted into a compliance mode is critical to any decisions that are made by anybody as to what the next step is.

The separatist movement is in our judgment a de facto extension of the Russian military and it is an instrument of Russian national power and that has been exercised in ways that we obviously have objected to.

What we have done in our sanctions have had a profound impact. The ruble is down 50 percent. Capital flight is in the total of about

\$151 billion. The predictions are the Russian economy will be in recession this year. I think they are down to——

Senator MENENDEZ. I do not disagree with you. But I would also say——

Secretary KERRY. The point I am making is they are paying the price now.

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. That he continues to send troops, armaments, and other assistance, heavy, significant assistance, to the rebels and sends people across the border. And at some point, you have to give the Ukrainians the wherewithal to defend themselves. I am glad to hear it is under consideration.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it is under consideration. As you know, there are pros and cons on both sides of that argument, obviously. It is under consideration.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay.

Secretary KERRY. We will see where we wind up in the next—you know, in the short term——

Senator MENENDEZ. One final followup on Ukraine. I know that there is a list of individuals, including individuals on the EU and Canadian-targeted sanctions list as it relates to the Ukraine, that do not appear on the American list. The most egregious example in my mind is Alexander Bortnikov, the head of the Russian FSB. He is not on the United States list in relation to either Ukraine or Magnitsky, but is on the EU and Canadian list. He was here, as a matter of fact, in the United States last week during President Obama's CVE conference. So I am puzzled, and could you shed any light on that?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. We each had different choices about who we thought might be more effective to have a sanction on and what entity to sanction—individuals and entities. So we both agreed that each would take their steps, and that would place pressure on all. And the next step I think, if we take one in the next days, which is under consideration depending on what unfolds, will bring us into sync. So not only will we come into sync, but there will probably be additional sanctions to boot.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator JOHNSON.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome again.

I want to go back to ISIL. I just want to ask a pretty simple question. What does defeat look like? What does “destroy” mean specifically?

Secretary KERRY. “Destroy” means eliminate their presence on the field of battle and their ability to threaten the United States and other people.

Senator JOHNSON. Over what period of time?

Secretary KERRY. As fast as possible. I cannot tell you what that will be, and most people have predicted it will take a fair amount of time.

Senator JOHNSON. In Iraq only or in Syria as well?

Secretary KERRY. Everywhere, wherever they are. That is what the President has said and that is what his policy is and that is why he has asked for no geographical limitation.

Senator JOHNSON. Everybody, I think, has read “The Atlantic” article by Graeme Wood talking about really what ISIL is all about. They require territory. Does that defeat mean denial of territory?

Secretary KERRY. Of course it does.

Senator JOHNSON. So what number would be left? I am trying to get some sort of sense here.

Secretary KERRY. I mean, I cannot tell you. Were there a few Nazis left after World War II? Sure. Did the war end and was there unconditional surrender? Yes. Did it eliminate the threat? Yes. Did we rebuild Germany and move on with Japan? Yes. But were there some Nazis around? You bet. Will there be some members lingering around as there are of other extremist groups? Most likely, but they will suffer the same fate.

The point is as an organization, as an entity, as a viable sort of conglomerated threat to the United States and the West and the rest of the world, it will be destroyed.

Senator JOHNSON. Pretty well decimated. Okay.

Do you agree with, I think, most military experts that in order to achieve that decimation, that defeat, that destruction, it is going to require ground forces of some type?

Secretary KERRY. I believe it will require some type of forces on the ground. Not ours, but some type.

Senator JOHNSON. There are 30,000–40,000 members of ISIL right now. We are hearing reports that their numbers are growing faster than we are destroying them. They are not being degraded. They may be degraded in some places but growing and spreading in other places. How many ground troops do you think it is going to take realistically to decimate them, to defeat them?

Secretary KERRY. It is not up to me to prognosticate on the numbers of ground troops. That is something that General Dempsey and Sandy Winnefeld and others—

Senator JOHNSON. Fair enough.

Secretary KERRY. But one thing I know is it is doable, and there are a number of different ways to do it. And we are looking at exactly what that structure and format may be, and there are a number of ways to come at it, by the way, some of which mix kinetic with diplomatic. You know, we have to see what happens in the course of the decisions that are made over the course of the next weeks and months as to what shape that approach takes.

Senator JOHNSON. So we obviously have Arab states participating in airstrikes. Do you have commitments of other Arab states other than the Iraqi Security Forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga? Do you have commitments from any other states in terms of ground troops to join that coalition?

Secretary KERRY. I have personally listened to affirmations of a willingness to do it under the right circumstances or under certain circumstances. I am not going to call them commitments until they are in a context, but it clearly is a potential under certain circumstances.

Senator JOHNSON. Who would lead that ground effort?

Secretary KERRY. Well, these are all the details that have to be worked out and an order of battle and a structure.

Senator JOHNSON. I understand the details. But is there really somebody targeted in terms of one of those Arab states that would actually lead that ground effort, somebody capable of doing it?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely.

Senator JOHNSON. Let me go on to Ukraine.

President Poroshenko gave a very impassioned speech here in front of a joint session of Congress where he said that we do not need to provide the ground troops. They will take care of defeating the rebels but they have to have more than blankets.

I know from discussions with a number of people that one reluctance of providing defensive weaponry is that if we provide defensive lethal weaponry, Russia will just up the ante. Is that one of the cons? Is that one of the things the administration is concerned about?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I am not going to articulate the parameters of the debate in terms of what they are concerned or not concerned about. But an argument is certainly made by people that whatever you put in—not even Poroshenko, who I met with a week or so ago, a couple weeks ago—not even he believes that they can get enough material that they can win. He believes they might be able to raise the cost and do more damage. But there is not anybody who believes that Ukraine with the size of its military and its current structure is going to have the ability on its own to win a war against Russia. So there is an imbalance to start with here, and you have to try to sort of pin that in. Now, that does not mean it is not worth raising the cost, and there are plenty of people advocating that you ought to raise the cost no matter what. So those are the things that have to be balanced here.

Senator JOHNSON. Another concern I have heard voiced—and I agree with this—is that the weaker Russia becomes, the more dangerous they are. Is that a calculation you agree with as well?

Secretary KERRY. Not necessarily. It is certainly one of the theories that is put on the table. It is a calculation you have to analyze and weigh, but it does not necessarily have to be true, no. There are elements internally within Russia that ultimately could come to play. Who knows when and how? An economy by the summer that is still hurting could be an economy that some people predict could create internal dissention and different kinds of problems. There is chatter today about a very isolated Putin with an isolated group of people advocating this and people scared. I mean, there are different parameters to this. I am not going to sit here and analyze it at this moment except to say there are lots of different considerations.

Senator JOHNSON. A quick budget-related question. I think everybody that has gone over to Ukraine and Eastern Europe is dismayed at really how effective Russian propaganda is. There is really no pushback. We have unilaterally disarmed in terms of the propaganda war. Is that something within your State Department budget that you are looking to increase and try to counter?

Secretary KERRY. It is. You bet it is. But I have to tell you it is within the constraints that we are operating in and it is nowhere near what it ought to be. We are engaged in a major initiative. We are working with the Emiratis. There is a new center for disseminating information that is being put together that the Emiratis are

helping to pay for—are paying for. And this will be a major center for use of social media to counter some of the propaganda that is being put out by ISIL itself. But Russia has resorted to a level—and you all see it. I mean, it floods the Baltic States. It floods Poland. It floods the frontline states, Bulgaria, et cetera, et cetera. It has a major impact. And we just frankly are not allocating the money to counter the way we ought to be. And we are fully prepared to go out there and undertake this.

Senator, you mentioned at the beginning why we use OCO. This is one of the reasons. We rely on OCO because, frankly, the appropriations are not on time. And so we need multiyear authority to do multiyear tasks. And we need to get the resources to be able to respond to this kind of thing. We have about \$7 billion in OCO, and we are putting a fair amount of that into Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria, humanitarian assistance, Counterterrorism Partnership, countering Russian pressure. We have \$350 million. So that is how we are bolstering Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia to actually go after this. It is not enough. I am just telling you bluntly. It is not enough.

And they are spending hugely on this vast propaganda machine, which people believe in the places they get them because there is nothing countering it. So according to people in many of those states, we are the problem. Russia is there defending Russian-speaking people. There is no sense of Russian transgression across the border. The people in Russia do not even know how many soldiers are dying. It is completely hidden from them. And we need to be able to counter this and tell the story.

Senator JOHNSON. My point exactly. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is always a pleasure to have you before our committee.

Just on Ukraine, one point. Some of us have been there. We have seen the problems in the country. They have been asking for a capacity to defend their own borders. They know that they cannot stand up to the Russian military, but they do need the capacity in order to protect their borders from Russian incursion. And that is why we passed the authorization in this Congress.

And I would just urge the administration with some urgency to look at an aid package that will allow the Ukrainians greater capacity to protect against the incursions continuing to be made by Russia. We cannot believe anything President Putin says about his intentions. He has shown by his actions a willingness to counter all the agreements that he has entered into. So I would just urge the administration to be more aggressive in providing the help to the Ukrainian people.

The second point I want to make is that we had a hearing here on trafficking in persons, and we will have a markup later this week. During that hearing, we had Assistant Secretary Sewall who offered to help us in regards to using the leverage we have in the trade negotiations on the TPP to deal with improved labor conditions particularly in countries that we are negotiating with that have less than acceptable rights. I mentioned Malaysia, which is a

Tier 3 country under the TIP Report, and I would just urge your personal attention as we get close to these negotiations to use that leverage to improve labor conditions on trafficking and all issues on trafficking in the countries that we are negotiating with the TPP.

But the question I want to ask you about is the Summit of the Americas that will be taking place in April. President Obama, I understand, intends to participate in it. And there is a lot happening in our hemisphere. One of the initiatives that is included in the President's budget is a billion dollars of aid to three Central American countries to try to deal with the crisis that we experienced last year with the unaccompanied children. We have seen a law but I think most of us know that the conditions are still there and we are likely to see a rise of matters on our border as the weather changes.

My question to you is we cannot just continue to layer aid programs. We need to make sure that our aid programs really are effective. And in conversations with some of the leaders in our hemisphere, they hope to use the Summit of the Americas to deal with the opportunity challenges in the region so that the people of our hemisphere have hope in their own countries for economic growth.

Can you just share with us the role that the United States plans to take in the Summit of the Americas and how we can help try to provide real opportunities within not just the three Central American countries that are targets for emigration but also dealing with the security issues dealing with the areas that have been at the root cause of so many children leaving Honduras and El Salvador and Guatemala?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely. Thank you, Senator Cardin, very, very much, and thank you for your constant vigilance on these kind of critical issues of rights, human rights, and of security and opportunity.

We are very, very focused on the Summit of the Americas. I went down to the Panamanian President's inauguration. We talked then about the lead-in. We have had any number of conversations since then. The Vice President has been engaged in this. We want to make sure there is a civil society component to the discussion there and human rights, and we pushed that. And that has been a *sine qua non* of our willingness to have any presence of Cuba or some others there. It has got to be an upfront discussion of these issues and it has got to be engaged in. That is number one.

Number two, when I was in Mexico last year, I took advantage of that to have a meeting personally with the three presidents, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. And it was at the height of the unaccompanied children problem. And we had a very frank discussion in which we talked about the need for enforcement frankly for their help to close borders, to prevent people from moving. But obviously, in exchange, we also had to talk about reducing the incentives for people to want to do that, and they were very frank about that part of it. One of the principal reasons for those departures was the circumstances within which those folks were living, the violence, the fear, the narcotrafficking, the criminality, the bad governance, the corruption, and all of those pieces.

So that is why we have put this \$1 billion request together for you, and we are doing it with, I think, a healthy dose of humility

and wisdom acquired through mistakes in the past—in other words, how you manage that money, where it goes, what the support system is underneath it, what the transparency and accountability is with respect to how and where it is spent.

We have targeted three key areas.

Security. So we will work with police. We will work with the judicial system. We will work with the parental and education and other components of trying to make sure we are reaching the kids and creating the security structure necessary.

The second piece of it is governance itself.

Senator CARDIN. I would urge on the governance piece, which I think is going to be the most challenging considering the history of corruption, et cetera, that there be ways that we can evaluate whether progress, in fact, is being made. I think we all support the effort of safer countries and opportunity in the countries and good governance, but we have to have accountability in these programs. We have had many programs in Central America, and the results have been less than consequential.

Secretary KERRY. You are absolutely correct. I do not disagree with that at all. And one of the first conversations I had with Rasha when I came in was how do we improve our development delivery system, how do we sort of blend the Millennium Challenge Corporation kind of goals without defeating the notion that sometimes you are going to have to do assistance that is not as economic-based, but it is more humanitarian. It has a genuine sort of other kind of purpose. And there will be some economic. There will be assistance like that.

But what we decided is to put about \$250 million in to reinforcing the democratic institutions, to increasing transparency and accountability, for instance, like making information available to people through Internet where it is available or a publication or otherwise, targeting corrupting specifically, which we can be particularly helpful with given our knowledge and law enforcement community input. We can strengthen efficiency, accountability of the judicial institutions. We know we can help them with improvement of the management of their funds by creating tracking systems, accounting systems, computerized systems, accountability, and so forth. And all of that is part of our goal.

The key is who is doing it underneath. You are not just giving them money and saying go do it. You have got mentoring and implementers and experienced people coming in and working side by side and helping to make it happen. It is labor-intensive, but it is probably the only way to have the accountability that I think everybody wants.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to Secretary Kerry.

You quoted in your testimony Dean Acheson from decades ago. I thought it was an apt quote saying that these problems that we have in foreign policy will stay with us until death. It is hardly a surprise or should be a surprise when contingencies come up. You said that his words remind us that, “we long ago entered into an

era of virtually nonstop danger, whether in one part of the world or another or regarding one type of challenge or another.”

So that tells us that we have a lot of issues and we will continue to have. Yet, we are requesting OCO funds as if these are unforeseen, that pulling out of Afghanistan or out of Iraq or new problems in Syria or Iraq are somehow unforeseen and we cannot plan for them. If we have been in this kind of period since World War II, why is it that only now since 2012 has the State Department started requesting OCO funds? Now, prior to that, I understand there were supplemental appropriations that went to State for various contingencies, but it is only since 2012 that these OCO funds have been requested.

And in my view and I think the view that all of us has is that the State Department is becoming overly reliant on OCO funding. You have described these as temporary, as unforeseen, and something that we need to move away from. Yet, we seem to be overly reliant on them.

Do you want to comment on that?

Secretary KERRY. You are right. We are and it is because we cannot get the budget increase we need to institutionalize it. Put it in the budget. I mean, we are already asking for what I think is tantamount to—if you take all of our foreign assistance, because of the OCO, it is about a 14-percent increase—or an 8-percent increase. If you take just the parts of the USAID and State Department, which is about \$50.3 billion, that represents a 6-percent increase I guess.

The point I am making is, Are you prepared to give us what would then amount, if we institutionalized OCO, the larger increase? That is how simple it is. If you want to institutionalize it, please do. And while you are at it, up it to the amounts we need to do the other things I have talked about.

Senator FLAKE. And if we were to do that, then no more OCO funds would be requested? Is that what you are saying?

Secretary KERRY. Well, no. Look, you are always going to have an emergency.

Senator FLAKE. No. I understand.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, there is no way for me to come in front of you and tell you that—

Senator FLAKE. I understand that.

Secretary KERRY. And that is going to require a kind of OCO.

Senator FLAKE. And those have been dealt with with supplemental appropriations.

Secretary KERRY. So I think it is important to have. I do not want to be flippant about this. I do think it is important to have an overseas contingency fund.

Senator FLAKE. We have always dealt with issues like that with a supplemental. But the problem is with OCO, as I think all of us recognize, is it is kind of just an offline budgetary amount that we deal with and we just increase OCO funds. And so it is a layer that we should not have.

Secretary KERRY. No argument from me. You know the way to deal with it is pass the authorization, and we will work with you to do it. And then we got to get the approps people to fill out the authorization, otherwise we will be right back here with another

OCO request. And by the way, it would help if we had an actual budget rather than a continuing resolution, I think.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Moving on, with regard to Cuba, as you know, I have been very supportive of what the administration has done. I am pleased that we are going to establish diplomatic relations. You mentioned that that is accounted for in the budget. It is not an increased budgetary amount, is it, to establish an embassy in Havana?

Secretary KERRY. No. No, it is not.

Senator FLAKE. Good. A lot of people do not realize we have—

Secretary KERRY. We could find a pre-painted sign in the basement of the current interest section and just put it up.

Senator FLAKE. I say that only because some people do not realize that we have quite a vibrant mission there now that has been operating for quite a while.

Secretary KERRY. And by the way, Senator, thank you for your thoughtfulness on this and your support for it. We appreciate it and we appreciate Senator Udall likewise being involved in this.

Senator FLAKE. Well, I appreciate that, and I do think that there are still severe problems in Cuba, obviously, in human rights issues, but I think that they can most effectively be pursued if we have diplomatic relations. So I agree with the administration there.

With regard to Iran for a minute, I have been also supportive of the administration pursuing negotiations, and I have withheld support for increased sanctions during that time because I think the administration needs and deserves the space to pursue every opportunity for an agreement. And I still am hopeful that a good agreement will come.

Having said that, as one who served in the Senate for nearly 30 years, do you feel that the Senate and the House, the Congress, should have a vote on that agreement in the end or some kind of approval or disapproval as the chairman has suggested with legislation?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I have no doubt that Congress will find plenty of ways to approve or disapprove. You have a vote because ultimately the sanctions that Congress has put in place will not be lifted unless Congress lifts them.

Senator FLAKE. But they can be provisionally lifted or waved for a significant period of time.

Secretary KERRY. Well, the President can wave them, but you ultimately are the ones who have to terminate them, and at some point in time, they have to make a decision whether that has to happen or not.

But let me just go one step further philosophically and practically. This is much like a sort of labor agreement and TPA and things like that. If you are hanging out there as the sort of approval people, then that is another layer of negotiation. And fundamentally it complicates it. It hardens positions, makes the negotiating more difficult. There is this looming other entity out there.

I think the President feels very strongly that you will have a sense of whether it is a good agreement or a bad agreement, and there are plenty of ways that Congress can weigh in on that. But we do not think it needs to be formalized in some prearranged way that makes the negotiation more difficult.

By the way, you know, when we finish this, if we finish it—look, I am telling you we have got some tough issues in front of us. There are no guarantees here. Some very tough issues. And we are adamant about not doing a deal that cannot withstand scrutiny. And it is not just going to be your scrutiny. Every other country in this—we have France, Germany, Britain, China, Russia all at the table, all with powerful feelings about nonproliferation and what ought to be done here. That is sort of a first barrier.

In addition, we have scientists all over the world. Our nuclear scientist community is going to have to look at this and say does it make sense. If they are clobbering this, then we have got a problem obviously.

So we are being very thoughtful and very careful. We are running things by people. We are talking to them, what works, what does not. We are taking advice. We have had exchanges with all of you through this process. We are well warned as to sort of where the thresholds are and what is difficult. In the end, the President will have to make a tough judgment, if we get an agreement. But it is not certain yet that they are prepared to meet whatever we think this important standard is that has to be met to meet all of these judgments and conclude.

But I am not going to go into all the pluses and minuses of this right now. There are powerful, powerful reasons for why this is better done diplomatically than otherwise, and there are powerful reasons for how this winds up being a better way to prevent them from getting a bomb than some other way. And when we get into that discussion, I look forward to it. But this is not the moment for it nor the place for it.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And I would just say that as you have said in the past, it does have to pass muster with Congress. You have been on the record in that way. And I doubt there is any body of any of these other countries that have actually passed through their parliament—we pass through Congress. It is a very unique situation, and I hope we will figure out a way to have a role in saying grace over this before the regime totally dissipates.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to Secretary Kerry for all of the great work that you have been doing and for being here today.

I want to start first with asking about our humanitarian efforts to assist Syria in particular and Jordan and also Lebanon as we look at the threat from ISIS and the support that we have gotten particularly from partners like Jordan and Lebanon who are really struggling under the refugees in their countries and ask if you could talk a little bit about what we are requesting in the budget to address that and what we hope that will do.

Secretary KERRY. Sure. Senator, I am really glad you asked that because I think this is one of the reasons why we all have to really buckle down and figure out how we are going to come together around the Syria component of this because the truth of the matter is that as Syria is disintegrating under the pressure of the sectarian struggle, three-quarters of the people of Syria are now dis-

placed. And about half of those three-quarters are displaced in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Turkey can assimilate more effectively. Lebanon has a problem. Jordan has an even bigger problem. And this has a major impact on Jordan's economy, on its social structure, its politics. You know, you have these vast numbers, many of whom are in the camps, but many of whom are not in the camps. And so they are permeating Jordanian society and they go out and get a job. They work for a heck of a lot less. That puts pressure on the labor market, creates a lot of dissent. They come in 10 to an apartment and they all throw in whatever they have and they rent the apartment, but they will rent it for more than it would have been rented for to a normal person or family. So all of these distortions are taking place, not to mention that with them can come some dangerous politics in these places.

So we believe that this pressure on Jordan is a reason to really try to work harder to find the way forward to get some kind of political resolution out of Syria.

Now, we continue to believe and adamantly there is no military solution here. If you pursue some sort of real scatterbrain military solution, you could have a total implosion and ISIL could wind up with Syria or ISIL and Nusra together. You could have any number of outcomes that are very, very dangerous.

So what we are trying to figure out is what is the road to that diplomatic outcome, and we are pursuing that. I will not go into the details with you, but we are actively talking with the players in the region. One of topics we will have at the GCC meeting this Friday is sort of how do we get there. And beating ISIL is a key part of that.

Senator SHAHEEN. I appreciate that and certainly agree with what you are saying. My question really is more about what our humanitarian efforts look like. For example, just recently the State Department announced an additional \$125 million in assistance to the U.N. World Food Programme, which as we know ran out of funding at the end of last year at a time when that funding was particularly critical to some of the humanitarian efforts in places like Jordan and Lebanon. So how can we avoid having that kind of situation happen again, and what kind of negotiations, pressure, whatever we want to call it are we entering into with the U.N. so that that does not happen again?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the shortfall itself to the U.N. World Food Programme?

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Secretary KERRY. Unfortunately, people who have made pledges are not stepping up, and the demand is increasing. It is the largest humanitarian crisis on the planet today and it is going to get worse. And I am sitting here—this is part of the frustration. It is going to get worse.

Now, we are the largest single donor in the world and we should be proud of that. More than \$3 billion we have put on the table since 2011. It is more than any other donor, and we have got \$2 million that just recently went into the Red Crescent, the Turkish Red Crescent, to provide hot meals to Syrians, the refugees from Khobani. We put \$133 million into the World Food Programme and other partners because of the emergency needs. It is not sustain-

able, and it is one of the reasons why we are looking at this question of Syria and other things with great urgency right now as to what other alternatives may be available.

Senator SHAHEEN. The 2016 budget requests \$2.2 billion for work at our embassies, and I understand that that is in response to the recommendations of the ARB following the Benghazi attack. Can you talk about how that will get prioritized if sequestration goes into effect? Where does that happen or fall out on the list of priorities?

Secretary KERRY. Our highest priority in the State Department is protecting our people. And we have closed on 25 of the 29 ARB recommendations. There are four Benghazi ARB recommendations that remain open. We are actively working to close them. There are things that take longer to implement. It is not that they have not been attended to. It is just that they do not close because it takes a lot longer to do them.

We have a major number of high-threat locations that are undergoing renovation in various places. Huge expenditures in Kabul right now to harden down that place, particularly given the drawdown. You know, you can run the list of places easily in your heads as to where most of this work is going.

But I made the decision with the President's consent to do the drawdown in Yemen because we were not able to do diplomacy, and most of the people we had there were people protecting the few people who were trying to do diplomacy. It just did not make sense. So we are doing it from a distance. We are not going away.

And by the way, our facilities are being used by the U.N. and protected. Our computers are not accessible. We destroyed all the classified information. It was done in a very orderly way over a period of 4 to 5 days with a very well managed exit that was done through commercial air not in some panic. You know, I am really proud of the people who pulled that off.

But we are not going to leave people at risk in these chaotic kind of situations, which is the same thing we did in Tripoli. But in many of these places, before you get to that stage, we have got to take steps to increase perimeters, harden buildings, do things so that there is no risk of negligence with respect to anything that might flow. And that is where those priorities are going, into that subset.

I would rather not talk about specific places in public because it begins to flag things.

Senator SHAHEEN. Sure. I understand that.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here and thank you for your illustrious service here over 30 years. It puts you in a unique perspective to talk to us today.

I want to come back to your comments in your opening. I agree with you so much. I just believe we are at a moment of challenge. I see this as a very dangerous world. I respect so much what you are doing in this position to try to deal with that.

You also mentioned that we need to lead, and I could not agree with that more.

But I see two things you have also mentioned as well that really create challenges. And I sense the frustration in your testimony today relating to one of these. First of all, this national security crisis relative to the threats not just abroad but even here at home relative to the threats abroad between a nuclear Iran, an ISIL that is really running rampant around the Middle East and threatening even our homeland, and of course, what is going on in the Ukraine and Russia.

But you mentioned also our fiscal irresponsibility and the questions that raises around the world relative to our ability to back up our agreement, our ability to fund our military, and our ability to really live up to the leadership role that has been thrust upon us.

You know, you mentioned budget constraints. Listen, I recognize that frustration. As an outsider, I see this fairly uniquely as someone new to the process. But I would like to get your sense of priorities particularly—and just one example of how you see in this budgeting process relative to all that we just mentioned and all that you talked about—how do you determine priorities and our ability to really do what we have got to do against your objectives?

And one is specific. I spent last week in Israel. And I stood on the Golan Heights and I looked across into Syria. I saw these three villages where fighting is going on, and it is a very confused space.

But then I went to the West Bank and I saw both sides of that equation. You know, in the 2016 budget, the administration is requesting almost a half a billion dollars in aid to the Palestinian territories of both Gaza and the West Bank. Earlier this year, the Palestinian Authority was allowed access to the International Criminal Court. And this is a troubling position that they will, no doubt, attempt to use to bring charges against Israel.

But independently yesterday—and this leads to my question—a Federal district court in Manhattan ruled that the Palestinian Authority independently and the Palestinian Liberation Organization were both liable for their role in knowingly supporting six terrorist attacks in Israel between 2004 and 2006 actually in which Americans were killed.

So my question is that half a billion dollars that is being requested there—could that be used in different ways to deal with some of the things that you are talking about, certainly one some of the social media counterbalance with ISIL and some of the cybersecurity issues you have talked about? It is a small number but it is the principle of the thing. And my question is, how do you see that very complex priority set as you try to develop the highest and best use for your budget?

Secretary KERRY. Great question, Senator, and I want to tackle both parts of it.

With respect to the \$450 million that you talked about to the Palestinians, you asked bluntly could it better go to something else, and the answer is, no. Of the \$450 million budget support for the Palestinian Authority, \$425 million goes to Israeli institutions, including utilities and creditors of the PA. So effectively it is going to Israel. It is not going to the Palestinians, but it helps Palestinians to survive.

Now, why is that important? It is critical. If the Palestinian Authority were to fail—and I warned about this in London the other day because they are not getting the transfer of the tax revenues because of their going to the ICC. But if they were to fail, what takes their place? Hamas, jihad? I do not know. I just know that as troublesome as they have been in certain respects at many times, that President Abbas remains committed to a nonviolent, peaceful approach to a two-state solution and he remains committed to the two-state solution.

Now, that has to be put to the test at some point in time, and I understand the difficulties Israel has had with them and him and so forth having taken part in those negotiations for a long period of time. We objected. We do not believe Palestinians have the right to accede to the ICC because we do not believe they are a state in standing to be able to go the ICC. We made that argument, as did other countries, by the way. A number of other countries made that argument. But we lost.

And we also forcefully advocated to the Palestinian leadership do not do this. It is a mistake. You are going to create all kinds of hurdles to the possibilities in the future. This is a mistake. But they are out of patience and we could not contain that. And as you know, they went to the U.N. And I spent 3 weeks over the Christmas holiday working to keep people that we would like to be working with constructively from doing something negative, and in the end by a vote—they did not get the nine votes at the U.N. And so we never had to exercise a veto.

But there is a great deal of frustration building, and this is not the moment to go into it in any depths. We are very anxious not to get dragged into the election process. We are not going to. Israel has this important election coming up, and they need to do it without us kibitzing from the sidelines. So I am not going to go further on this.

I will just say to you that we wish the Palestinians had behaved differently. And that is why they are not getting aid right now. We think others are going to step up and try to help bridge the gap in order to get them over the hurdle. But when the Israeli elections are over, there is going to be a need to quickly begin to try to decide where everybody is going thereafter so that there is not an irretrievable clash that takes place with respect to the ICC or otherwise and prevents any further activity.

On the first part of your question, a very important part of the question, the Golan Heights—and you sort of talked about the budget as a whole and where we need to go. The need for the United States to—I went through that list of things in the beginning, Ebola, ISIL, Afghanistan, the Maghreb, the Sahel, Somalia, Mali, Boko Haram, Yemen, Houthis, the region, still al-Qaeda in the western part of Pakistan. I mean, you can run through the gamut of these challenges, and you got to recognize that it is the United States who usually helps to convene or becomes a central part of the convening, working with our key allies, Britain, France, Germany, other members of the P5.

But we need to be able to make a difference to some of these countries. There is a different world we are living in now. After World War II, most of the world's economies were destroyed, and

we were in great debt but we came out of the recession by virtue of the war machine that was built up. And for 50 years or so, there was a pretty polarized east-west—you know, a bipolar decision-making process. And it was a lot easier.

Ever since the Berlin Wall fell and nations sprung up reclaiming their individuality and their personal aspirations and defining themselves differently and free and democratic, the economies of the world have changed. And now you have the BRICS. You have China, India, Brazil, Mexico, others, South Korea people all playing a different role with a different impact. And many of them are donor countries.

So others are playing a more mercantilistic, voracious game in the marketplace of ideas and products than we are. And we have been hamstrung by this budgeting process here in Washington that is not allowing us to actually meet our own priorities and serve our own interests. And I could make a much longer—and I will not do it now—argument of how it specifically affects us in instance after instance.

I will give you just one example. Recently the Prime Minister of a great country was here. I will not go into the details of who. The most we were able to do is provide a loan guarantee when what they really needed were billions of dollars to help them move forward and make a difference. And if they get them from other places, other places will actually wind up having greater impact and influence than we do.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I know it has been a long day of testimony. Some of us are getting our second shot at you today, those of us who are on the Appropriations Committee.

Secretary KERRY. More than any Senator should go through. [Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. We had the chance to have a good dialogue this morning about my belief that we need to be having a more holistic conversation about the ways in which your lack of capacity to fight corruption, build up rule of law in and around the Russian sphere of influence is preventing us from doing the real work to combat their march across their periphery, and I hope our committee will focus on that.

But this may be the only chance that we get to talk to you before we have a fulsome debate about the authorization of military force that is pending before Congress. And so I wanted to just ask you a question or two to try to help us understand some of the terminology in the proposed draft that I think we are having trouble getting our hands wrapped around.

Secretary Gates, I believe shortly after he left the Department of Defense, said that if any future Secretary of Defense advised a President to deploy major numbers of combat troops back to the Middle East, that they should have their head examined. And there are a number of reasons for that. The lessons that we learned from the Iraq war are that when hundreds of thousands of American troops are there, we let our allies in the region off the hook, that

we kill a lot of bad guys, but we frankly allow for our enemies to recruit more than we kill into the fight because of the presence of American troops. And it is why many of us really believe in this prohibition or restriction within this AUMF on another major deployment of ground troops to the Middle East. And I know you agree and I know the President agrees, and I think our new Secretary of Defense agrees. That is why the authorization draft that you gave us has that restriction in it.

But I think we are struggling to understand these two words in it, “enduring” and “offensive,” and trying to get a better understanding of when the next President—because I do not think this President will make the mistake of deploying new ground troops to the Middle East—crosses that line.

So can you give us a little bit more color on what your understanding of those two words mean? What is the number of ground troops that trips the “enduring” limitation? What are the kinds of actions that would trip the defensive versus offensive juxtaposition? I know that you are not the Secretary of Defense, but you are intimately involved in these discussions and the ramifications, would we ever commit troops to the region. Help us just understand a little bit more about what those words mean and if they are true limitations because, as you know, many of us believe that those words are so malleable to actually be no limitations at all, and I trust that you believe something different.

Secretary KERRY. I am not going to suggest to you that there is not in any terminology latitude for interpretation because there always is unless there is an absolute, horrendously proscriptive, broad prohibition, which everybody would counsel against I think. We are seeking to destroy this entity, and it is not a good message nor a good policy to place such constraints on yourself that you cannot do that.

At the same time, the President wants to make certain that those who feel burned by prior votes or by prior experiences are not fearful that he is somehow opening up Pandora’s box to that possibility again.

So our feeling is—and we give kudos to you on this committee. I mean, I think Senator Menendez as chair is the one who produced this concept from your deliberations, and I would have hoped you would have said, God, they listened to us. I mean, we came up here. I testified in December and we did listen to you. And I think the President tried to come back to you with something that he felt did not constrain his ability to exercise his constitutional authority as President but at the same time respected Congress’ role and right to shape this. And that is what you have done and what you are doing.

Now, “enduring” in our mind means no long-term offensive combat of a large scale, which is what the President has defined. In other words, we are not asking you for authorization to give us the ability to build up to a new Iraq or a new Afghanistan. It is not what we are doing. What we are asking for—and offense versus defense—when a large number, you know, a battalion or whatever of forces are directed to go have a firefight with ISIL in a proactive way, that is offense. And that is prohibited and that is not what we are seeking to do. But it does not mean that there might not

be instances where you have advisors who are helping people to understand how to properly do fire control or properly call in air support or something else. There is a special force operation that might be necessary for one thing or another to try to rescue somebody or close something. I mean, there are things that are not part of the larger offensive operation where you may well have reasons to have some people there. I would not consider that—even though they may be in a hostile area and on some occasion conceivably inadvertently take fire or something, they are not in proactive, offensive actions, and certainly not enduring. I mean, what we do not want to do is get into a ground war.

Gates—I think he said it was Gates who said that. You know, the President is trying to make sure that he does not have to have his head examined. This is a pretty straightforward prohibition without curtailing exigencies and leaving that sufficient level of fuzz that the other side cannot decide, oh, we got a safe haven here. We can do whatever want. Or they are not going to be able to whack us if we go do this or that or the other thing. So I think there has to be a little bit of leeway there.

But rest assured there is in our judgment no way possible for this language to be misinterpreted and allow a kind of mission creep that takes us into a long-term war.

Senator MURPHY. And speaking for myself, I do not have any doubt that you will live within the confines that you and the President believe to have limited yourself publicly and within your interpretation of these words. I think that we are just going to be debating the amount of fuzz that is created here, and if there is so much so that the next President, who may not believe in the same strategic limitations that this President believes in, has an interpretation that is much more expansive than yours is, I think that is why we want to entertain further discussion.

Secretary KERRY. And let me just say, Senator, there have been authorizations previously which have had restraints in them, some more limiting than this. Obviously, there is a constitutional argument, which is powerful and important, to the effect that there should not be any, and the President ought set limits. And you can deal with the funding. You cut off the funding. You are managing what is going on, and you have the power of the purse.

But it seems to me that what is important here also is for the world to see that the United States Congress is uniting in a significant vote to make it clear we are committed to degrade and destroy ISIL. That is critical. And so whatever you do—I think everybody is going to have to compromise a little bit. And I went through all your various positions, and there are little nuances of differences between almost everybody. And so it does require people kind of finding the common ground and coming together here. And we hope we can get the strongest vote possible that indicates the United States of America is committed to this policy.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary, for being here today, your service to the country as Secretary of State, as well as in this body.

I just wanted to follow up quickly on my colleague's question. You mentioned that there had been other AUMF's, authorizations,

with restraints. Which ones were you referring to and what were those restraints?

Secretary KERRY. On the chemical weapons recently passed authorization, there were restraints put into that.

Senator GARDNER. What were those restraints?

Secretary KERRY. Let me check. There was a restraint of time limit of months and a limitation on a certain use of force.

Senator GARDNER. And what was the other example you said?

Secretary KERRY. There was multinational force in Lebanon, 1983, where there was a time limit. There were limitations on the use of force, et cetera.

So I think what the President has tried to do here is tailor something, based on the AUMF hearing we had in December, that reflected the sensitivities of the committee. And obviously, you guys have to tackle that now, and the administration is prepared to sit and work with you and work it through.

Senator GARDNER. I want to follow up on the questions that Senator Flake had asked. When you were talking about the formal role of Congress and approval of any agreement, I believe you said that there was this other looming entity out there, that you were concerned about a possible approval by this other looming entity. Well, to me, that other looming entity is Article 1, the United States Congress.

So two questions. Do you believe there should be a formal approval role by the United States Congress for the agreement? And two, will you be coming back to the United States Congress and asking us to lift sanctions against the regime?

Secretary KERRY. No. I do not think there ought to be a formal approval process. I think there is a formal process of consulting and of input, and ultimately you have to vote to lift the sanctions.

Senator GARDNER. Will you be making that request to us?

Secretary KERRY. Not immediately in our current notion of what we would be doing. There would have to be some period, I would think, of compliance and other kinds of things, and this is yet to be determined.

Senator GARDNER. And the reports—I believe I came in from a Commerce Committee hearing right as you were telling Senator Menendez you cannot believe everything that you read. So the reports in the AP and other places that have said this would be a 10-year agreement with a 5-year ramp-down—it is simply not true?

Secretary KERRY. I already said that that is not our view of it, but we have not reached an agreement yet.

Senator GARDNER. Is that one of the considerations that you are making, a 10-year timeframe with 5 years out—

Secretary KERRY. I do not want to get into what we are or are not. I am just telling you that is not where it is at today.

Senator GARDNER. Have you had conversations perhaps with Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader McConnell about the terms of the agreement?

Secretary KERRY. I have not had direct conversations with them.

Senator GARDNER. Do you think that is appropriate, to speak to the leadership of Congress?

Secretary KERRY. Well, what we are doing, Senator, is we are having very regular consultations. Wendy Sherman and the team

have been up here in classified session with many of you. That has been going on for almost 2 years now. We have been consulting on a regular basis in a classified forum. I have personally telephoned the chairs and ranking members at the conclusion of negotiations, given them some indication of what we are doing, where we are. So there is a regular consultation taking place under the normal order of the U.S. Senate. And when the briefings take place down in the classified room, if the practice is continued, when I was here, the leaders are usually there and part of those briefings.

Senator GARDNER. Do you believe that that consultation is what will fulfill the role that Congress plays in this agreement?

Secretary KERRY. I do.

Senator GARDNER. Just the hearings downstairs in the basement. That is basically our role.

Secretary KERRY. In terms of the ongoing negotiating portion, yes. You certainly have a right to have whatever hearings and whatever further examinations you want to have if a deal is struck. I mean, that is your prerogative at any point in time, and ours is to respond to you and to—

Senator GARDNER. But no other role and feedback on this than straight congressional hearings.

Secretary KERRY. No. I believe this falls squarely within the Executive power of the President of the United States in the execution of American foreign policy, and he is executing thoroughly all his responsibilities of consultation. But in the end, this is the President's prerogative. You can always decide to oppose it one way or the other, as you might. Our hope is that we will consult, work together, not set up predetermined barriers that make it difficult to get to an agreement. I mean, every nuance of what we do here, folks, I am telling you gets interpreted and usually in ways that make our negotiating life harder. I am very serious—

Senator GARDNER. Will you commit to us that you will not be asking us to lift sanctions?

Secretary KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Senator GARDNER. Is there any commitment that you can make that would involve a commitment that you would not be asking Congress to lift sanctions?

Secretary KERRY. I do not want to bind that at this moment. I know of nothing at this moment in time, but I am not going to bind myself. I do not know how this proceeds. I do not know where we wind up, and I am not going to take away, depending on what we got for it, some option. But that is not our current—

Senator GARDNER. I am running out of time here. I want to switch to the Asia rebalance. One of the signature policies or initiatives of the administration was the pivot or the rebalance in Asia announced November of 2011 in Australia. The President said that our new focus on this region reflects a fundamental truth the United States has been and always will be a Pacific nation. And I agree.

I am serving as the new chairman of the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee. I look forward to working with you and my colleague, Senator Cardin from Maryland, to ensure that our policies reflect the growing strategic importance of this region covering nearly two-thirds of the earth's population.

But I am concerned that the administration's efforts to apply this whole-of-government approach to the Asia-Pacific region are faltering. Last year, this committee issued a report that highlighted some of these shortcomings, noting that the administration—and this is the quote from the report. The administration can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the rebalance policy by increasing civilian engagement, strengthening diplomatic partnerships, and empowering U.S. businesses.

I understand that the fiscal year 2016 request for diplomatic engagement within the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau is up 6 percent this year, but is still 11 percent below 2014 fiscal year levels.

How do you explain the disparity in the administration's rhetoric and the seeming discrepancy in the budget request?

Secretary KERRY. I am not sure I followed you completely on the what is up.

Senator GARDNER. So basically the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau is up 6 percent, but that is still 11 percent below what the fiscal year 2014 funding levels were. So despite the efforts of the Asian pivot or the talk or the rhetoric of an Asian pivot, are we actually reaching that and does that remain a top priority for the administration?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, I am not sure what figure you are balancing against what to come up with that because the 2016 budget has a \$1.4 billion increase not total in support of the rebalance, and that includes a 6-percent increase over 2014.

And we are pursuing the Trans-Pacific Partnership voraciously. I mean, we have a major effort going with respect to the region. Under Secretary Wendy Sherman was over there about a month ago. Deputy Secretary Tony Blinken was over there 2 weeks ago following that visit. I am going over in about a month to follow up on that visit. We have President Ji coming here for a visit in the fall. We have major presence with our negotiations right now with Vietnam, Malaysia. I have been talking personally with the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of these countries.

So we are deeply, deeply engaged in this rebalance. We have never had that many high-level visits taking place. We have had a revamping of our defense policy with Japan, with South Korea. We are engaged. The President was over there for his fifth trip. I think I have made seven since I have been Secretary. So I think that every step the East Asian and Pacific Bureau is taking and every step the higher level of the State Department is taking and the administration is following up on this notion of the rebalance and of its importance.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I would say on the consultation—I hate to jump in here. But at every one of these meetings where the numbers of centrifuges are generally laid out and we express concern, the next report, the numbers of centrifuges increase. And I would say that every time we get concerned about the length of time of the agreement being too short, at every report, the length of the agreement shortens.

So I do hope we will have an opportunity to weigh in on the totality of the deal prior to sanctions being lifted. I do not think that is an undue burden when Congress put those in place in the first place.

With that, Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

First of all, Mr. Secretary, I want to congratulate you on your naming of a special envoy for LGBT rights in the State Department. I think it is a historic moment. And I am just wondering what response you may have received over the past few days from other countries in your announcement.

Secretary KERRY. Well, to be honest with you, Senator, I have been wrapped in the negotiations. I just got back late last night. So I have not had personally any response. I am told a very, very positive response. I read one article in the paper this morning which was very positive about it, but I have not seen—

Senator MARKEY. I think it is an important step forward.

Al-Shabaab has threatened the Mall of America, and that is clearly linking foreign policy to domestic homeland security. The President is constantly talking about countering violent extremism. And so I am just wondering if you could give us a little bit of an insight into what actions your Department—the Obama administration generally—is taking to counter this threat coming out of Somalia in terms of its potential threat to the homeland.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, we are engaged in the most massive day-to-day counterterrorism efforts that one could imagine, and it is consuming every aspect of Government. The President regularly convenes a national security meeting to get updates on where we are and what we are doing and particularly when we are in a moment of a particular threat or challenge.

I think what the Department of Homeland Security was really talking about is sort of a generic set of threats and challenges that are out there that we are working to respond to. We have an unprecedented level of communication and information sharing and intelligence sharing taking place now with other countries. We have the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund, which we are requesting money from all of you to implement, and that is \$390 million, which will be used to enhance border security among our foreign partners. We are working with the Europeans to move them now to sharing lists on passengers which they had not been doing. We are trying to increase the scrutiny of people moving in between countries and share more information about it. We are trying to stem the financial flow to these groups through nations and increased scrutiny of who is giving money how and how it flows.

There is a Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications which has been set up, and that is at the State Department. It is playing a key role in our efforts to counter violent extremism, and it is coordinating and informing the whole-of-government public communications structure that is able to pass on information and counter rumors and deal with social media in Arabic, in Urdu, in Somali, and more recently English because of English-speaking countries which are at risk.

So there is just a whole-of-government effort going on. It is taking shape. It is growing almost by the day and week.

The counterterrorism, counterextremism session that we just had in the last 2 or 3 days—the first day of it at the White House was almost exclusively civil society, law enforcement, NGOs, people who are engaged in grassroots efforts to see how they can be augmented to this.

Now, one thing I do not want to have come out of this. This is a challenge and it is a legitimate threat. And indeed, there are risks in certain places at certain times. But no one should doubt that notwithstanding that, we are actually living in the least loss-of-life, violent period in our history. There is an anomaly here. So I think what people need to do is be vigilant but not scared. People need to be always attentive but never fearful of doing something or going somewhere. And I think travel today is safer than it has ever been. I think people's ability to move—our SWAT teams are better, our sharing of information, FBI, all of our units. People have really gotten pretty good. It does not mean a lone wolf cannot come along and do something. If somebody wants to die, you can hurt people. I think it is important for people to recognize this is not a moment of turning inward and getting frightened.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The United States-China climate agreement was historic, though not universally well received. Could you tell the committee why this agreement serves America's interests and what you believe it contributes toward reaching a positive result in Paris later on this year?

Secretary KERRY. Well, look, you are absolutely correct. Of course, it is not universally well received. On one side, you have people who do not receive it well because there are still people who do not think we have to do anything. On the other side, you have people who believe we ought to be doing more. I happen to be one of those. And I helped negotiate this deal. I would have loved to have seen it do more, but this is the most we could get. And we took a country—most people thought it was foolish and how could you possibly try to get China. Up until last year—you know this better than anybody—China was on the opposite side of the table and stopping us from doing anything. And we turned that around in a year to have a China that has publicly committed to set a standard for reduction of a dependency on fossil fuel by 2030 and begin to have a 20-percent commitment internally to alternative renewable energy, clean energy. That is huge.

And in our case, we set a goal of somewhere between 26 and 28 percent reduction in our emissions by 2025 with the hope that we are going to actually do better and hit the 28 and do it sooner. China likewise committed to try to do it sooner if possible.

Now, we believe the technology is going to help us do it sooner. If we get moving down that road, the technology curve always winds up producing faster and spinning out new ways of doing things cheaper and you get to your goal faster. So that is our bet.

But we are still behind the curve of where we need to be in terms of meeting our obligation to deal with climate change and keep the rise of temperature on planet earth to 2 degrees Centigrade. We are not going to make it right now. And that is why we are still talking—a lot of people are talking about mitigation and dealing with the effects.

But I will tell you this. I run into the effects of climate change in various parts of the world all the time now. There are tribes fighting each other over water in places that there used to be water, and there is not anymore. There are record-level droughts, 500-year droughts. By the way, in California, as Senator Boxer knows better than anybody, not just in deserts in other parts of the world, we have had record levels of storm damage, of fires, the hottest year. Each year now is the hottest year since the last year for the last 10–12, whatever number of years. You know this better than anybody in the Senate, Senator Markey.

So we are behind the curve, but what we are trying to do is create a critical mass of countries out of the major emitting nations that will then have an impact on everybody gathering in Paris. And when they see that the major countries are doing it—and the reason others have to do it is less developed countries now equal over 50 percent of all emissions. So they have to start coming on board because no one country can reduce completely. If everybody rode a bicycle tomorrow and nobody drove to work and had public transportation and if we did not emissions, we would still be in deep, deep trouble because of the rate of the promulgation of coal-fired power plants in various countries around the world.

So we have a huge distance to travel and the great benefit—you asked about the benefit. The market we are looking at for clean, renewable, efficient energy is a \$6 trillion market with 4 billion to 5 billion users, and that will rise to 9 billion users as the population grows up to 2050 or so. The market that created the great wealth of our Nation, when every quintile saw their income go up in the 1990s, was a \$1 trillion market with 1 billion users.

So that is what we got: \$6 trillion versus \$1 trillion; 1 billion users versus 4 billion to 5 billion now and more growing. This is the biggest market in all of human history. Countless people could be put to work. Countless technologies put in place, new grids, smart energy, all of these things. And the sooner we move to it, the sooner a lot of economies start to move and the sooner we deal with the crisis.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for this.

Thank you, Secretary Kerry. You are serving in very challenging times and you are doing it so well. You are making us proud whether we agree or disagree with you. And I think a lot of us agree with you sometimes and disagree with you sometimes. And I have to say you are a great diplomat, and those skills were on display today. And so I am very pleased to see you.

You know, in light of the threats that you have laid out, I am not going to ask you about the looming shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security because that is not your bailiwick, that is Secretary Johnson's. But I think it ought to be another message to everybody that this is a ridiculous way to run a country at this difficult time.

I also want to say I agree with your overarching comments at the beginning that there is not enough of a priority placed on the work of the State Department and the very brave men and women out

there representing our great Nation and how important it is. And that is why I so strongly supported what the President did on Cuba because I find that when people meet Americans, they fall in love with America. And that is the way we are going to influence people—to have contact with them. I know that we are divided on this issue even within our own party and on the other side, which is okay. It is fine.

But from my perspective, when I went there years ago, what I remember is that Cubans were so afraid to be seen with us, they ran away—ordinary folks. It had to be straightened out with the top people there because they were afraid that they would get harassed for even talking to us. So I just want you to know that I back what you did there.

On Iran, this is a chance of a lifetime to do something so important. And I know how difficult it is. And I know you have said—and so has Wendy Sherman—in many of our meetings that this is a difficult thing, and it may not work. Maybe it is 50/50. I do not know today if you would still say it is 50/50. But I think trying to get a deal here is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And we have done it with other countries.

And the most important thing to me—and I spoke with Senator Risch about this once—is the verifiability. We cannot trust these people in that government for 1 second. We can trust the people, but we cannot trust the government. So it must be verifiable. And for me, that is what I am looking for: the inspections, the unfettered ability to see if this is real. And also I would demand that there be constant reports to the Congress as to whether Iran is living up to the agreement.

Now, I am working on something—I just want to know if you could make time for me in your busy life—that takes us somewhere between where some want to go, where I think Congress gets over-involved, and where some others want to go, where they want Congress to be underinvolved. I think there is a sweet spot here that does deal with Congress getting involved on the sanctions we put in place and also on demanding reporting requirements. Would you make time for me or would your staff make time for me so I can go over some legislation I have been working on with Senator Paul?

Secretary KERRY. Sure.

Senator BOXER. Okay.

Secretary KERRY. And by the way, Senator, thank you for flying back especially to do the hearing on Cuba with Senator Rubio. We really appreciate it.

Senator BOXER. Listen, I was very happy to be part of that.

Let me just close with this argument, and it gets to the AUMF. You and I are very close friends and allies most of the time. The one time we had a real difference was on the war in Iraq, and you remember that. And it had to do with wording and it had to do with approaches to an issue. And you were working on wording with Senator Biden and Senator Lugar, and it was a difficult meeting and we did not reach agreement on wording on the Iraq war.

I asked the Congressional Research Service—CRS—if they could analyze this word “enduring,” and I want to say I asked my ranking member—when he put forward the idea of “enduring,” he had a list of what it meant. The way you have approached this, Mr.

Secretary, you do not have any definition. And the CRS—and I ask unanimous consent to put this report in the record, if I can, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Senator BOXER. Here is what they say. This is incredibly important for you to hear. “It seems doubtful that a limitation on, ‘enduring offensive ground combat operations,’ would present sufficient judicially manageable standards by which a court could resolve any conflict that might arise between Congress and the executive branch over the interpretation of the phrase or its application to U.S. involvement in hostilities.” This is the CRS. They do not have a dog in the fight.

And this is really very important because I am not going to support this language. It is as open-ended as you can imagine. It is ridiculous. No one can define what it means. You said it is extended hostilities. CRS says it cannot be defined. I say it cannot be defined. This is just common sense because what is an enduring relationship to one person is not an enduring relationship to another. “Enduring” is a subjective term and it is not tested.

So I am saying to you as someone who agrees with you and the President when you and he have said in the most beautiful, unequivocal terms—and I quote the President from June 19, 2014, “American combat troops are not going to be fighting again in Iraq.” The President said in September 2014, “these American forces will not have a combat mission—we will not get dragged into another ground war in Iraq.” He also said, “nor do we intend to send U.S. troops to occupy foreign lands.” And in January 2015, the President said, “instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East, we are leading a broad coalition . . .”

And Mr. Secretary, you have said the same thing: “I think that is a redline for everybody here, no boots on the ground.” You said that in September 2014. And then you said, “President Obama has said repeatedly that U.S. ground troops will not engage in combat roles.” And you said in December 2014, “The President has been crystal-clear that his policy is that U.S. military forces will not be deployed to conduct ground combat operations against ISIL and that will be the responsibility of local forces.”

So this is your clear statement of policy. Today you affirmed that that is the current policy.

I would ask to put these statements in the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Senator BOXER. And yet, you send up here an AUMF with this giant loophole you could drive a combat truck through. And it is not going to get a lot of support among, I think, the Democrats on this committee. I do not speak for every one of them, but we have had many discussions.

I am hopeful that you can take back to the President some of these comments.

Now, on the other side of the aisle, you are facing another problem. I cannot speak for them. They want very few limitations.

And I know this puts you in a bind, but the most important thing to me, when you send up an AUMF, is to have it reflect your own strategy. And I do not think this AUMF reflects your strategy. I think it reflects an attempt to bring people together to get some-

thing passed, but at the end of the day, I do not know what a future President is going to do. I know what this President is going to do, and I support that strategy strongly. I voted for an AUMF that was put together by our then-chairman. Every Democrat supported it, if I could say, Senators from the left to far left supported it. And then you come in with this one.

I am just saying, I hope you will take back to the President the fact that the CRS says it cannot be—it is not a term that is definable and that many of us feel it is an open-ended commitment. Will you take that back to him and tell him some of us feel that way?

Secretary KERRY. Sure. I think he is well aware of that position among some people here, Senator. And you are articulate and clear about it as always.

But I would just say to you that I think the policy that the President has defined—and all of the statements that you just articulated are contained within the language that Senator Menendez and the committee produced previously. We believe that.

Now, you know, I think when you get into this process—and I am consistent with what I said here in December—of trying to list things, it gets difficult because of something that gets left out or something that was meant—you know, it just gets more complicated. But that is why there is a sunset—

Senator BOXER. My time is running out. My time is running out.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish.

Senator BOXER. Nothing gets more complicated than the use of a word that no one can define. It is a disaster. The President is not going to be here after a year and a half or two.

Secretary KERRY. Well, the President will be here for another year and three-quarters.

Senator BOXER. And this would go for 3 years. So you are not talking about just this President.

Secretary KERRY. Right. But I think that the language is such and the process is such with the sunset that the sunset could be executed in a way that you protect minority rights so that there has to be a coming together and a conclusion on it with respect to how that vote takes place so that a future President really cannot abuse it per se. They are going to have to deal with it. And I think in my judgment that is a strong protection because if you cannot get it renewed because there is not a willing majority to be able to do that, you have effectively asserted your rights and your position.

Senator BOXER. Well, we just disagree. Thank you, though.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish one other thought. As we have said to you, this is an open process. I mean, this is now in the legislative arena. I think the goal is to get as many votes as you can, Senator Boxer. I think if you think you can bring 40–50 Republicans on board with language that is absolute prohibitory or more declarative, as long as it is not restrictive of things the President thinks he needs to guard, that is the give and take here. I doubt you can get there, but if you can, more power to you.

Senator BOXER. You are not going to get there with this one.

The CHAIRMAN. If we could, I mean, I think you all have had a chance to discuss it fully, and I appreciate the views of both of you. And I think Senator Udall would like to weigh in.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Chairman Corker, and thank you, Senator Menendez.

And not to beat a dead horse here, but on the specific subject that Senator Boxer brought up, I just want to tell you how much I appreciate you coming in December and outlining what it is that you felt the administration needed. And as you saw, with Senator Menendez at the chair, we did some very serious work, and we came up with a lot of what was very close to what you talked about. You know, on my part, I wanted to be more limiting, but I voted for the final product. Chairman Corker, I do not know the dynamic because we were in the majority at the time, but I think we all worked seriously. And there were Republicans that wanted to be more limiting. And so I think there is a lot of room to take that product and move forward and work with it.

Secretary KERRY. That is what we are looking for, Senator. This is not a closed-out—this is not a take it or leave it, obviously. So we look forward to your work on it and ask you simply to work with us also to make sure that we are not put in a place that does not allow us to pursue the policy per se.

Senator UDALL. You have spoken several times about Cuba and what has happened in Cuba. And I just want to applaud the administration for normalizing relations. And Senator Flake and I were down there together just before—within about 6 weeks of when Alan Gross was released and then when the big announcements were made. And what I am wondering is what do you think. We know there are serious problems with this authoritarian government and all the things that they do. But what is your recommendation of the best steps forward to normalize and how we move down a path. There are all sorts of things that are being explored, but what is your—

Secretary KERRY. The normalization process is effectively announced and now needs to be implemented. The theory of the normalization is that it is getting it in place that in fact begins to put us in a different position to be able to advance our interests. I mean, Senator Menendez and others are absolutely correct about what the problems are there. We all agree. There is maybe a slight difference about how you are going to get them to change. Our theory of the case is that the best change is going to come through families, through people, through travel, through information, through access and that normalization in fact leverages our ability to do what 50 years of isolation has not achieved. Now, obviously, the proof will be in the pudding. But we have seen what has not happened for this long period of time. So effectively we think we ought to try this difference.

Now, we will have a meeting this Friday here in Washington that will take place which will basically be negotiating the normal pieces of negotiating the entry into normal diplomatic relations, in other words, how do your diplomats react, what are their rights of movement, you know, the visa situations, the travel, the access to equipment, goods. All those kinds of things have to be negotiated. And the components of the agreement which we understood were

critical like the Internet and the business and so forth has to be articulated. That is being done now, at which point we hopefully are in a position to actually sign memorandums of—exchange diplomatic notes and engage in the process.

Senator UDALL. Shifting over to Iran, you talked earlier about the execution of American foreign policy. And I cannot think of a more dramatic area of the collision between the executive branch and the legislative branch than when a foreign leader—and the Constitution talks about who deals with foreign leaders—than what has happened here with this speech on March 4 by Prime Minister Netanyahu. And I have said publicly that I believe that he should postpone that speech.

Could you describe to people what is at issue here? You are the Secretary of State. You understand this issue. Do you think is a wise move on the part of the prime minister to come here when we are in the middle of these very delicate negotiations? Was it a wise move on his part to ignore the administration in terms of appearing in front of a joint session of Congress? What are your thoughts on that?

Secretary KERRY. Well, my thoughts are that you as Senators have all the leeway in the world to make up your own minds about how you feel about this decision. My job is to work with the Prime Minister of Israel and with Israel to maintain its security, to honor our very, very strong relationship.

I speak with the prime minister more than any other leader. I speak with him regularly, and it is an important part of our security and his security—I mean the security of Israel and the enduring relationship that we have, and nobody should question that relationship.

You all have to make up your own minds about the propriety of the way this unfolded or what happened. We are going to proceed about our business which is protecting the country and maintaining the integrity of these relationships, and that includes Israel.

You know, I have been focused on, obviously, Iran negotiations and Ukraine and Afghanistan and a bunch of other things, and actually I will be leaving I think on Saturday for meetings with Foreign Minister Lavrov on Syria and other things, then the Human Rights Council. I will not be here. I will be negotiating with Iran for the rest of that week, as a matter of fact. So during that period of time, I will actually be sitting there trying to get an agreement.

Senator UDALL. Secretary Kerry, just to conclude, I tried to have my staff research this. So I do not know of any other time that the administration has been ignored. Can you in your memory at all? And if you cannot answer that now, I hope you will try to answer that for me in terms of the history of our foreign relations.

Secretary KERRY. I think that your staff should do some research for you, and I am not going to get into the history here now, one way or the other. As I said to you, my focus is on protecting the relationship between us and Israel and dealing with important issues in the region, and I do not want anything coming in between that.

Senator UDALL. And I understand that and I believe it is a tremendously important relationship, but I also believe what the

Prime Minister has done by taking this action—he has created a very divisive situation.

Thank you, Secretary Kerry, for all your hard work.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary. I have a lot of questions about ISIL AUMF, but I am going to hold on those for the hearings that we will have on that.

I want to talk to you about strategy, and I want to talk to you about security.

On the strategy side, having been on this committee for about 2 years and just even as a citizen reading the news, it seems like we are always in crisis management mode because there are always crises. But just because there have always and will always be crises, it does not mean we need to define our job as crisis managers. And I think we ought to look big-picture strategy and take advantage of some successes. I am going to commend you in both senses, thank you but also encourage you on one.

I just got back from a CODEL to Mexico, Honduras, and Colombia. Mexico is now our number three trade partner. Net migration from Mexico is now zero. As many Americans migrate to Mexico as Mexicans migrate to the United States, which is a very dramatic thing. Even with significant security challenges—and we are working with Mexico on those—the increase in the Mexican middle class has been sizeable, and the trade relationship between the United States and Mexico has gone a long way in 20 years.

Honduras, a very challenging situation. The administration has put on the table a significant Plan Central America investment, that is based on a plan the northern triangle nations put together. And this kind of investment, if we do it the right way, has the capacity to be a significant improvement in life for folks in that region and also slow the unaccompanied minor migration to this country.

And then I went to Colombia, and I was there on the day that you announced Bernie Aaronson as the United States Special Envoy to the peace talks between the Colombian Government to accompany our ally Colombia in the negotiations with the FARC to end a 50-year civil war in Colombia. Colombia was a failed state in the late 1990s, but because of the U.S. investments—and they will say because of the U.S. investments—and their own hard work, they have now become, next to Canada, our primary security partner in the hemisphere. They provide security on the border between Egypt and Israel. They provide security assistance to Central American nations, and their economy has grown in a significant way.

People who have done your job as Secretary of State—you spend all your time traveling east and west, all your time on—I am exaggerating a little bit. American foreign policy is about Europe and it was about the Soviet Union. Then it is about the Middle East. Now we are pivoting to Asia. It is as if the world has an east-west axis only when we know it has got a north-south axis. And what the Latin countries have told me on this visit and others when I

lived there is that you pay attention to us when there is a crisis, but you ought to pay more attention to us because there are a lot of good things going on.

I think from the big-picture strategic standpoint, I would commend you for the work that you have done with respect to Cuba, with respect to the Plan Central America, with respect to Colombia, but I would also encourage you to really focus on that north-south axis. We are 35 countries. We are a billion people. We share a name. We are all Americans, North Americans, Central Americans, South Americans. We have a unique culture that was formed by indigenous and European and African. We share that from the Yukon to Patagonia, and that unique culture has made us who we are, but it has also made us open to other cultures as the immigration to the Americas from Asia has shown.

Trade is booming in this region between our nations. The prosperity of the continents has dramatically improved. It just not just Canada, the United States, and the 33 dwarfs anymore. It is significant, major economies that are doing some wonderful things. There are challenges, sure. But if this civil war in Colombia ends, we will be two continents at peace. There will not be a war in North or South America. You cannot say that about Europe with what is going on in Ukraine. You cannot say that about Africa. You cannot say that about Asia. But we are close to being able to say it about the Americas.

So I just want to commend you for the work that you have already done. But let us not just focus on the Americas when there is a crisis and then turn our attention back to the east-west axis. This billion people, 35 countries, two continents that could potentially be continents of peace could be some of the best inoculation that we would have against global security challenges if we are persistent, if we stick with it. And I would encourage you to do that.

The last thing I will say I want to thank you on something else. The first time we had a hearing together after your confirmation and I was sitting as the newest guy on the committee, I asked you about the ARB recommendation with respect to embassy security. The State Department had had a multiyear search and had decided that they needed to do an embassy security facility to keep our people safe. And they had come up with that conclusion and picked a site in Virginia in the summer of 2012. A few months after the choice of the site, we had the horrible attack at Benghazi, and in the aftermath, the ARB report suggested that this site was needed.

And yet, here we are. We are now nearly 3 years after the selection of the site, 2½ years after the horrible tragedy at Benghazi, and it has not really moved forward. But I was happy to see in the President's fiscal year 2016 budget a proposal to finally invest \$99 million to build this embassy security facility.

You mentioned that there are ARB recommendations that have been done and there are ARB recommendations that have not been done. One of the ones that has not been done was to provide state-of-the-art security training for those who serve in dangerous embassies around the world. And given that the State Department wisely recommended in the summer of 2012 that we needed to make this investment, I am a little chagrined but still excited to

see that in fiscal year 2016 we might finally start to act on that awareness within the State Department.

And I do not know if you have comments either about the strategy or the security point. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. I have comments about both, Senator.

Let me just tell you on the latter, we are very, very excited about this. The Department of State and the General Services Administration looked at over 70 properties. There was a major property, obviously, down in Georgia that was considered. It is the enforcement training center, the Federal law enforcement training center, and there was a lot of talk about going there. But we made the right decision to go to Fort Pickett. Over a 10-year period, we will literally save—the cost would have been \$91 million to do it in Georgia. It is \$9 million to do it and the cost of transportation back and forth to do it in Virginia. So this is a good decision. It is going to get implemented now. We are ready to go, and we are very excited about it. All the due diligence has been done and it is going to happen.

On the policy, I could not agree with you more. And in fact, I think it was about a month ago—early January—I invited the Foreign Minister of Mexico and the Foreign Minister of Canada to come and join me in Boston for a day and a half/2 days. And we had dinner at my house, and then we had a full day of meetings. I took them to a hockey game and had a lot of fun. And we talked about North America. We talked about the ability of Canada, the United States, Mexico, which are a huge part of the global economy, by the way, when you combine them, to be able to have a much greater impact and have a greater impact, by the way, on Central America and Latin America. So we have committed to that.

And in fact, I have had a meeting in the State Department within the last month at which we sat with our Western Hemisphere Assistant Secretary, Roberta Jacobson, who is doing a great job, and others and talked about how we are going to implement a greater north-south complement over the course of the next 2 years of this administration.

And the appointment of the special envoy to Colombia came out of my second visit to Colombia and my discussions with President Santos who asked us to get engaged and to become involved. And President Obama agreed to do that, and together we decided that Bernie is the fellow to help get the job done because he was intimately involved in the Nicaragua-El Salvador peace process and has great experience, served previously as an Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere. In fact, I worked with him on the committee when I was chairman of that subcommittee.

So we think we got something cooking and that, together with the Central America initiative and efforts to deal with Petrocaribe, with the fuel problems that the Caribbean may have depending on what happens with fuel prices in Venezuela and so forth—we are now putting together an entire energy connection strategy, which involves Mexico and others, which could begin to really change the economies of the region.

So I appreciate your focus. We should work on it. Next time we head down there, maybe you want to come with me. And I will be heading down there shortly. We are very excited about the possi-

bility of really defining this North America access, and you are right on target.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. Thank you.

Senator Menendez.

Senator Menendez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly. I want to thank Senator Kaine because as someone who for 23 years has been trying to create this focus on Latin America and the Caribbean, it is great to have another voice who is as equally as passionate about it.

Mr. Secretary, three quick questions.

One, speaking about Latin America, the situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate. The Venezuelan Government arrested Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledesma on trumped-up charges. There are high-profile political prisoners in Venezuela like Leopoldo Lopez who have languished in prison for over a year. We had legislation passed, signed by the President, that calls for including mandatory implementations of certain sanctions.

Can you give us an update of where the administration is at and how they intend to move forward?

Secretary Kerry. Yes. We are perplexed by and disturbed by what is going on in Venezuela, Senator. I reached out to the Foreign Minister when I traveled the year before to Panama. I think it was in Guatemala I saw him. And we met. It was supposed to be a 15-minute meeting. It turned out to be 45. We agreed we were going to try to follow on and begin a new period. And the next thing I knew a couple of weeks later we were being attacked for this or that and accused of this and that.

This seems to be the pattern. Whenever President Maduro or someone in Venezuela at the high level of their government gets into trouble or something is pressing politically, they blame America. And it is a repeated effort to trump up notions of coups which do not exist and to play to, frankly, a very old script. I mean, this is regrettable.

So our policy is we are very supportive. You know, we continue to meet with and we encourage meaningful dialogue between all the sectors of Venezuelan society, political opposition, society, business, government, et cetera. We call on the government to release political prisoners, including dozens of students, and opposition leaders, Leopoldo Lopez and Mayor Daniel Ceballos and Enzo Scarano. And we are working with others to try to get them to live up to their defense of democracy. So we are working with the National Security Council right now and the Department of the Treasury and other agencies to implement the provisions of the law on sanctions and we are moving ahead as fast as we can.

I have raised the issue of Venezuela in all my conversations with leaders in the surrounding countries.

Senator Menendez. When we were proposing this, we were asked to withhold because there was an attempt by Colombia and others to try to engage. And unfortunately, that did not produce results. And it seems that President Maduro only continues to arrest those that either create opposition to his government and/or who he uses as scapegoats. At some point, I just hope that we can use

the provisions of the law sooner rather than later, and I recommend your attention to it.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are pushing that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Secondly, Turkey has gone into the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. It put its ships there, followed with warships. It is pretty outrageous. And it is a country—Cyprus—that is part of the European Union. If this is the way we are going to have countries in that region affect others' economic exclusive zones, which are internationally recognized, and at the same time pressure a country which is in the midst of good faith negotiations to try to solve their longstanding problem in terms of the division of the country, it is a horrible set of circumstances.

I hope we can be stronger with the Turkish Government that this just simply—I have read some statements and they have been positive in terms of criticizing what they have done. But they are still there. And at some point, there has to be—this is another one of these elements of violating international norms and not having any real consequence, and the message you send globally is you can do that if you happen to be the stronger party.

Secretary KERRY. And we have raised this issue. I have raised this issue. I met with the President of Cyprus—the Prime Minister, and we have had various conversations. It has been raised with Turkey. I do not know when but in the not too distant future, I think I am slated to head in that direction, and this would be one of the conversations, is how do we move on Cyprus more effectively.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I hope we can be vigorous about the part that if you want to get a negotiation for it, you cannot have your warships off the coast of the country. That is just not a way in which to get parties—and I must say I have followed this issue as well for a long time. This Cypriot Government is more advanced, more forward-leaning in trying to get to a negotiated settlement, but you cannot do it at the point of a gun in essence. And it creates a real problem to try to move forward. So I hope when you are in the region or an Assistant Secretary—

Secretary KERRY. We have been doing it even outside the region. I had meetings in Munich on it. We had meetings prior to that. I had meetings in New York on it. We have met frequently with all the players. We have people deeply engaged. We have an ambassador to the talks who is deeply engaged in it. And it did get in a bad place partly because of this but other ingredients also. I have had conversations with the Turkish Foreign Minister about it previously. Now Prime Minister Davutoglu and I are working quite closely on it. My hope is we could get back to an equilibrium that would allow us to move forward. But we specifically discussed the economic zone, the ship presence, and the gas rights, and so forth.

Senator MENENDEZ. One final comment. On Cuba, I noticed your comment about what did not work for 50 years and how we can apply leverage. What also has not worked for 50 years is the leverage of the international community that was all engaged with Cuba, and the Castro regime has had more political prisoners, more beatings, more repression, and no openings whatsoever. So the Europeans, the Latin Americans, the Canadians, and others who have traded with Cuba, visited Cuba, done all of those things

that we think are going to be the turning point did absolutely nothing to change the course of events there.

I hope—and I understand that at the President's direction, you are conducting a review of Cuba on the State list of terrorist sponsors. So as Assistant Secretary Jacobson was before the committee at that hearing, she confirmed that the Castro regime continues to provide sanctuary to Joanne Chesimard, who is on the FBI's top 10 list of wanted terrorists. We also know that Basque terrorists from ETA are there. We also know that even while negotiations are being hosted by Cuba with the FARC, that the FARC continues to conduct terrorist organizations even as they are in the midst of negotiations inside of Colombia, and the Colombian Government pushes back on them. And we know that Cuba sent the most significant violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea—sent Migs, missiles, and tons of other military equipment to North Korea in violation of those sanctions.

So when you are looking at removing Cuba from the list of terrorists, I am going to look at the provision of the law that specifically comes from the Export Administration Act that defines the term "repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism, to include the recurring use of any part of a territory of the country as a sanctuary for terrorists or terrorist organizations." And I will be looking forward to how you are going to meet that threshold to remove Cuba from the list.

Secretary KERRY. That is all part of the analysis that has to be made.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. I want to raise just a couple of small issues relative to some of the bigger issues that you have been talking about, and I will do so briefly. I know we all have places to go.

I know hundreds of American families have adopted young ones in the DRC. They have suspended the process of those children leaving. I know it is an incredibly difficult thing for us to deal with the government that is in place there. But I want to raise this at this meeting just so that your Department will continue to work with us and others to try to break that loose and to also get some kind of lever in place to cause the DRC to act appropriately. I know there is a note that has just been slid to you there. But the fact is that these are kids that are actually adopted today by U.S. families and yet they are unable to get them out. I do not know if you want to respond to that or not.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I have raised it personally with President Kabila, and Russ Feingold raised it with him. We have not had a result yet, but we are mindful of it.

The CHAIRMAN. Obviously, in comparison to some of the other issues we have discussed today, it is minor. It is everything, obviously, to the families who are involved, and I hope that you will continue to raise that issue.

Secretary KERRY. We agree, and we raise these, let me tell you, with the Iranians whether it is Saeed Abedini or Hekmati or Levinson or Jason Rezaian. I mean, these names are all in the front of my head because we constantly raise people who have been held in one place or another. We do not always talk about the names publicly because sometimes that works to a disadvantage.

But there are folks in Pakistan, places where we are highly focused on these situations. And it is a daily concern of the State Department.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate your commitment to the authorization process, and I think that in many ways it can help you significantly in what you are doing to leverage efforts and get Congress far more bought into some of the issues you are talking about today. And yet, there is almost no knowledge of those activities because of the lack of involvement that has taken place. So I look forward to working with you on that.

Secretary KERRY. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate very much your comments regarding the modern slavery initiative, and Senator Menendez and I introduced legislation today that hopefully will move through the committee later this week and on to the Senate floor. And I know you are committed to the same.

And I just want to close with this. I think there is a concern, and I know we are going to have a lot of testimony. I know there is a concern. We are going to have a lot of testimony over the next several weeks regarding Syria. There is a sense of a lack of commitment. You are not going to dispel that today. But I do hope as witnesses come forth they will be open and transparent about the things that are underway because today I think there is a sense that, in essence, we have a containment strategy, that we are, in essence, riding the clock out until this President leaves office.

We have the same concerns right now in Ukraine where we lured them West. They gave up 1,240 nuclear weapons. Obviously, Russia would not be moving into their territory today had they not done that. And yet, together with them and with the U.K., we made comments about their territorial sovereignty, and yet those are being invaded. And it does appear that the administration is not committed to doing those things that are necessary to cause Ukraine to be able to at least defend itself. We were slow on intelligence. We are providing blankets. We are providing MRE's, but we are not providing some of the defensive lethal support that is necessary. Let me just finish.

Secretary KERRY. We have provided some counterbattery radars and other kinds of things that are defensive. But, Senator, I understand the debate.

The CHAIRMAN. So I just want to say where it takes us on Iran is there is a strong sense of a lack of commitment, of a not willing to hold the line. And so I hope that we as a committee are going to be able to move forward on legislation that allows us to see that, to cause us to force a process where you will submit what it is you are doing with Iran. I know you have been working on it very heavily. I know you must be proud of that effort. And in the event you come to a resolution with Iran, I do think it is important that it is submitted, that we have the opportunity to approve it prior to sanctions being lifted and the regime actually dissipating. And I think the role of Congress to make sure that they are continuing to adhere to it is important.

So those are comments I would leave you with. We thank you for your service. I do not know of anybody who has worked harder to try to deal with the many crises that we have around the world.

We thank you for your service here as a former chairman, and we wish you well.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to be with you. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Members will have until close of business Thursday to submit questions.

The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question #1. This request seeks to compensate for depleted carryover balances from previous budget years. Doesn't this practice of relying on carryover balances breed poor fiscal discipline? How do you know the true budget requirement for a particular year if there are always carryover balances to dip into?

Answer. The FY 2016 budget request for the Department of State and USAID prioritizes resources to support the U.S. foreign policy and national security interests. In formulating the budget request many factors are considered to identify the appropriate request level, including carryover balances relative to the timing and level of annual appropriations. The funds requested in the FY 2016 request will be executed in the year appropriated if there are no delays in the budget process outlined in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended.

Question #2. OCO seems to have taken the place of making difficult choices in the enduring budget. I do understand that Congress has been part of the problem, and I am working to reverse that trend in my new assignment on the Budget Committee. I also commend you for transferring some enduring requirements out of OCO in this request. But how are you preparing for the eventual end of OCO and what are you doing to identify the enduring requirements that remain in OCO and move them to the base budget?

Answer. The administration will release a plan this year that describes which OCO costs should endure as the United States shifts from major combat operations, how the administration will budget for the uncertainty surrounding unforeseen future crises, and the implications for the base budgets of the Department of Defense, the Intelligence Community, and the Department of State/Other International Programs. This plan is still in development, and will include a strategy to transition enduring costs currently funded in the OCO budget to the base budget beginning in FY 2017 and ending by FY 2020. For a transition strategy to be viable, congressional support is vital. Any transition of enduring OCO to base could only work if the caps on discretionary spending were lifted so as not to jeopardize ongoing, enduring efforts.

Question #3. The second Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) was supposed to be completed in fall 2014, and we now hear it is delayed until the spring. When can we expect it? How well, if at all, does this budget request reflect the strategic direction established in the forthcoming QDDR?

Answer. The report is near completion and will be released this spring. The process for this QDDR has been informed by the reforms initiated by the first QDDR, by the 2014–2017 State Department/USAID Joint Strategic Plan, and by the 2015 National Security Strategy. We also appreciate thoughtful input from your committee staff, and from others on the Hill. The current budget request is aligned with the strategic priorities identified in the forthcoming QDDR, which advances a set of recommendations to bolster our capabilities to prevent and mitigate conflict and violent extremism; promote inclusive economic growth; advance open, resilient and democratic societies; and reduce and adapt to the effects of climate change. The QDDR also addresses areas for strengthening our internal operations, with a focus on innovation, knowledge management, and investing in our workforce. Our QDDR team looks forward to briefing you on the report at your convenience.

Question #4. You have requested a 38-percent increase in U.S. Contributions for International Peacekeeping, compared to FY 2015. This is also a 66-percent increase compared to FY 2014. The request includes arrears and a higher U.N. assessment. What steps is the United States taking at the U.N. General Assembly's Fifth Com-

mittee to reduce the U.S. peacekeeping assessment and the broader U.N. peacekeeping budget?

Your peacekeeping request includes an additional \$150 million for the proposed Peace Operations Response Mechanism in OCO for “off-budget cycle needs.” Given the billions of dollars we already spend on peacekeeping, why do you feel the need for this additional fund, especially since extensive transfer authority already exists? And with reference to question 2, what is the justification for proposing that such a fund exist outside of the enduring budget, when it appears to be conceived as an enduring solution to an enduring challenge—that of unanticipated peacekeeping needs?

Answer. The request is \$2.93 billion (based on the 2015 assessment rate of 28.36 percent), of which \$2.55 billion would fund the U.S. share of U.N. peacekeeping assessments during FY 2016 for 14 ongoing U.N. peacekeeping missions, a war crimes tribunal, and logistical support for U.N. Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA), as well as the monitoring of mission effectiveness. An additional \$380 million is included to partially cover projected FY 2015 shortfalls.

The Department recognizes that this request represents an increase of \$811 million (or 38.2 percent) over the amount appropriated in the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (“FY 2015 Act”) for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account. However, the FY 2016 request is based on an assumption that our U.N. peacekeeping assessment will be about equal to the FY 2015 estimated requirements of \$2.55 billion.

Peacekeeping missions are critical tools to maintain international peace and security, and to advance U.S. interests around the world, including in Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Lebanon, and Haiti. International peacekeeping efforts are cost-effective means for countries to work together toward the same ends, resolve conflicts, contribute to international stability, and mitigate humanitarian crises. We continue to regularly review missions to determine where we may be able to downsize, close, or transition them to a peace-building or other arrangement, as appropriate, as well as encourage the U.N. to further pursue cost saving measures and efficiencies.

A priority of the administration is to seek favorable changes to U.N. regular budget and peacekeeping assessment rates, which the U.N. General Assembly will set later this year. We will seek to make the scales methodology fairer, so that emerging powers that have an increasing share of the global economy pay their fair share of the U.N.’s expenses. We also will seek to reduce discounts that relatively wealthy developing countries receive on their peacekeeping assessments, which have contributed to the recent increases in the U.S. peacekeeping assessment rate.

Having the Peace Operations Resource Mechanism (Peace Ops Mechanism) account in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) will ensure funding is available to respond expeditiously to unforeseen requirements without the risk of endangering critical, ongoing, budgeted peacekeeping efforts or other national security priorities. Existing authorities are limited in scope and require that funding for new peacekeeping efforts come at the expense of existing peacekeeping efforts or other high priority programs funded by Congress—such trade-offs are not in the long-term strategic interest of the United States. The Peace Ops Mechanism would provide funding for transfer to the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and CIPA accounts to meet urgent and unexpected global peacekeeping requirements. The account limits availability of funds to new or expanded peace operations or activities above the level recommended in the President’s budget. Funding for these types of contingencies is appropriate for OCO, with funding regularized where necessary in future year CIPA and PKO budgets. Additionally, the use of Peace Ops Mechanism funds would be subject to congressional notification procedures and we plan to consult with Congress on the use of this mechanism.

Question #5. The Asia Rebalance is supposed to prioritize political, economic and diplomatic initiatives in the Asia-Pacific. But yet again, the budget requests for regional operations and foreign aid do not reflect this reprioritization. How do you justify not reprioritizing funds toward the Asia Rebalance in this request?

Answer. The rebalance is built on a simple premise: the Asia-Pacific is integral to the United States growth, and the United States is necessary for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the last 6 years, we’ve established that the “new normal” of U.S. relations with the Asia-Pacific region is extensive collaboration with our Asian allies and partners on important global issues and a high tempo of sustained engagement by the President, me and my team, and other Cabinet, and senior officials.

We have dedicated significant diplomatic, public diplomacy, military, and foreign assistance resources to the region in a way that is commensurate with the growing importance of the region to the United States. The President's FY 2016 budget provides \$1.4 billion in support of the rebalance, which includes Diplomatic Engagement and Foreign Assistance funding, representing a \$75.4 million (6 percent) increase over FY 2014.

This is a landmark year for this administration and for the United States. In 2015, finalizing TPP is the most important way to advance the rebalance. That's why the President, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the rest of the administration, including me, have repeatedly called for movement on TPA, and we're hopeful for movement on this in Congress at the earliest possibility.

Question #6. Can you please describe your plans to more fully integrate economic policy interests and decisionmaking throughout the Department, particularly within the regional bureaus and between the regional bureaus and the E family? How do we ensure that economic policy interests and concerns are prioritized?

Answer. Since the beginning of my tenure, I have said "foreign policy is economic policy" and the Department has worked hard to make his vision a reality. This vision of fully integrating economic policy throughout the Department includes leveraging the work of the entire E family, which encompasses economic growth, energy, and the environment.

Tight coordination among regional bureaus and the E family is essential for prioritizing economic policy interests and concerns across all of our diplomatic efforts. Regional bureaus help E family bureaus advance economic interests in specific countries, and the E family bureaus help regional bureaus address the economic, energy, and environmental concerns that matter to our bilateral, multilateral and regional relationships.

In addition to regular coordination at the working level among regional bureaus and the E family, the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment meets every other week with Deputy Assistant Secretary-level officials in each regional bureau who lead for their bureaus on economic issues. These meetings ensure that the economic and political sides of the Department are knitted up across an exceptionally wide range of economic, environmental and energy related issues.

E family bureaus also have internal programs to coordinate planning and strategy with the regional bureaus at the working levels. For example, each E family bureau has designated teams of experts on particular regions to track events and plan economic, energy, and/or environmental policy efforts, meeting regularly with regional bureau counterparts to share information and ideas.

The recently released Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) further institutionalizes E family/regional bureau cooperation. The QDDR (on page 40) formalizes the designation of a Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) in each regional bureau to lead on E family issues and notes, "To facilitate coordination, each designated DAS will be expected to liaise regularly with the three "E family" assistant secretaries, while continuing to be supervised by the regional assistant secretary."

Another key part of my economic focus is the Shared Prosperity Agenda, led by Senior Advisor to the Secretary David Thorne. The Shared Prosperity Agenda includes several active working groups that seek to elevate and improve how we conduct economic diplomacy at the Department, including work on entrepreneurship, knowledge platforms, and human resources. These groups include representation from the E family and regional bureaus, and the Shared Prosperity Agenda is an important means of integrating economic diplomacy across the entire Department.

Question #7. The State Department is negotiating with the member states of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change toward a goal of reaching an agreement by the December Paris Conference of Parties meeting (COP/ 21). The Lima Ministerial Declaration from December 2014, which provides a work plan for the next 10 months of these negotiations, refers to a "protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention." As you know, the State Department's regulations and practice require you to consult with the Senate regarding the form of "significant international agreements."

A protocol is clearly a treaty but can you please explain what the Lima Declaration means by "another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force"? Will such an agreement be legally binding on the U.S.?

If a legally binding agreement is reached at the COP/21 in December, will it be referred to the Senate as a treaty under the Constitution requiring the Senate's advice and consent, yes or no?

Answer. The 2014 decision of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, taken in Lima, Peru, recalls a 2011 decision of the Parties adopted in Durban, South Africa. That decision launched a process to develop a “protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties . . .”

The Durban mandate makes clear that the Paris agreement is to further the objective of the Convention (i.e., to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate), yet leaves the Parties with substantial flexibility regarding its form and the legal nature of its provisions. At this stage, the international discussions are more focused on the substance of the agreement than on whether it should be a protocol, etc., or whether particular provisions should be legally binding.

The United States seeks an agreement that is ambitious in light of the climate challenge; that reflects nationally determined mitigation efforts in line with national circumstances and capabilities; that provides for accountability with respect to such efforts; that takes account of evolving emissions and economic trends; and that promotes adaptation by parties to climate impacts.

It is not possible to say at this stage whether the Paris agreement will be referred to the Senate as a treaty under the Convention. The appropriate domestic form of the Paris outcome, whether a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force, will depend upon several factors, including its specific provisions.

The administration will continue to consult with the committee regarding the negotiations. As I testified during my confirmation hearing, any international agreement brought into force for the United States will be done so consistent with the United States Constitution.

Question #8. Is the USG going to meet its commitment to full compliance with the International Aid Transparency Initiative by December? If not, which agencies/departments are lagging behind? What will the Secretary be doing to speed up progress?

Answer. The USG takes its IATI commitments seriously and has been making efforts to improve IATI reporting and compliance. Although no agency will be fully compliant by December 2015 over 90 percent of U.S. foreign assistance is reported to the IATI standard.

Each USG agency that implements or funds foreign assistance is responsible for reporting qualitative and quantitative information about its programs to Foreign Assistance.gov (FA.gov) in accordance with OMB Bulletin 12–01 which incorporates the main elements of the IATI standard.

All data reported to FA.gov is converted into and published in the IATI format. Reporting to FA.gov is the responsibility of each agency. Ten agencies are currently reporting some data to FA.gov, but at varying degrees of completeness and comprehensiveness. Under the Secretary’s leadership, agencies are working toward better reporting. State, MCC and USAID, which constitute the bulk of U.S. Government foreign assistance, are all taking concrete steps to improve reporting. Others will be further behind, especially those agencies whose foreign assistance activities are only a small percentage of the agencies’ portfolios, which are primarily domestic.

Question #9. How will the Secretary ensure that the evaluations now being conducted under the International Aid Transparency Initiative will (a) be scientifically rigorous and of good quality; (b) be made public in their entirety, and not just their summaries; and (c) be used to guide decisionmaking?

Answer. In November 2011, the U.S. became a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). As a voluntary, multistakeholder initiative that includes donors, partner countries, and civil society organizations whose aim is to promote a single global transparency standard and format to enable comparability of foreign assistance data, IATI is a common, open standard for the timely reporting of aid information. It does not create or suggest standards for evaluations. The U.S. published its IATI Implementation Schedule and the first set of IATI-formatted data in December 2012 on ForeignAssistance.gov. We continue to collect, format and publish data to meet our commitments under IATI through ForeignAssistance.gov. Evaluations are not conducted under IATI, but reported in a specified format agreed to by the signatories.

(a) Regarding scientifically rigorous, good quality evaluations, both State and USAID have evaluation policies, USAID since 2011 and State since 2012. These policies set forth accepted standards and best practices for evaluation. Both policies emphasize that evaluations must use methods that generate the highest quality and most credible evidence that corresponds to the questions being asked, given time, budget and other practical considerations.

(b) USAID publishes its evaluations in their entirety on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). State's policy requires every evaluation funded with foreign assistance that are not already available through other public Web sites, such as the DEC, to have a summary containing the elements listed in the bill to be made available for public posting on <http://www.state.gov/f/evaluations/index.htm>. This site is searchable by title, sector, bureau or region, and year published. A number of State bureaus were already posting full evaluation reports on their public Web sites. They will continue to do so. Those that were not posting full evaluations are now required to make summaries available.

(c) State and USAID both have annual planning, budgeting and performance management cycles that use monitoring and evaluation results to inform decision-making. Bureaus and missions that have performed evaluations are also using them effectively to make improvements, plan program adjustments, and inform future program design.

Question #10. According to U.S. and Azerbaijani NGOs, there are approximately 100 hundred political prisoners in Azerbaijan. How does the budget reflect our support for democracy and human rights activists at a time when the government is intensifying its crackdown on civil society?

Answer. The United States is working with nongovernmental organizations to strengthen their ability to advocate for citizen interests, safeguard civil and political rights, and increase public participation in governance, especially at the regional level. The United States is assisting independent media to increase citizens' access to objective information, including through the use of web-based and mobile device news platforms. The funding level for programs that support democratic reforms and help improve the environment in which civil society can operate currently accounts for just over 40 percent of the FY 2014 State/USAID bilateral assistance budget for Azerbaijan, more than any other sector. The President's FY 2016 Request includes 5.4 million for democracy programs, which is approximately 47 percent of the total request for Azerbaijan.

Question #11. USAID has been funding a contract to clear areas of Nagorno-Karabakh from World War II era mines. What is the status of the demining program? Will the demining contract associated with this program be extended beyond 2016?

Answer. The demining program has cleared nearly 27,500 hectares of the active mine fields within the Soviet-era boundary. It is estimated that 95 percent of anti-personnel and antitank mines have been cleared. While no decision has yet been made about specific funding beyond FY 2016, USAID remains committed to providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Some have compared the Obama administration's policy toward Iran as an attempt to duplicate U.S. efforts in the early 1970s to open up China.

- ◆ Is a nuclear deal a first step in a reorientation of our policies in the Middle East away from combating and containing Iranian influence?

Answer. Our negotiations with Iran are solely focused on Iran's nuclear program. We remain extremely concerned about Iran's support for terrorism, threats against our friends and partners, and violations of human rights. Even if we do reach a nuclear deal with Iran, we will not turn a blind eye to Iran's destabilizing activities and human rights abuses. As the President said after the Joint Plan of Action was signed, "As we go forward, the resolve of the United States will remain firm, as will our commitment to our friends and allies—particularly Israel and our gulf allies, who have good reason to be skeptical about Iran's intentions."

Question. Iranians already prioritize funding for armed proxy groups which are destabilizing governments from Bahrain to Yemen to Lebanon. The Iranians are also directly funding and militarily backing the brutal dictatorship of Bashar Assad in Syria. Sanctions relief and improvements in Iran's economy associated with a nuclear deal will increase Iran's ability to fund terrorism and violence.

- ◆ What actions can we take to counter an economically empowered Iran's destabilizing and malign activities across the region?

Answer. Iran's destabilizing activities in the region are a top concern of the administration. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would make this aggressive behav-

ior even more concerning. This is why the administration believes the first step is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

Our ongoing efforts to combat Iran's destabilizing and malign activities across the region fall in the following broad categories:

- First, we continue to improve our ability to defend against any attacks by Iran or its proxies;
- Second, we continue to restrict Iran's ability to move money and material for illicit purposes;
- Third, we remain committed to Israel's security and that of our other regional allies and we continue to build up partners' capacity to defend themselves against Iranian aggression;
- Fourth, we are working unilaterally and with allies to weaken Hezbollah's financial networks;
- Finally, we publicize Iran's meddling wherever we can.

Question. Anti-ISIL Coalition.—The military campaign against ISIL in Iraq has met with some promising success: ISIL's advance has been halted, in many places ISIL is in retreat, and in other places it is struggling to maintain the territory it holds. We also are hearing reports that ISIL's brutality and failure to govern has caused friction with communities in Iraq and Syria, opening the aperture for the United States and its coalition partners to peel away local support empower a moderate middle, and set the conditions for ISIL's defeat. However, there is a risk of catastrophic success—that the timeline for ISIL's defeat will outpace reconciliation efforts and before moderates are effectively empowered. Iraq's Prime Minister Abadi is saying the right things on reconciliation with Iraq's Sunni community, but there are powerful forces aligned against him from Iran to Shia politicians and militias to former Prime Minister Maliki who want reconciliation to fail.

- ◆ (a) What can we do to accelerate and build support for a program of national reconciliation in Iraq?

Answer (a). Addressing the root causes of this conflict and supporting the GOI's effort to promote national reconciliation will be the only effective method to cement again battlefield gains against ISIL. As the President has stressed, this battle cannot be won by the military alone. Our Ambassador in Baghdad engages regularly with the senior-most officials in the Iraqi Government on these issues and regularly highlights national reconciliation as a precursor to long-term stability in Iraq.

We have seen Prime Minister Abadi's government make significant strides in improving governance as outlined in Iraq's National Program for reform and reconciliation and we continue to hold the Prime Minister accountable to the timelines his government set for reform. Through a combined strategy of steady diplomatic engagement, civil society and democracy promotion—which relies heavily on our foreign assistance programs—and prioritizing inclusion of Sunnis, Kurds, Shia, and minorities in the military offensive, we are building reconciliation into our entire counter-ISIL strategy.

On February 3, Iraq's Council of Ministers approved two key pieces of draft reform legislation with significant implications for national reconciliation currently being reviewed by Parliament:

1. A revision of the country's de-Baathification law; and
2. A restructuring of Iraq's Security Forces (ISF) to integrate local-community volunteers, including Sunni tribal fighters, into provincially based "National Guard" (NG) units.

The GOI has sought our assistance in developing the National Guard concept and our policy and military advisors continue to play an active role in helping the Iraqis to develop their security infrastructure in a manner which would facilitate the inclusion of all religious and ethnic groups into the counter-ISIL campaign. We also continue to meet with Iraqi leaders and tribal sheikhs to ensure that all parties have a seat at the table. A senior delegation of Sunni Sheikhs from Anbar province traveled to the United States just weeks ago, meeting with Vice President Biden and senior officials at the Department of State and the Department of Defense and we stressed the importance of all groups working in coordination on the counter-ISIL strategy.

On February 10, Iraqi President Massum, a Kurd, signed Iraq's new budget law that included an important agreement on energy exports and revenue-sharing between the central government and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The Department played a significant role in brokering the agreement between the central government and the KRG officials to reach the deal and continues to serve as a key interlocutor on reconciliation matters between both parties. Our commitment to Iraq's national unity has helped foster better coordination between the KRG and

central government on the current military campaign against ISIL through joint planning sessions, effective transfers of military assistance, and shared intelligence; it is critical that we continue to work through the central government to further build this trust.

Additionally, Prime Minister Abadi has issued a number of Executive orders to initiate other critical reforms, such as devolving authority over certain public services to local communities and expediting the release of prisoners held without charge—a key concern of the Sunni community, to the extent possible within his constitutional authority as Prime Minister. As part of our strategy, we continue to work aggressively to pressure the GOI to enact further reforms to unify Iraqis and promote human rights and the rule of law. The State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), Embassy Baghdad through the Ambassador's Fund, and USAID continue to carry out targeted interventions to promote reconciliation, the protection of minority communities, and respect for human rights. Notably, we are targeting over \$10 million in FY 2014 DRL funding for programs which include activities to address human rights and rule of law as well as atrocities prevention and accountability issues—key areas for building reconciliation.

- ◆ (b) In Syria, we need programs and policies that seek to reach those who reject ISIL and empower them as a moderate alternative in an eventual, post-Assad Syria. Do you agree and if so, what more should we be doing to reach these communities immediately?

Answer (b). We wholeheartedly agree. The United States continues to support the Syrian people's aspirations for an inclusive, representative, and unified Syria free of terrorism and violence, and the extremist groups that promote it. The United States is seeking a negotiated political solution to the Syria crisis that brings Syrians together to support the center against the extremes of terrorism or dictatorship. Assad cannot be a part of that solution. The United States continues to support the moderate Syrian opposition, including the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC)—which the United States recognizes as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people.

We are increasing our support to the moderate opposition to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other extremists, as well as to enhance the capacity of the moderate opposition to establish the conditions for a political solution to this conflict. To date, the United States has committed more than \$330 million in transition and nonlethal assistance to the Syrian opposition. This assistance includes support to the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC), including its interim governance structures, as well as local and provincial councils, civil society organizations and local security actors. U.S. assistance also include nonlethal support to vetted units of the moderate, armed opposition to help enhance their operational capabilities as they seek to protect their communities against the regime and extremist groups. Examples of assistance in Syria that counters ISIL and empowers moderate voices include:

- Support for independent media through the training of journalists and operational support for nine radio stations, two satellite TV stations, and one media production studio countering regime and extremist narratives and promoting free speech.
- Providing civil society actors, community and religious leaders, women's networks, youth groups with advocacy, conflict management and prevention tools to prevent sectarian violence and foster reconciliation. U.S. programs work to mediate local conflicts and equip members of communities to advance respect for freedom of religion or belief and other civil and political rights and promote an environment free from violence all to prevent sectarian strife.
- Assistance to Syrian governance structures and civil society organizations at the national, provincial, and local levels. This assistance connects moderate civilian opposition groups to each other and to the citizens that they represent. These activities include support to provide essential services and robust outreach components to amplify the efforts of these moderate governing bodies delivering assistance, to increase their recognition and boost their legitimacy. Assistance to dozens of local councils has resulted in the development of a small network of provincial councils now functioning in Aleppo, Idlib, and Hama governorates. U.S. assistance also includes the provision of civil defense equipment that has contributed to civil defense teams' ability to save over 12,000 lives. Civil defense teams act as emergency responders to everything from indiscriminate regime barrel bombings to winter storm relief and firefighting. Education assistance has allowed moderate civilian bodies to provide more than 55,000 backpacks filled with supplies to students along with office and rec-

reational equipment for 73 schools. We have also provided food baskets, winterization materials, and heavy equipment as a means to demonstrate moderate civil authorities' governance capacity.

In early Spring the Department of Defense plans to begin its train and equip (T&E) program for vetted members of the Syrian armed opposition to defend themselves and other Syrians from attacks, to prevent ISIL advances, to stabilize and strengthen secure opposition-held areas of Syria, to provide protection for the Syrian people and to advance conditions for a political solution. Department of State and USAID assistance programs will complement the DOD T&E program by helping build a civilian structure into which the DOD-trained forces can integrate. The T&E program will encourage civilian-military cooperation and teaching armed actors how to interact constructively with and in support of civilian governance bodies. This will increase the likelihood that moderate civilian actors will be able to provide services to their constituents, preventing the return of extremist forces, and that newly trained forces will operate under civilian leadership.

Question. Last year security conditions compelled us to suspend Embassy operations in Libya, this year we did the same in Yemen. In Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain our Embassies operate every day at a reduced level. In Iraq and Lebanon our diplomatic teams work under stringent security requirements without the opportunity to bring their families with them to their assigned posts. This trend demands that we take a step back and take a hard look at political and security developments over the past several years, and how we engage with the governments and people of the region going forward.

- ◆ Four years after the Arab Spring, what trends do you see across the region? How do we continue U.S. engagement in a region that is increasingly unsafe for our diplomats, development experts, and nongovernment organizations?

Answer. The tremendous instability we see across the MENA region today has been a consequence of the widespread anger among the region's people at governments that have proven unable to meet popular aspirations for democracy and economic development. The inaction by sclerotic and corrupt governments and economies that produced few jobs and little confidence in opportunities for the future. The rapid decline in the security environment that has ensued as grievances—new and old—have opened across the region has presented serious challenges for our diplomatic engagement. Regrettably, countries throughout the Middle East will be struggling to face security challenges for the foreseeable future. Yet because our vital national security interests are at stake in the Middle East, American engagement and leadership will continue to be foreign policy priority.

We have been working both bilaterally and multilaterally to extend a range of security, economic, and governance institution-building programs to governments in transition. And we remain ready to work with those governments that are willing to tackle these challenges.

Despite the challenges to diplomatic engagement in the region, the Department has, and will continue, to find ways to advance U.S. interests. First, the Department has refined its process to assess and manage risk and to determine appropriate staffing by balancing threats, mitigating measures, and program implementation. This is not easy. But we must continue to weigh our national security interests and policy priorities against evolving security threats. In countries like Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt, we are constantly mindful of security concerns for our personnel. We are continually assessing threats, and have taken a variety of security measures to allow our personnel to continue their important work on the ground while avoiding unnecessary risks. Nevertheless our diplomatic personnel fully understand the importance of our work to protecting U.S. national security—it is an assignment nearly everyone in the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau has taken on at one time or another. Our country can take great pride in their commitment to advancing U.S. foreign policy, sometimes in conditions of considerable risk.

We also continue to advance our interests to bring stability in the region by working closely with our bilateral, regional, and international partners—this is especially true for countries where the security environment restricts or prohibits normal engagement work. By cooperating with our partners throughout the region, we strengthen our engagement strategy, achieve stronger results, and are able to better advance our interests.

We have also learned to be more flexible in how we conduct diplomacy in the region. For example, our Ambassadors to Libya and Yemen are forward deployed in close proximity to both countries to continue engagement with key players and to shape productive outcomes to the ongoing conflicts there. We remain strongly committed to Yemen's democratic political transition. However Yemen's political actors, especially the Houthis, must commit to inclusivity, to negotiations without pre-

conditions, and to a peaceful transition consistent with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, National Dialogue Conference Outcomes, UNSC Resolutions, and Yemeni law. We continue to work with our regional and international partners to press all sides in Yemen to put the country back on the path to a peaceful transition.

Regarding Syria, we suspended operations in 2012 due to security concerns as a result of the civil war. Nonetheless, our Special Envoy for Syria, Daniel Rubinstein, is actively engaged in diplomacy with a wide range of Syrian opposition actors, the members of the London 11, the United Nations Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and others.

Question. Prime Minister Abadi is saying the right things on reconciliation with Iraq's Sunni community, but there are powerful forces aligned against him from Iran to Shia politicians and militias to former Prime Minister Maliki who want reconciliation to fail.

- ◆ (a) What specific policies, actions, and programs are you considering to accelerate and build support for a program of national reconciliation in Iraq?

Answer (a). Addressing the root causes of this conflict and supporting the GOI's effort to promote national reconciliation will be the only effective method to cement again battlefield gains against ISIL. As the President has stressed, this battle cannot be won by the military alone. Our Ambassador in Baghdad engages regularly with the senior-most officials in the Iraqi Government on these issues and regularly highlights national reconciliation as a precursor to long-term stability in Iraq.

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Additionally, Prime Minister Abadi has issued a number of Executive orders to initiate other critical reforms, such as devolving authority over certain public services to local communities and expediting the release of prisoners held without charge—a key concern of the Sunni community, to the extent possible within his constitutional authority as Prime Minister. As part of our strategy, we continue to work aggressively to pressure the GOI to enact further reforms to unify Iraqis and promote human rights and the rule of law. The State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), Embassy Baghdad through the Ambassador's Fund, and USAID continue to carry out targeted interventions to promote reconciliation, the protection of minority communities, and respect for human

rights. Notably, we are targeting over \$10 million in FY 2014 DRL funding for programs which include activities to address human rights and rule of law as well as atrocities prevention and accountability issues—key areas for building reconciliation.

- ◆ (b) Human Rights Watch reports that Shia militias, allied with Iraqi Security Forces, are inflaming sectarian tensions and committing abuses against local populations. On December 17, the Wall Street Journal and other media reported that militias were carrying out evictions, disappearances, and killings in the Baghdad Belt after conducting military operations against ISIL. What ground truth can you share about the activities of Iraqi Shia militias? Has the U.S. Government, at any point in the past year, received credible and accurate evidence that U.S. military equipment provided to the Iraqi Security Forces has been transferred to militias, or groups or individuals outside the command of the Iraqi security force? If so, what actions were taken in response to these developments?

Answer (b). We share your concern about human rights abuses committed by the Shia militias and unregulated armed groups. However, Shia volunteers have been an important element of the fighting force against ISIL inside Iraq. Many of these volunteer forces formed last summer when Baghdad and other major cities were under an imminent threat from ISIL. We have heard reports that militias and other groups have razed civilian homes, conducted extrajudicial killings, and in some cases prevented the return of civilians to their communities. Such abuses are intolerable, threaten any gains made against ISIL, and will have a significant impact on post-conflict stabilization.

We have stressed to the Government of Iraq, at all levels, the need for the militias to fall under the command and control of the Iraqi Security Forces. Prime Minister Abadi has stated that he has a zero tolerance policy of human rights abuses, perpetrators must be held accountable, and all armed groups and militias should be incorporated under state security structures. PM Abadi has launched several high-level investigations into allegations of abuse. Grand Ayatollah Sistani, Iraq's senior-most Shia cleric, has also supported the Prime Minister's efforts by issuing repeated calls and religious edicts prohibiting such human rights abuses and sectarian violence.

We have no credible information to indicate that the GOI has officially transferred U.S. military equipment to individuals outside the command of the Iraqi Security Forces. We take end use monitoring of all U.S.-provided equipment seriously. Our Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) works closely with senior Iraqi Ministry of Defense leadership to stress the importance of responsible use and stringent management of all weapons systems, and the Government of Iraq continues to strengthen its relevant security procedures. The OSC regularly conducts inspections on U.S.-provided systems already fielded in Iraq. We also continue to clearly and consistently communicate to the Iraqi leadership that any violations of any end-use agreement will have serious repercussions that will negatively affect not only our security cooperation, but our relationship, as well.

We have urged Iraqi forces to avoid and prevent abuses of human rights, both because it is the moral thing to do, but also because abusive tactics will fuel sectarian fears and promote sectarian divides.

- ◆ (c) Planning for the offense to retake Mosul is underway, and, according to Defense officials, could begin as early as May. Is the training we're providing in Iraq with coalition partners appropriate for the heavily urban environment of Mosul? Will Iraqi Shia militias participate in the Mosul offensive? Will Sunni tribal fighters? What are the implications for the broader anti-ISIL fight if the Iraqi and Kurdish security forces lose the battle for Mosul?

Answer (c). Ongoing coalition training efforts, to include Advise and Assist and Building Partner Capacity, is intended to generate an Iraqi security force ready to face the challenges of defeating ISIL, and restore Iraqi sovereignty. Along with our coalition partners, we are currently focused on getting these forces adequately trained and equipped for this mission. This training is not only critical in the short term, but also to generate an Iraqi Security Forces that are sustainable beyond our direct military engagements.

We defer to DOD and the Government of Iraq for any details on Mosul operational planning, to include the potential composition of the force.

The inability of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to retake Mosul could negatively impact military morale, undercut PM Abadi's ability to successfully command his forces, and could potentially damage the coalition's cohesion. This underscores the importance that any action on Mosul must be deliberately planned and the execu-

tion well-coordinated, only when the Iraqis are adequately prepared. Regardless of timing, our shared goal is clear: the defeat of ISIL and ensuring that ISIL can no longer pose a threat to the people of Iraq and to other countries in the region.

- ◆ (d) I remain extremely concerned about the safety of the residents of Camp Liberty. Ultimately, the safest place for them is outside Iraq. What is the current condition of Camp Liberty? When was the last time a U.S. official visited the camp and inspected conditions? When will the resettlement process resume and where would the residents be resettled? How many residents are eligible to be resettled in the United States?

Answer (d). The relocation of the remaining 2,474 residents of Camp Hurriya outside of Iraq is a priority for the State Department and the Obama administration. On January 23, the Department of Homeland Security authorized 15 residents for parole into the United States, adding to two residents already paroled into the United States. The 15 authorized candidates received their travel documents February 25 and are expected to have arrived in the United States by March 25. An interagency team has recently completed a deployment to Albania to interview the next group of candidates. The interagency process is on track to identify and vet additional candidates and to meet the administration's target of at least 100 individuals by September 2015.

To date, 13 countries have accepted Camp Hurriya residents for resettlement. Albania has accepted 476 residents and has signaled willingness to accept more. Albania has also offered to allow countries to interview Camp Hurriya residents who have already been relocated to Albania for relocation elsewhere, substantially reducing the cost and logistical challenges for third countries associated with identifying candidates for relocation. Albania has offered to replace any residents who move on to a third country with new residents from Camp Hurriya. State Department Senior Advisor for MeK Resettlement Jonathan Winer is actively engaging the international community to accept Camp Hurriya residents. While countries that have already accepted some residents are logical possibilities for additional relocations, the State Department performed a strategic review in February to identify new options for resettlement and has begun the process of negotiating with those countries.

U.N. monitors make daily visits to Camp Hurriya to inspect the facility and provide reports on those visits for the State Department. The monitors regularly observe the camp's stocks of supplies including food, water, fuel, and other essential items. The monitors consistently report that the camp is abundantly supplied with fresh food, potable water, fuel for generators and vehicles, and other supplies. The monitors regularly observe the Camp's medical and dental clinic and consistently report that Camp Hurriya residents have sufficient access to basic and specialized care.

State Department personnel most recently visited Camp Hurriya on March 9 to assess the welfare of the camp. The observations made during the unannounced visit regarding supply stocks and access to medical care were consistent with U.N. daily reporting. State Department personnel are in regular contact with representatives of the Camp Hurriya residents and held discussions with them during the March 9 visit. When appropriate, U.S. Embassy Baghdad conveys concerns over issues related to Camp Hurriya to senior leaders in the Government of Iraq.

Question. What are the biggest risks facing Tunisia's democratic transition? How would the administration's increased request for Tunisia support that country in overcoming those risks?

Answer. The Department's assistance seeks to support Tunisia's successful democratic transition by helping it build a participatory and pluralistic society supported by a growing economy, responsive government, and capable security services. Economic and security challenges pose the greatest risks to Tunisia's stability in the coming years and, if not addressed, could undermine the country's hard won democratic gains. Long-standing economic grievances and stagnation that sparked the 2011 revolution remain drivers of radicalization and widespread public frustration. The Department's increased foreign assistance seeks to fund programs that will complement and build on work we and other donors have done to address a range of economic challenges in Tunisia, programs which aimed to improve economic competitiveness, make better use of Tunisia's existing trade preferences, and promote legal and regulatory reforms needed to bolster foreign investment by improving Tunisia's business environment. We need to continue our work on expanding SME participation in public procurement, liberalizing and expanding franchising, as well as working with the Tunisian Government to promote more streamlined and consistent company registration laws. Our programs also seek to continue our successful

demand-driven job training targeting Tunisian youth, whose unemployment rate (30 percent) is double the national average, and expand successful job creation models. Assistance programs will also sustain efforts to develop Tunisian democratic institutions at national and local levels, which will be key to continued stability by creating mechanisms for greater transparency, accountability, social inclusion, and citizen participation.

Our requested increase in Foreign Military Financing in FY 2016 will assist the country in reorienting its military forces to face a growing terrorist threat both within Tunisia and along its borders. These funds will bolster Tunisian security forces' capacity to effectively monitor Tunisia's borders, combat terrorism, and prevent the travel of foreign fighters. We also aim to improve the technical capacity and professionalism of the criminal justice system by improving crime scene investigations and criminal intelligence analysis, court administration, community relations, and crisis response.

Question. How long will the United States support the U.N. process in Libya and what options are available if this process hits a dead end? What tools are you considering, including sanctions, to compel parties to participate in the political dialogue?

Answer. The United States Government continues to support the efforts of the United Nations and Special Representative of the Secretary General Bernardino Leon strongly to facilitate formation of a national unity government in Libya and bring a political solution to the ongoing political, security, and institutional crisis in the country. The United Nations-led process provides the best hope for Libyans to return to building the strong and representative state institutions that can most effectively address the terrorist threat and to confront all violence and instability that impedes Libya's political transition and development.

The United States urges all parties to come to the table to engage in constructive national dialogue. Those who choose not to participate are excluding themselves from discussions which are critical to combating terrorism as well as to the overall peace, stability, and security of Libya. At the same time, the United States is exploring a range of other options, including targeted sanctions under UNSCR 2174, to deter spoilers and encourage participation in the U.N.-led process from a broad spectrum of Libyan society.

Question. Some Arab countries, including Egypt and Jordan, are calling for lifting the U.N. arms embargo on Libya. What impact should we expect to see on the ground in Libya if the arms embargo were to be lifted?

Answer. The United States is concerned by the illicit flow of weapons in and out of Libya and continues to support implementation of the existing arms embargo to prevent illicit arms transfers. The existing U.N. arms embargo is not a ban on weapons transfers to the Libyan Government; rather, it allows the Security Council to guard against risks that weapons may be diverted to nonstate actors. We are engaged with our Council colleagues in looking at how to ensure that the existing U.N. sanctions regime can address concerns about the threat posed by unsecured arms and ammunition in Libya and their proliferation, which poses a risk to stability in Libya and the region, including through transfer to nonstate actors and terrorist groups in Libya, and best support the U.N.'s efforts to facilitate a political solution.

Question. General Khalifa Hefter was named Chief of the Libyan Army by the Tobruk-based House of Representatives. Currently, U.S. assistance to build a Libyan General Purpose Force is on hold. How might General Hefter's new position factor into decisionmaking with respect to the disposition of U.S. assistance for the General Purpose Force?

Answer. While the United States remains committed to training Libyan security forces, our GPF training program is necessarily being delayed as we reevaluate how to effectively work with the Libyans to advance this effort in light of the current situation on the ground. This delay predates the House of Representatives' decision to appoint Khalifa Hifter as General Commander of its armed forces.

Question. The U.N. has brokered a "People's Transitional Council" to prevent Yemen from sliding into civil war and Yemeni President Abd Rabuh Mansour Hadi has escaped his house arrest under the Houthis and rescinded his resignation. The State Department has said on several occasions that it considers Hadi to be Yemen's legitimate president.

◆ Is this still the case? If so, how will the U.S. Government support him going forward?

Answer. We still consider President Hadi to be Yemen's legitimate leader. The initial agreement on the formation of a transitional council is only one element within a broader political agreement that is still being negotiated by all Yemeni parties, under the auspices of the United Nations. We support these ongoing U.N.-mediated negotiations consistent with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and the National Dialogue Conference Outcomes as the best way to solve the current crisis peacefully and return Yemen to its political transition.

Although Embassy Sana'a's operations were suspended on February 10, our Ambassador to Yemen, Matthew Tueller, has since met with Hadi twice in Aden to underscore our support for Yemen's peaceful transition and to discuss issues of mutual interest. In addition, we are continuing senior level diplomatic engagement with key regional partners to help support President Hadi and press for a political transition.

Question. The human rights situation in Bahrain remains troubling, an example being the recent decision of the Bahraini Government to strip citizenship from democracy activists under the clause of "causing harm to the interests of the kingdom" and the arrest of Wefaq Secretary General Sheikh Salman on questionable charges.

- ◆ What is your assessment of the Bahraini Government's efforts to implement the recommendations of the 2011 Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI)?

Answer. The Government of Bahrain (GOB) has taken some important, initial steps in line with the recommendations in the 2011 BICI report, to include:

- Rebuilding mosques;
- Establishing the Ombudsman's Office;
- Establishing a Special Investigative Unit;
- Adopting a National Preventative Mechanism on Torture;
- Allowing independent prisons monitoring;
- Establishing the Commission on the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees;
- Reestablishing the National Institution on Human Rights;
- Rescinding the Bahrain National Security Agency's law enforcement/arrest capabilities;
- Training police in human rights standards;
- Reinstating dismissed workers;
- Welcoming a U.N. OHCHR technical team;
- Endorsing school reconciliation programs in cooperation with UNESCO.

We have not seen the GOB make meaningful progress on media incitement, accountability for abuses committed by security forces, or antitorture safeguards. The GOB has much more to do on BICI implementation, and we continue to press them on this. We also remain concerned about the arrest of individuals on charges relating to freedom of expression.

Question. I understand that the Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Salman has formally requested that the administration lift the holds on the sale of certain military items.

- ◆ Is this true? Why does the Crown Prince believe it is necessary to lift these holds? Are you supportive of responding favorably to the Crown Prince's request?

Answer. We have made no decision at this time to resume the shipment of restricted items. We have maintained the same arms transfer policy toward Bahrain since 2012. The United States and Bahrain have a strong and long-standing defense partnership, and we will continue to work to advance our strong security partnership in the face of serious threats in the region.

Question. I remain concerned about the well-being of Mohamad Soltan, an Egyptian-American who has been on hunger strike for over a year to protest his detention on questionable charges by the Egyptian Government. It was recently reported that Mr. Soltan had suffered a serious decline in his health. The State Department previously asked the Egyptian Government to release Mr. Soltan on bail on humanitarian grounds.

- ◆ What else is the U.S. Government doing to bring about that release and ensure that Mr. Soltan receives proper medical care?

Answer. We remain deeply concerned about Mr. Soltan's health and continue to provide Mr. Soltan with all possible consular assistance. A consular officer last visited him on April 2. We understand that Mr. Soltan is currently in the Intensive Care Unit in prison and receiving necessary care. We have raised Mr. Soltan's case at the highest levels in both Washington and Egypt requesting that he be granted parole on a humanitarian basis. Unfortunately, Mr. Soltan was given a life sentence

on April 11. We are urging the Government of Egypt to take all measures to redress this verdict.

Question. The FY15 Appropriations Act requires that you certify and report to Congress that Egypt has met benchmarks on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

- ◆ Can you provide examples of cases where the Egyptian Government has released individuals who you determine to be political prisoners, has implemented laws or policies to govern democratically, has taken consistent steps to protect and advance the rights of women and religious minorities, and/or has provided detainees with due process of law?

Answer. In 2014, Egypt held a constitutional referendum and Presidential elections. Domestic and international observers concluded that the constitutional referendum and subsequent Presidential election were administered professionally and in line with Egyptian laws, while also expressing concerns that government limitations on association, assembly, and expression constrained broad political participation. Parliamentary elections under the new constitution were scheduled to be held in March, 2015, but an Egyptian court recently declared unconstitutional a redistricting law governing those elections. This has meant that the government must delay elections while the law is redrafted.

The new constitution provides increased human rights protections as compared to the previous constitution, including a stipulation of equality before the law irrespective of religion, and provides for more seats to women and Christians than any other Parliament in Egyptian history. It also requires that Parliament pass a new law facilitating the construction and renovation of Christian churches, which is without precedent, and provides for the establishment of an antidiscrimination commission to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Al-Sisi became the first Egyptian President to attend Mass on Coptic Christmas. There have been some convictions for anti-Christian violence, which is also almost without precedent.

However, the government continues to prosecute individuals for “denigrating religions,” and accountability for former sectarian crimes remains problematic. The government has also issued new legislation that criminalizes peaceful dissent and imposes onerous restrictions on civil society.

In an effort to combat incidents of sexual abuse, al-Sisi implemented a new law with penalties of prison and fines for sexual harassment; as a result, at least nine police officers were arrested in 2014. He visited a rape victim in the hospital 2 days after being sworn in as Egypt’s President.

The Egyptian courts have issued hundreds of mass death sentences, mostly to Muslim Brotherhood supporters. Capital punishment cases are automatically reviewed by the Mufti and the Court of Cassation, which have commuted the majority of death sentences.

Over 16,000 Egyptians remain in detention, primarily on charges related to membership in the now outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. Hundreds of others, including prominent secular activists, have been detained for violating the Demonstrations Law. In January, the public prosecutor ordered the release of 100 detained students “out of concern for their academic future.” In February, a prosecutor ordered the release of an additional 130 students, juveniles who had either been pardoned by al-Sisi or met the conditions of parole according to prison regulations.

Australian Al Jazeera journalist, Peter Grete, was released in February 2015; the remaining two Al Jazeera journalists are out on bail pending a retrial. Al-Sisi has promised publicly to release these two after the trial is complete.

The Government of Egypt has not enforced an NGO registration law that many members of the NGO community fear is meant to restrict or shut down NGO activities.

Question. Recently, potential natural gas deals between Israel, Egypt, and Jordan have come undone as the Israeli Antitrust Authority announced a proposal that would require Noble Energy and Delek Group to sell some of their largest joint offshore gas holdings and to compete on gas sales with the rest of their current partners.

- ◆ What impact might the current regulatory environment in Israel have on potential energy deals with Egypt and Jordan?

Answer. Prospective energy deals between Israel and Egypt and Jordan are an opportunity to strengthen peaceful relations between Israel and its neighbors, and demonstrate the potential for energy to be a key source of realignment and interdependence in the broader Eastern Mediterranean. Countries facing severe energy shortages like Egypt and Jordan now have regional options for meeting their energy needs with natural gas that is both cheaper and greener than heavy fuel oil. Israeli

gas, therefore, remains critical to Jordan's continued economic growth and political and economic stability. Equally important, Egypt recognizes the political and commercial necessity of increasing domestic energy supplies, which could include gas from Israel.

Since the Israeli Anti-Trust Authority's December 22 announcement, senior officials at the Department of State, including Secretary Kerry, Under Secretary Sherman, Special Envoy Hochstein, and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro, have engaged the most senior leadership of the Government of Israel on this issue. While acknowledging the importance of not interfering with the independent Anti-Trust Authority, these officials have shared concerns over the potential negative impact on Israel's strategic interests if Israel fails to develop and export its gas to regional markets including Egypt and Jordan.

The United States is not involved in the legal debate in Israel, but continues to believe that it is important for all countries to have a strong investment climate, including a consistent and predictable regulatory framework. Energy discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean can and should be used to strengthen collaboration and cooperation in the region. We continue to closely monitor the situation as well as engage and support all parties to move forward with the natural gas deal signed between Noble Energy and partner entities in Jordan and Egypt.

Question. Palestinian efforts to seek unilateral recognition at the United Nations Security Council through imbalanced resolutions, and the bid to join the International Criminal Court (ICC), call into question President Mahmoud Abbas' commitment to direct negotiations for a two-state solution. In response to these and other actions, the Israeli Government is withholding the transfer of tax revenue to the Palestinian Authority (PA).

◆ (A) Without this revenue, how much longer will the PA be able to operate?

Answer. We have strongly opposed the Palestinians bid to join the ICC and we have opposed one-sided resolutions in the UNSC. We are, however, deeply concerned by Israel's decision to withhold the transfer of monthly tax revenue to the PA for December 2014 and January 2015. These transfers of tax revenue historically have averaged \$150 million per month, or about 75 percent of all regular PA revenues. In the absence of revenues, the PA had only been paying 60 percent of employees' salaries from January to February 2015.

According to the PA, it is unclear how they will be able to pay salaries in April and beyond unless Israel resumes transferring PA tax revenues or international donors significantly advance their planned 2015 budget support to the PA. Local borrowing is effectively exhausted, as the PA already reached its borrowing limit of \$1.47 billion. In the continued absence of tax revenue transfers, Palestinian officials maintain the PA may have to resort to furloughs and staggered work schedules for its employees, including security forces. The payment of partial salaries and shortages of food and fuel has already impacted the operational readiness and morale of the security forces. We are concerned that financial damage to the PA can undermine security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

◆ (B) What is the impact of withholding this revenue on Palestinians living in the West Bank?

Answer. Rising poverty rates, food insecurity, and private sector layoffs are just some of the economic and humanitarian impacts of the PA's financial difficulties that are already being felt by Palestinians. A continuation or deepening of the financial crisis will likely result in the PA no longer being able to pay even partial salaries, provide services, or carry out the normal functions of a government authority. These difficulties are building upon an already deteriorating economic and political environment, generating a crisis in the West Bank that threatens to unravel the economic, security, and humanitarian gains of the past 10 years. Given that the PA makes up about one quarter of the Palestinian economy, its demise—or even its reduction—will have severe negative economic and humanitarian consequences.

◆ (C) If the Palestinians introduce another resolution to the U.N. Security Council this year, will the United States use its veto?

Answer. The United States has consistently opposed every effort to delegitimize Israel or undermine its security, including at the United Nations. We uniformly and firmly oppose one-sided actions designed to punish Israel in international bodies and will continue to do so.

In most cases of unfair and unbalanced texts introduced in the Security Council, we have been able to advocate successfully for the U.S. position during negotiations and, if necessary, form a coalition of like-minded countries to stop such resolutions from moving forward.

For example, on December 30, 2014, the United States successfully rallied a coalition to join us in voting against an unbalanced draft resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that was hastily put before the Security Council. We made clear to the other members that the draft text was deeply imbalanced and should not be supported. Through outreach by Secretary Kerry to multiple leaders represented on the Security Council, as well as Ambassador Power's tireless work in New York, the resolution failed to achieve the nine UNSC member votes in favor required for adoption. Separately, the administration used its veto power to defeat another one-sided resolution in 2011.

We will continue to work with our partners, including in the Council, to advance the prospect for future negotiations and provide a horizon of hope for Israelis and Palestinians, while opposing all efforts that would undermine that goal.

- ◆ (D) Given his recent efforts at the U.N. and ICC, is Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas still a partner that Israel and the United States can work with to reach a negotiated peace?

Question. We have made very clear our opposition to Palestinian action at the ICC. We also worked hard to defeat a one-sided Palestinian UNSCR this past December. These actions damage the atmosphere with the very people with whom they ultimately need to make peace, and will do nothing to further the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a sovereign and independent state. We will continue to oppose such counterproductive actions at the ICC and U.N. We do believe that President Abbas remains a partner for peace, and he continues to reaffirm the PA's commitment to the principles of nonviolence and recognition of the State of Israel.

We will continue to consult with you as we move forward on these issues.

Question. Current U.S. law prohibits economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority if the Palestinians initiate an ICC investigation of Israeli nationals or "actively support such an investigation." I, along with other Members of Congress, have called for a review of U.S. assistance in light of these legal requirements.

- ◆ Please describe the process and methodology by which the State Department is undertaking this review, what conclusions (if any) have been reached, and when you expect to complete this review.
- ◆ Are Palestinian security forces still committed to cooperating with Israel?

Answer. The State Department, in conjunction with USAID, is examining U.S. assistance to the Palestinians to determine how it can best be used moving forward. Although our view is that the legislative restrictions related to Palestinian initiation or active support for an ICC judicially authorized investigation have not been triggered to date, we intend to maintain pressure on the PA not to take additional destabilizing action at the ICC.

Any decisions related to assistance will be made in consultation with Congress, as we remain committed to maintaining an open dialogue with lawmakers. We continue to believe that U.S. assistance to the Palestinian people is an important tool in promoting regional stability, economic development, and increased security for both Palestinians and Israelis. U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority is fundamental to support U.S. national security interests.

Both Israeli and Palestinian leaders attest that the Palestinian security forces' remain committed to security coordination. As President Abbas has said many times, security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority serves the interests of the Palestinian people. It has been instrumental in preserving security in the West Bank and in reducing threats to Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Our support and engagement has helped to strengthen security coordination. Although we continue to see a political will to maintain security coordination, we are very concerned about the continued viability of the Palestinian Authority—including the security forces—if they do not receive their tax revenues soon. If we cannot find a solution and the Palestinian security forces can no longer operate effectively, the result could be the breakdown of basic law and order in the West Bank—and a real danger that extremists could exploit the situation.

Question. Turkey remains a linchpin in turning off the flow of foreign fighters into the region, as well as to a significant portion of ISIL's financing—along with the Assad regime—based on sales by ISIL of confiscated petroleum.

- ◆ What more can the Turkish Government do to contribute to degrading ISIL?
- ◆ Why hasn't Turkey joined the coalition's air campaign against ISIL?
- ◆ Is Turkey stemming the flow of foreign fighters through its territory to Syria and Iran?
- ◆ Considering Turkey's geostrategic importance, what strategy are you putting in place to deal with the increasingly authoritarian actions of President Erdogan,

including cowering of the Turkish judiciary, imprisonment of critical journalists, and propagation of anti-Semitic rhetoric, which put them in a divergent position relative to our other NATO allies?

Answer. Turkey is a NATO ally and valuable partner in the counter-ISIL coalition. Turkish leaders have made clear that they reject ISIL. For example, on March 5, President Erdogan criticized the terrorist group for “destroying everything in Islamic civilization, culture and roots.” Turkey has made significant contributions to coalition efforts, including:

- Hosting a Department of Defense train and equip program for the moderate Syrian opposition;
- Providing an overland corridor to the Syrian city of Kobane for Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga and Free Syrian Army units defending against ISIL attacks;
- Providing military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to support the Iraqi Government and Kurdistan Regional Government in their fight against ISIL;
- Taking increased measures to restrict oil smuggling;
- Cochairing with the United States a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) initiative to address how ISIL raises, moves, and uses its funds;
- Hosting nearly 1.7 million refugees from Syria and 130,000 from Iraq. Turkish officials report having spent over \$5 billion caring for the refugees, through 23 high-quality camps and provision of social services such as health care and education.

On foreign fighters, Turkey has made noteworthy progress in improving screening procedures, including implementing an expanded “no entry list” and turning back or detaining suspected foreign terrorist fighters. Turkey continues to work with the United States and other coalition partners to enhance intelligence cooperation on terrorism. For example, on March 12, we signed a declaration of intent with Turkey to negotiate in coming months an agreement to share foreign terrorist fighter identity information.

Turkish leaders have stated their intention to contribute even further to coalition military operations. As each partner country brings unique capabilities, we will continue to work with Turkey and the other 61 members of the coalition as part of a broad international campaign against ISIL.

As NATO allies, the United States and Turkey share many strategic interests. In this context, we continue to encourage Turkey to take the necessary steps to uphold its own stated democratic commitments. We are concerned by government actions that weaken the independence of the media and judiciary, and we have conveyed these concerns through private meetings with Turkish officials, public statements, and our annual human rights report.

We are deeply concerned by anti-Semitic statements made by Turkish leaders and engage directly at all levels to express our disapproval of such statements. For example, President Obama discussed the importance of building tolerant and inclusive societies and combating the scourge of anti-Semitism with President Erdogan during their September 5, 2014, meeting in Wales. Our Ambassador and Embassy officers also meet regularly with the Jewish community and other representatives of religious minorities in Turkey to discuss their concerns over religious freedom and security, and to promote interfaith dialogue.

Question. Property Claims and Judgments in U.S. Courts.—I am very troubled by the fact that the administration has seemed to downplay the fact that there are thousands of American citizens and businesses that hold over \$6 billion in unresolved claims for properties confiscated by the Castro regime, and that there is an additional \$2 billion in unsettled judgments rendered by U.S. courts. Furthermore, Section 103(a) of the LIBERTAD Act states “Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no loan, credit, or other financing may be extended knowingly by a United States national, a permanent resident alien, or a United States agency to any person for the purpose of financing transactions involving any confiscated property the claim to which is owned by a United States national as of the date of the enactment of this act, except for financing by the United States national owning such claim for a transaction permitted under United States law.”

- ◆ What assurances can you, given the American citizens and businesses hold these claims and judgments, that the administration will use all means necessary to pressure the Castro regime and ensure their prompt resolution? What specific steps will the administration take?

Answer. The Department is committed to a resolution of claims and firmly believes the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, including opening an embassy in Havana, will allow the United States to engage more effectively on a range of impor-

tant issues, including claims. During the January talks in Havana with the Cuban Government, we proposed, and the Cubans agreed, to begin a dialogue on claims in the months following the reestablishment of diplomatic relations and reopening of our respective embassies.

The discussion of claims will be part of our broader normalization efforts, and may take some time. As in all claims settlement discussions, there is a range of issues that will need to be considered.

Question. When the U.S. interested [SIC] into a process of normalization with Libya during the last decade, Secretary Rice committed that she would not travel to Libya until there was a complete resolution of the claims held by the families of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing.

◆ Will you make that same commitment to the U.S. citizens that have been victims of the Castro regime?

Answer. The Department is committed to pursuing a resolution of claims and firmly believes the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, including opening an embassy in Havana, will allow the United States to engage more effectively on a range of important issues, including claims. During the January talks in Havana with the Cuban Government, we proposed, and the Cubans agreed, to begin a dialogue on claims in the months following the reestablishment of diplomatic relations and reopening of our respective embassies.

Claims are not necessarily addressed as part of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations. In fact, diplomatic relations are generally in place when governments embark on claims discussions. In Libya, we had not severed diplomatic relations; claims discussions were simply part of normalizing our bilateral relationship, along with discussing other pressing matters such as weapons of mass destruction.

Question. On Sunday February 22, the Cuban Government arrested nearly 200 activists across Cuba, including over 80 members of the Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White), 90 members of the Unión Patriótica de Cuba (Cuban Patriotic Union), and prominent democratic activists such as Sakharov prize winner Guillermo Fariñas, Angel Moya and Antonio Rodiles.

◆ What is the State Department's assessment of these arrests? Will U.S. officials raise this unacceptable wave of arrests in their talks with the Cuban Government on February 27?

Answer. The Department consistently monitors human rights in Cuba and, as the President said on December 17, we will continue to raise our differences on issues related to democracy and human rights directly with the Cuban Government. We have no illusions that the Cuban Government will change its behavior overnight. We want to work closely with Congress on such arrests and on bringing positive change on human rights in Cuba. Human rights are central to our discussions with the Cuban Government and we will continue to press for greater respect of fundamental freedoms and an end to these practices.

Question. February 24, 2015, marks the 19th anniversary of the shoot-down of two civilian aircraft over international waters by Cuban MiG fighter jets, which resulted in the murder of three Americans and a permanent resident of the United States. This shoot-down over international waters has been named an act of state terrorism, including by the United States Congress. An August 2003 federal indictment remains open for three senior Cuban military officials for the murder of these Americans.

◆ Should Cuba be removed from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism prior to these senior Cuban military officials facing justice for an act of terrorism that resulted in the murder of three Americans?

Answer. The Department is reviewing Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST). We are undertaking a serious review of Cuba's designation based on all relevant, applicable information and the statutory standard. We will not prejudice the outcome of that process.

Question. In May 2003, the U.S. Government expelled 14 Cuban diplomats for having engaged in espionage against the United States, including diplomats stationed at Cuban mission to the United Nations and the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, DC.

◆ As the U.S. State Department prepares to host talks with Cuba on February 27, will any of the 14 Cuban diplomats expelled in 2003 participate in these discussions?

Answer. None of the 14 Cuban diplomats expelled in 2003 participated in the February 27 discussions with the Cuban Government in Washington, DC.

Question. On December 17, 2014, President Obama announced that, as a result of negotiations between the United States and Cuba, the Cuban Government would permit greater access to the Internet. On February 20, Cuba's First Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel announced that a process to increase Internet access would take place under the leadership of Cuba's Communist Party, and include the full involvement of all institutions of the Cuban Government. Diaz-Canel also said that any such process would include close collaboration with the Governments of Russia and China, which are known to censure and limit access to internet content.

- ◆ What is the State Department's assessment of Diaz-Canel's call for Internet access governed by the Communist Party of Cuba? Would such access meet the United States expectation for the Cuban people to have greater access to the Internet, as it was set forth by President Obama on December 17, 2014?

Answer. Internet access in Cuba is expensive, of very poor quality, and available to a relatively limited number of people. According to Cuban press reporting, the Cuban Government used the country's first national "computerization and cybersecurity" workshop in February to publicize its new information and communication technology (ICT) strategy, which includes upgrading 70 percent of the country's telecom equipment, increased training, and greater access to technology by Cubans, i.e., easing import restrictions and digitizing public registries, services, and payments.

Greater access to information through the Internet and other means is a U.S. priority in Cuba and around the world. Greater connectivity for the Cuban people is essential to empower them in their efforts to build a democratic, prosperous, and stable Cuba. Ambassador Daniel Sepulveda, U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, will travel to Cuba at the end of March to begin a dialogue on broadening telecommunications and Internet on the island with the objective of expanding Internet access for the Cuban people. In addition, we continue to work with Cubans, including independent civil society actors, to promote the free flow of information to, from, and within the island. This is an important part of our efforts to enhance and strengthen the fundamental rights of all Cubans to freely exercise their freedom of speech and expression.

In January, the Department of Treasury promulgated regulatory changes authorizing transactions incidental to the establishment of telecommunications facilities not just directly linking the United States and Cuba, but also within Cuba and linking Cuba to third countries. Under a new Department of Commerce license exception, the export of items for Cuba's telecom infrastructure is also permitted under certain conditions. Under the new policies, U.S. companies may also export personal communication devices and software (e.g., telephones, computers, and Internet technology/applications) to Cuba for commercial sale or donation, and can also export certain tools, equipment, and supplies to private enterprises in Cuba. We are informing U.S. companies of these changes and continuing to work to address their questions.

Question. In his op-ed in the New York Times, Vice President Biden noted that one of the challenges facing Central America today is pervasive corruption, often linked to transnational drug trafficking syndicates and organized crime. Guatemala has addressed corruption by hosting the U.N.'s International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG, pronounced SEE-sig) and Honduras recently signed an agreement with Transparency International.

- ◆ What steps will the administration take to encourage that CICIG's mandate be renewed, and that the Honduran agreement with Transparency International is successful? What other steps will the administration take to help Central American governments confront corruption?

Answer. Citizens and investors will trust Central American institutions after these institutions establish a pattern of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. The result will be improved security and broad-based economic growth. The quality of institutions will determine the quality of results.

The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) has been a vital institution for promoting accountability and justice. We have raised the importance of a CICIG extension past September 2015 at the highest levels of the Guatemala governments and emphasize that an extension would be a crucial demonstration of Guatemala's commitment to the objectives outlined in the Alliance for Prosperity.

We are pleased that the Government of Honduras, on its own initiative, signed an agreement with Transparency International to promote public sector transparency and accountability as well as to reduce corruption. We will coordinate

closely with the international community, civil society, and the Government of Honduras to ensure that this agreement is fully implemented.

We are committed to combating corruption throughout the region. CICIG and Honduras' agreement with Transparency International are two examples where these countries are working to address these complex issues. Our support to the region under the U.S. Strategy for Engagement with Central America will include working with Central American governments to implement internal control systems and institutional checks and balances that reduce the potential for corruption. In addition to working with audit and fiscal control bodies, we will work with the police, prosecutors, and judges to help ensure transparency in the justice system. Likewise, we will work with the executive branch and electoral management bodies to identify and limit illicit funding in political and campaign finance systems.

Civil society must be involved in efforts to improve accountability and fight corruption. We will support the work of citizen watchdogs, civil society, and the media. An engaged, informed, independent civil society is an important accountability mechanism and government motivator. We look forward to working with all sectors of society to improve the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of institutions in Central America.

Question. Growing Narco Threat.—The U.S. Department of Treasury has designated over 10 senior Venezuelan Government officials as drug kingpins, members of Venezuela's National Guard and military act as a de facto cartel, and in testimony before this committee in May of 2014, Assistant Secretary Jacobson stated that the situation in Venezuela constitutes a national security threat to the United States.

♦ Can you please provide your assessment of this threat and describe U.S. strategy to address it?

Answer. It is a concern not only for the United States, but also for the rest of the hemisphere, that Venezuela remains a key transit country for the shipment of illegal drugs from South America. The majority of illicit narcotics that transited Venezuela in 2014 were destined for the Eastern Caribbean, Central America, the United States, West Africa, and Europe. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations facilitate the transshipment of narcotics through Venezuela and media reports indicate that Mexican drug-trafficking organizations also operate in Venezuela.

Venezuelan authorities do not effectively prosecute drug traffickers, in part due to political corruption. Additionally, Venezuelan law enforcement officers lack the equipment, training, and resources required to impede the operations of major drug trafficking organizations. The U.S. Government and its regional partners have repeatedly said more effective counternarcotics efforts by the Venezuelan Government are necessary to curb the flow of drugs into and out of the region.

Since the Venezuelan Government ended formal cooperation with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency in 2005, bilateral counternarcotics cooperation has been conducted on a case-by-case basis, including informal information exchanges and maritime interdiction activities with the U.S. Coast Guard. However, a lack of sustained, high-level cooperation reduces the ability of our U.S. law enforcement partners to investigate and prosecute violators of U.S. law residing or operating in Venezuela. We nonetheless encourage our U.S. law enforcement partners to work as closely with their Venezuelan counterparts as is permitted by the Venezuelan Government.

We will continue to support drug interdiction programs throughout the region, including programs in Colombia, Peru, Central America, and the Caribbean. We will urge those partners to encourage the Venezuelan Government to step up its efforts and fulfill regional commitments and responsibilities to combat drug trafficking.

Question. For many years U.S. foreign policy—under Presidents of both parties—has paid insufficient attention to the countries in the Western Hemisphere—whether it is Canada to the north or Latin America to the south. Yet 12 of the 20 countries with which we currently have free trade agreements are located here in our hemisphere. And, throughout the last decade, as the region posted strong growth figures, U.S. economic integration with Latin America and the Caribbean also rose sharply. By 2012, the United States exported more products to Latin America than to Europe, almost twice as much to Mexico as to China, and more to Chile and Colombia than to Russia. U.S. natural gas is increasingly sold to Mexico, with natural gas exports increasing tenfold since 1999.

♦ Given these trends and the fact the well-being of the U.S. economy is inherently linked to our ability to identify and gain access to overseas markets, in your opinion, should our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere receive a greater degree of our time and attention? And, what can be done to galvanize greater focus on the opportunities here in our own hemisphere?

Answer. The United States seeks a hemisphere that is a model of economic prosperity, education and social inclusion, citizen security, and democracy and human rights. In order to remain competitive globally we are also working with regional partners to build the Americas into a shared, integrated platform for global success with a market of nearly 1 billion people.

U.S. partnership is based on jobs, education, energy, prosperity, innovation, democratic values, and keeping our people safe. We are focusing our diplomatic engagement and assistance resources where they can have an enduring impact. Addressing issues of citizen insecurity, economic opportunity, economic integration (especially in the energy sector), and effective governance with Central American partners could be transformative. We are supporting the Colombian Government's efforts to seek a durable peace. High-level meetings and working groups are strengthening the United States-Mexico partnership and driving a more competitive North America. We are working to reenergize our relationship with Brazil. Negotiations to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba have seen our partners in the region reengage on issues previously off limits. Our drive on energy reform in the Caribbean will help these countries adapt to reductions in PetroCaribe assistance. Efforts to expand trade and investment opportunities through broader initiatives like the Trans-Pacific Partnership and increased cooperation with the Pacific Alliance also hold great potential for forming stronger economic partnerships in the region. Finally, the United States is also firmly committed to advancing reform of the Organization of American States (OAS) in order to revitalize and strengthen the institution and preserve its leadership role as this hemisphere's premier multilateral organization, and bolster OAS' ability to promote and uphold the values at the core of this hemispheric union, consistent with the principles enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Question. As you're aware, our economic statecraft agencies—like the Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and the Trade & Development Agency (TDA)—play vital roles in promoting U.S. economic and political goals abroad while helping foreign countries achieve their development objectives. One particularly interesting case is that of a New Jersey company which was awarded a contract to build a facility in Ukraine to store the used nuclear fuel from its commercial nuclear reactors. When complete, this facility will free Ukraine from its current dependence on Russia to accept current annual rail shipments of Ukraine's used fuel without which Ukraine would be forced to shut down its nuclear fleet. Ex-Im had originally been a sponsor of this project, but recently had to withdraw given the instability in the country. But in any case, you can clearly see how these kinds of projects, backed by our economic statecraft agencies, can generate U.S. exports, and achieve critical foreign policy objectives, while simultaneously promoting economic development and security abroad.

◆ My question to you is: How do you think we should best use these institutions to further our foreign policy objectives and how could this Congress strengthen them?

Answer. In today's world, foreign policy and economic policy are mutually reinforcing. That's why business and economics are top priorities. We're taking a number of steps to facilitate more trade and investment. We know that when American businesses invest abroad, we benefit here in the United States. Our firms cannot survive without exports. Fully 95 percent of the world's market is outside the United States. We know that U.S. business leaders are some of the finest ambassadors that we have, sharing their practices in transparency, innovation, technology, social responsibility with every country in which they invest.

U.S. companies have some of the world's most competitive products and services. Our embassies around the world advocate on a daily basis for U.S. companies, helping them find opportunities, supporting their bids on projects, helping in disputes, and promoting legal and regulatory reforms that create a level playing field on which they can compete on quality and service. But when they go after sales and contracts internationally, their European, Japanese—and increasingly Chinese and Brazilian—competitors are armed with their own governments' financing and other support, which they build directly into their sales pitches.

That is why the U.S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im), is critical for helping U.S. businesses succeed. In FY 2014, it supported 164,000 American jobs and \$27.5 billion in U.S. exports, and provided \$675 million in revenue to the Treasury to reduce the budget deficit.

While Ex-Im is not an aid or development agency, its funding often has the added benefit of contributing to economic development and security abroad. Ex-Im provides financing support for the purchase of U.S. goods and services by foreign buyers. Its lending fills market gaps by assuming credit and country risks that the private sec-

tor is unable or unwilling to accept without support. To support a level playing field for U.S. businesses, Ex-Im matches financing that other governments within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provide to their exporters. Ex-Im can also match financing terms that are outside the OECD Arrangement when there is documentation on the offers by foreign export credit agencies.

We cannot afford to unilaterally disarm in the international trade arena, which is what we would be doing if we did not reauthorize the U.S. Export-Import bank. For Ukraine, we are encouraging an economic reform process that will help restore stability and enable Ex-Im to reopen in support of U.S. exports and Ukrainian growth and prosperity.

Another federal agency that is actively helping out in Ukraine is the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), whose mission is to advance U.S. development, foreign policy, and national security goals by facilitating U.S. investments in developing countries. OPIC operates on a self-sustaining basis at no net cost to American taxpayers. OPIC-supported projects address critical development challenges—clean water, sustainable energy, infrastructure, education and access to finance. OPIC is focused on lending for long-term, commercial projects and can also insure U.S. investment against political risks—currency inconvertibility, expropriation, and political violence. Operating in over 160 countries, OPIC has financed more than \$200 billion of investment in more than 4,000 projects, generating \$76 billion in exports and supporting 278,000 American jobs.

A third agency, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities in sectors where U.S. expertise is particularly strong: energy, transportation, and telecommunications. Examples include early-stage project planning activities—such as feasibility studies, pilot projects, and other technical assistance—as well as reverse trade missions that bring foreign buyers to the United States in order to observe the design, manufacture, and demonstration of U.S. products and services in operation. USTDA's programs are responsible for generating over \$25 billion in U.S. exports to emerging markets—supporting an estimated 110,000 U.S. jobs—over the last 10 years. That equates to \$76 in exports of U.S.-manufactured goods and services for every \$1 programmed.

Congress can strengthen the trade and investment facilitation agencies by fully funding the President's request for FY 2016. Moreover, Congress should provide reliability to U.S. businesses and our partners overseas by reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank for 5 years or longer, in order to assure predictability and confidence that their vital support will be available when opportunities are on the line.

Question. For the second year in a row now, the administration did not request funding to pay our arrears to the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF). This lack of funding is sure to undermine the MIF's operations. The MIF does critical work in promoting private sector-led economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean and I believe it deserves the full support of the U.S. Government.

◆ Could you please explain why the administration did not request any funding at all for the MIF?

Answer. The MIF currently has sufficient resources. The administration did not request funding for unmet commitments to the MIF for FY16, as we prioritized reducing unmet commitments to other multilateral development banks where we are at risk of losing shareholding.

Question. I greatly appreciated Secretary Clinton's focus on economic statecraft and bolstering the State Department's ability to grow U.S. jobs and exports and fully applaud your work in continuing this effort through the Shared Prosperity Agenda. Efforts like these are a clear example of how the State Department can contribute to strengthening our economic recovery at home.

◆ Given the tremendous importance of exports in generating American jobs and economic growth, could you please explain the status of the State Department's Shared Prosperity Agenda and what concrete steps the Department plans to take over the coming year to elevate the importance of economic issues in our diplomatic engagement?

Answer. My commitment to elevating economic issues in our diplomatic engagement focuses on both policy priorities and reforms within the Department of State. Our policy priority is to promote inclusive, job-rich, sustainable economic growth in the United States and overseas. Internal reforms emphasize the increased use of data and advanced analytics, better knowledge management tools, strengthened

internal and interagency cooperation, and improved incentives and training to better inform the Department's decision making. These priorities and initiatives will be reflected in detail in the forthcoming 2014 Quadrennial Diplomacy Development Review document.

Inclusive Growth

Trends in inequality and structural underemployment around the world compel us to define the goal of our economic diplomacy as sustainable, job-rich, inclusive economic growth pursued in an environmentally responsible manner. This approach complements our current commercial advocacy efforts, which aim to expand foreign market opportunities for U.S. companies. American companies conducting business abroad provide jobs (at home and abroad) as well as social and environmental benefits. State is an active partner with USTR in the effort to negotiate new trade agreements such as TPP and TTIP, as well as Trade and Investment Framework Agreements, and Bilateral Investment Treaties.

At U.S. embassies and consulates around the world, State continues to collaborate closely with our Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) colleagues as we work to grow U.S. jobs and exports. Where the FCS is not present, State Department economic officers fill in at over 56 posts, offering the same package of support services to U.S. exporters and investors as FCS officers do.

We also support accountable governance and continue to combat corruption in economies abroad: the World Economic Forum (WEF) estimates corruption reduces global GDP by more than 5 percent each year. We are using a variety of tools, including bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement, enforcement, and capacity building assistance, to advance our anticorruption agenda. Through initiatives such as the Ukraine and Arab Forums on Asset Recovery, we help build capacity to ensure motivated governments have the ability, and in some cases, the resources to effectively combat corruption. Beyond providing technical assistance, we also work to generate the political will to respond to corruption by creating trade incentives for reform, celebrating good performers in venues like the Open Government Partnership, and supporting citizen organizations, journalists, and prosecutors holding public officials accountable.

Finally, we are specifically promoting entrepreneurship and innovation as drivers for the creation of new businesses and increased employment abroad. Academic research reveals that while small and medium sized businesses contribute approximately half of U.S. GDP, it's actually new and young businesses which create all net new jobs in the United States. This is true abroad as well: SMEs account for 97 percent of all jobs in emerging markets according to the World Economic Forum. We are doing this work with specific emphasis on the next generation of economic actors, on skill building, but also on making sure that the environment for doing business is strong and vibrant.

State Department Reforms

Addressing several key cultural, process, and technological challenges within the Department will help accelerate progress toward the above goals. The forthcoming QDDR will address these in detail, focusing on the following themes:

Our strategic and tactical decisions in pursuit of inclusive growth need to be informed by the best data, diagnostic tools, and research available. We are working to improve State's capacity and resources in these areas and in doing so are aligning with best practices on data already adopted by MCC, USAID, and many multilateral institutions.

We are also pursuing improved knowledge management practices and systems so that we can better build on and benefit from the institutional knowledge of the Department. This includes an effort to modernize our contact relationship management systems and improving our capacity to archive, discover, and search our work products.

Finally, we are pursuing a refreshed emphasis on performance outcomes and training for our Civil and Foreign Service colleagues, including recognizing and rewarding economic expertise. We are also expanding opportunities for private sector details for Department employees, and more short-term but impactful Department opportunities for the best and brightest from the private sector.

Question. International Monetary Fund (IMF) Quota Reforms.—About this time last year, the Foreign Relations Committee passed a bill with a strong bipartisan vote, which in addition to providing aid to Ukraine authorized U.S. acceptance of the 2010 IMF reforms. When that bill ultimately reached the Senate floor, however, the IMF reform provisions were removed due to the opposition of some members who apparently disagree that these reforms are in the interest of the United States. I'm glad to see that the administration reiterated its request for congressional

approval of the 2010 reform package in its FY16 budget, but several of my colleagues and I wish the administration would do more to advance this issue.

- ◆ Could you please state for the record the administration's position on why approving the 2010 IMF reform package is in our national interest, and what you think the impact of our failure to approve the reforms would be—to U.S. credibility and international leadership and to the IMF's ability to respond to global financial crises?
- ◆ Does the administration plan making passage of the 2010 IMF reform package a priority for this year?

Answer. The administration strongly calls for congressional approval of the 2010 IMF quota reform. The U.S. delay in ratifying the 2010 reform has eroded our leadership and capacity to influence international development financing. Giving important developing economies a greater vote in the IMF would preserve the integrity of the existing international financial infrastructure without increasing U.S. monetary commitments or endangering the U.S. veto over important IMF decisions. To preserve U.S. influence, we need to work to recognize the legitimate aspirations of several growing economies to become responsible participants in the Bretton Woods institutions. Delay will ultimately affect the IMF's ability to respond to geopolitical and economic crises in a way that serves our vital national interests.

Despite the fact that the United States championed the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms, we are now the only major IMF member country that has not yet ratified them. The U.S. failure to ratify IMF reforms is generating criticism abroad and eroding our credibility in the G20, with emerging economies, and with international financial institutions. At the 2014 World Bank/IMF spring and fall meetings, an increasing number of countries called for moving forward on IMF quota and governance reforms without the United States. The November G20 Brisbane Summit Joint Communiqué stated that the G20 will begin to engage the IMF in 2015 to discuss how to advance the reform process if the United States fails to ratify the proposed reforms by the end of 2014. The International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the policy advisory arm of the IMF, and G20 communiqués over the last year tasked the IMF with discussing options for next steps, and significant work has been done to date to outline interim steps to move in the direction of the 2010 reforms. Participants at the April 17–19, 2015, World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings criticized the United States for our inability to agree to quota reform, and discussed other ways to implement quota reform.

Our inaction has fueled momentum for alternative institutions. While we recognize the need for additional development financing around the world, we believe it is also important that all such efforts advance standards for governance and environmental and social safeguards that institutions like the IMF and the World Bank have helped establish over the decades.

The administration will continue to make passage of the 2010 IMF reform package a priority for this year.

Question. I want to commend you and the administration for the historic climate announcements with China and India. I believe these agreements have forever changed the dynamic of international climate negotiations and developed and developing countries will henceforth act in tandem to lower climate emissions. It is truly a remarkable accomplishment and one that deserves universal praise. Unfortunately, we have already seen efforts in the Senate to undermine the administration's efforts to work with developing nations to lower their emissions.

- ◆ If the majority were to somehow block the United States-China announcement, and other such efforts, how would U.S. interests be harmed?

Answer. Blocking U.S. implementation of elements of the joint announcement would harm U.S. interests at home and abroad and dramatically weaken our ability to encourage strong commitments from other major economies. Specifically, the United States-China joint climate change announcement has had a profound effect on the international climate talks. As the world's largest economies, the United States and China sent an unmistakable signal to the world that the Paris agreement would be forged by both developed and developing nations alike. For example, the announcement has helped catalyze action from other developing economies like Mexico, which on March 27 made a strong pledge to peak emissions by 2026 and emit 22 percent less carbon in 2030 compared to a business-as-usual baseline. Without the momentum created by the United States-China announcement, the United States would lack a powerful tool with which we can shape the commitments and attitudes of other nations around the world.

The joint announcement also benefited our bilateral relationship with China. The United States-China relationship is one of our most important bilateral relation-

ships. If Congress were to walk back implementation of the pledges embodied in the announcement, it would give China an opening to backpedal on its historic climate pledge. For China to achieve its carbon emissions peak around 2030 or earlier, China will need to take significant additional action now. Additionally, in the joint announcement, China said that it intends to strive to peak even earlier than 2030, which will require a more targeted effort. Before this announcement, many major academic analyses predicted that China would peak emissions in 2040 or later.

Further, achieving China's announced goal of a 20-percent nonfossil energy share by 2030 will require China's large-scale deployment of nonfossil energy capacity on the order of 800–1000 GW. These are remarkably substantial goals, even for China. The entire U.S. generation capacity in 2012 was a bit less than 1000 GW, and the Chinese have committed to add that much clean energy capacity over the next 15 years. Action by China on climate change and clean air will ultimately reduce the costly effects of climate change, thus benefiting the United States and our ability to protect the public health of American citizens.

Question. Over 1.3 billion people worldwide lack access to reliable electricity, including nearly 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa and over 300 million people in India. This is a major barrier to development. The most successful projects to provide electricity to these communities in recent years have been private companies selling or leasing off-grid solar panels. For instance, a company in Kenya called M-KOPA has provided nearly 100,000 customers access to electricity in the last year.

- ◆ (a) What more can be done to provide financing and break down regulatory barriers for these new, successful, sustainable companies and help them grow even faster?

Answer (a). Power Africa is focused on removing the barriers that have long impeded or stalled energy project and private sector development across the African Continent and limited the number of people who have access to electricity. Using a “toolkit” approach Power Africa offers the combined technical and financial resources of 12 U.S. Government agencies, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, the Government of Sweden, our partner governments, and many other Power Africa public and private sector partners. Power Africa also provides technical advice and transactional support through regional- and country-focused transaction advisors.

Different from other initiatives, Power Africa is headquartered in the field with teams located in several locations in sub-Saharan Africa. U.S. Government officials from several agencies are focused on identifying specific obstacles to power deals and to recommend tools to overcome these obstacles in order to advance President Obama's ambitious electricity access and generation goals. These field teams and transaction advisors have already assisted with regulatory reform to enable the first instance of private sector power generation in Ethiopia, regularization of tariff structures for small off-grid producers in Tanzania, and tariff reform to better support the recently privatized electric utilities in Nigeria.

Through these field teams and the interagency coordination team in Washington, Power Africa also facilitates private sector access to numerous finance tools offered by the U.S. Government. These include USAID's Development Credit Authority, the U.S.-African Clean Energy Finance initiative funded by State Department and executed by OPIC and USTDA, as well as the more conventional OPIC and Ex-Im financing and risk mitigation tools. This coordinated access to technical assistance and financing has led to successful private sector ventures ranging from off-grid access via stand-alone solar photovoltaic systems, to grid integrated multimegawatt solar installations, to large-scale natural gas fired generation.

- ◆ (b) I applaud the President's Beyond the Grid initiative to get private sector commitments from the private sector for off-grid energy investments in Africa, but when will we see large financing commitments from EXIM or OPIC in this sector in Africa?

Answer (b). Ex-Im and OPIC are dedicated to supporting the types of small-scale transactions critical to energy development in emerging markets. In partnership with the State Department, USTDA, and USAID, OPIC has implemented the U.S.-African Clean Energy Finance Initiative to support early-stage projects and catalyze private sector investment in the renewable energy sector in sub-Saharan Africa. Since the program's launch, OPIC and USTDA have committed funds to 30 renewable energy projects across 10 African countries that span a wide breadth of activities designed to address Africa's energy challenges, including small-scale projects that serve rural, off-grid communities.

- ◆ (c) Is the State Department committed to continued strong funding of the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Finance Initiative (ACEF) to facilitate small, clean energy projects getting into the OPIC pipeline?

Answer (c). The State Department is committed to funding the U.S.-ACEF initiative. In June 2012, former Secretary Clinton announced the U.S.-ACEF at the U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) with an initial funding of \$20 million for OPIC and USTDA to provide grant funding to support 25–30 African renewable energy projects. The initial round of the U.S.-ACEF program received funding from FY11 and FY12 ESF funds, with \$15 million from FY11 funds obligated to OPIC and \$5 million from FY12 funds to USTDA.

U.S.-ACEF has seen strong demand, with more than 400 project applications received. While original estimates were that it would take 5 years to deploy the original \$20 million commitment, the initial tranche has already been deployed to support 30 projects across 10 African countries. During the U.S. African Leaders Summit in Washington, DC (August 2014), Secretary of State Kerry announced an additional \$10 million in funding, bringing total State Department support to date to \$30 million. This \$10 million pledge represents a commitment to continued funding of the initiative.

Question. Last year, the President committed to “increasing electricity access by at least 60 million household and business connections” as part of the Power Africa Initiative. Some have expressed concerns that large, centralized power plants might count toward that goal even if they are not associated with any new connections to the grid.

- ◆ Will the Power Africa initiative count power plants that provide energy “equivalent” to a certain number of households being connected to the grid or will Power Africa only count those who are actually receiving first-time access to electricity whether on or off grid?

Answer. Power Africa is setting out to add 30,000 megawatts (MW) in generation capacity and—as you note—increase access with 60 million new household and business connections. All new generation in sub-Saharan Africa is linked to access because it will help remove capacity as a constraint to grid expansion, thereby enabling utilities to increase access more than would otherwise be possible. Estimating how many new connections would result from each new MW of generation—i.e., the inferred access—is not an exact science, especially because people tend to consume more power as grids gain access to additional generation and costs come down. Also, power consumption rates vary from country to country.

Power Africa makes an inferred access calculation by estimating the average number of households that can be served with additional MWs of new generation capacity. The methodology is based on World Bank estimates and takes into account existing residential and per capita consumption, household size, capacity factors for various forms of generation, and other relevant metrics to derive these estimates.

Additionally, in June 2014 Power Africa launched the Beyond the Grid (BTG) subinitiative, under which millions of households and businesses are expected to achieve varying levels of new electricity service. BTG is focused exclusively on unlocking investment and growth for off-grid and small-scale energy solutions on the African Continent. The subinitiative is defining access in line with the United Nations’ Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) definitions for access, which starts with a minimum level of “task lighting” and cell phone/radio charging. While that first electron or light source is the most valuable, BTG also strives to achieve community level solutions that will offer “access” above that first tier of task lighting. As BTG develops and Power Africa continues to expand, Power Africa will further refine and develop in a transparent manner the methodology for assessing progress toward meeting the access goals, both on and beyond the grid.

Question. The rapid fall in oil prices over the past year from increased production, lower demand, and increased efficiency has profound geopolitical implications. Increased U.S. energy security, for example, may lead some to reconsider some of our obligations and commitments around the globe. And while falling oil prices are putting pressure on Russia, Iran, and Venezuela, who now find themselves in extreme financial distress and less power, it is far from clear whether each country will react by lashing out further, or by seeking reconciliation with others in the international community. Further, falling oil prices have contributed to U.S. economic growth, but they have also helped contribute to deflationary pressure in the Eurozone, and may undermine Europe’s ability to play a robust role on the world stage.

- ◆ What is your assessment of how these changes in world energy markets will affect geopolitical cooperation and competition in the years and decades to come?

Answer. The integrated nature of global energy flows creates a shared interest in stable and well-supplied markets. The shale revolution certainly helps the U.S. economy through greater production but the benefits to energy security are shared worldwide instead of being isolated to just the United States. New U.S. supply has already helped make up for geopolitical supply disruptions, which are still at historic highs due to instability in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Sudan and South Sudan, Nigeria, Venezuela, and due to international sanctions on Iran. Now, in a time of lower oil prices and greater global economic integration, it is more important than ever that we work diligently to ensure that energy resources are used to drive economic growth, stability, and cooperation, rather than conflict.

Question. Arctic Council.—The United States has assumed the chairmanship of the Arctic Council for 2-years, presenting an opportunity to engage with our Arctic partners on a wide variety of issues, including a changing climate, maritime transportation, fishing, and protection of indigenous peoples, among others.

- ◆ What are your priorities for the U.S. chairmanship? What opportunities does our chairmanship provide for increased geopolitical cooperation with our Arctic partners?

Answer. The United States is assuming the chair of the Arctic Council at a critical time. Changes in the Arctic have created significant challenges and opportunities for every Arctic nation and the region is quickly becoming a global focus for scientific and academic research, trade, and tourism. The Arctic Council has proven itself to be an effective and cooperative forum where the eight Arctic States and the Permanent Participants, who represent the interests of indigenous peoples of the Arctic, come together to address circumpolar issues. International cooperation in this region is essential, which is why the theme for the United States Arctic Council chairmanship is One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges, and Responsibilities. We have developed a robust program for our chairmanship in line with the priorities laid out in the National Strategy for the Arctic Region and its subsequent Implementation Plan. Priority initiatives of our chairmanship fall generally under three main areas.

Arctic Ocean Safety, Security, and Stewardship

The acceleration of maritime activity in the Arctic enhances risk in an already harsh and challenging environment. We plan to prioritize collaborative search and rescue and oil pollution preparedness and response exercises. Our chairmanship will build upon the existing science of ocean acidification in the Arctic and raise awareness of this important global change. We will also seek to improve international coordination in the Arctic Ocean through a regional seas program similar to regional seas programs in other oceans.

Improving Economic and Living Conditions

During the U.S. chairmanship, we will strive to bring tangible benefits to communities across the Arctic. In particular, we will seek to assist remote Arctic communities to adapt to the rapid changes that are altering traditional ways of life. The United States aims to increase water security for remote Arctic communities through a better understanding of freshwater availability and community vulnerability, as well as through improved community sanitation. We plan to work toward better access to renewable energy sources to reduce community dependence on diesel generators while at the same time reducing emissions of black carbon in the Arctic. The United States also plans to continue advancing suicide intervention and awareness programs to reverse disturbing trends that disproportionately affect Arctic communities.

In addition, as indicated in the Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region, the United States hopes to see an Arctic telecommunications infrastructure assessment that would serve as the basis for the eventual build-out of the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to support ever-increasing human activity throughout the Arctic region. Building telecommunications infrastructure across the Arctic will provide critical support to navigation, offshore development activities, search and rescue operations, environmental and humanitarian emergencies, and will make online tools for Arctic communities, such as telemedicine, education, and adaptation, more accessible and useful.

Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change

Our chairmanship will continue the ongoing, high-level focus on the impacts of climate change, especially the drivers of change and the ways and means of addressing on-the-ground impacts. To minimize the prospect of irreparable, long-term harm to the Arctic—and the globe, as changes in the Arctic reverberate around the world—

we need to take sustained, quantifiable measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase community resilience and preparedness.

During our chairmanship, we will continue the Council's work on the subject of black carbon, and we will press for full implementation of a new, voluntary arrangement that will include development of national black carbon emission inventories, national reporting on domestic mitigation efforts, and data collection efforts. Another path forward is to examine key industrial practices, such as oil and gas flaring, to share best practices, policies and technologies among technical experts, industry and policymakers. The Department of State aims to lead the Arctic Council through an assessment of how we can improve emissions estimates of black carbon and other air pollutants from gas flares.

Finally, we hope to be joined by other Arctic States in efforts that build climate resilience into national policies and promote community- and ecosystem-based climate adaptation through improved information, tools, and best practices. The U.S. chairmanship program will further underpin these climate change efforts through science initiatives that will allow for remote access to high-resolution mapping information and indices of future climate in the Arctic.

Question. A week in advance of Nigeria's general elections, the head of the Independent National Elections Commission, Attahiru Jega, announced a 6-week delay in the face of pressure from the nation's security chiefs who cited the inability to provide security due to the focus on ongoing operations against Boko Haram. And just last week, Dr. Jega told members of the Nigerian Senate that the new March 28 date may not hold. These delays significantly threaten the legitimacy of the contest. You personally met with both Presidential candidates in January and urged INEC to hold the elections as scheduled.

◆ What is the administration doing to discourage further delays, and what actions will we take if the Presidential polls are not held on March 28?

Answer. The United States, in a whole of government effort, has engaged at the highest levels with Nigerian candidates, political party leadership, civil society, business leaders, and other prominent individuals to promote peaceful and credible elections in March and April 2015. In a statement following the announcement of the 6-week delay in February, I expressed that the "United States is deeply disappointed by the decision to postpone" the elections. It is imperative that the new elections timeline holds. Through frequent outreach to key stakeholders in Nigeria, the State Department has continued to press for the adherence to March 28 and April 11 for the national and state-level elections, respectively. Our outreach extends beyond Nigeria as well. We work closely with British, European Union, and other African counterparts to maintain focus on this critical issue of timely elections.

While a further short delay from March 28 and April 11 is permissible under Nigeria's Constitution, we have advised against any additional postponements. In any case, we have received multiple assurances from senior members of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party that the May 29 inauguration date, which is set by the constitution, is "sacrosanct."

Question. Boko Haram has threatened to disrupt elections at all costs, but there is also the threat of ordinary civilians engaging in election-related violence should they believe the polls results are flawed, or their candidate is not declared the winner. Given past instances of fraud and political violence as well as the contentious nature of the Presidential race, elections violence is likely to occur.

◆ Are you concerned about sustained widespread electoral violence, and what—if anything—has the administration been doing to support efforts to prevent and mitigate such violence?

Answer. We have emphasized the importance for the Nigerian people that Nigeria's 2015 elections be peaceful and credible, and that the results reflect the will of the Nigerian people. Given Nigeria's political and economic importance within Africa, as well as Nigeria's increasingly prominent role on the global stage, the quality of these elections will have serious implications for Nigeria's and Africa's future. It is vital that the outcome reinforce citizens' confidence in the legitimacy of their elected representatives.

Nigeria historically has had election-related violence and could again. But the degree of violence could be determined by how fair and free the elections are. That is why we opposed the postponement of the elections from February 14 and I met with Presidential candidates Jonathan and Buhari in Nigeria in January to caution against violence. We also have engaged civil society, business leaders, and other prominent individuals to promote peaceful and credible elections in March and April 2015. Mindful of the risk of political violence in Nigeria, U.S. funded programming

incorporates measures intended to prevent and mitigate as much conflict as possible.

The U.S. mission has conducted intensive outreach throughout the country, resulting in widespread Nigerian press coverage of numerous speeches, round tables, and interviews on the subject of elections, particularly emphasizing the message regarding antiviolenence. The Ambassador has called upon all members of the political leadership, Nigerian Government, and civil society to publicly eschew violence on many occasions, including direct discussions with the main candidates—President Jonathan and General Buhari.

We have been providing assistance to Nigeria to strengthen its electoral systems since 1999, and have been consistently working toward this objective since the last Nigerian General Elections in 2011. U.S. Government assistance has been provided in three basic areas: (1) strengthening of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to organize and carry out elections; (2) training of civil society organizations (CSOs) to conduct domestic election observation, engage with INEC to ensure proper voter education and information, and monitor electoral processes to see that they are fair and adequate; and (3) supporting major political parties to enhance their inclusiveness and to develop strong issues-based platforms.

Mindful that inaccurate and sensationalist reporting may contribute to post-electoral violence, as in 2011 when an estimated 800 Nigerians were killed over the course of 3 days, the U.S. Government funds programs to help professionalize the media and strengthen the reporting skills of journalists. Additionally, U.S. Government entities have partnered on a conflict prevention and mitigation initiative to reduce the risk of destabilizing election-related violence in the Niger Delta.

The U.S. Government has engaged the Nigerian Government, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and civil society to emphasize the need for a clear and well-coordinated elections security plan, and to offer assistance. The U.S. Government has provided a full-time elections security consultant to directly support INEC security operations, supplemented by an additional expert who is regularly deployed to Abuja to support elections security planning. We are also funding a program to strengthen the capacity of target communities and leaders to prevent and respond to religious, ethnosectarian, and political conflict before, during, and after the 2015 elections.

Question. Boko Haram.—The African Union recently authorized an 8,700-strong force to combat Boko Haram. What material support, if any, does the United States plan to provide to this force? How does this assistance fit in with our overall counterterrorism strategy for the region? How will this AU-authorized force be funded and sustained and what financial support is the United States planning to provide?

Answer. The countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria) and Benin agreed on February 27, 2015, to establish a 10,000-strong Multilateral Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to combat Boko Haram. The MNJTF was earlier authorized by the African Union. The United States is committed to supporting the MNJTF once it is stood up.

Meanwhile, the United States is providing bilateral support to MNJTF countries Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, including information-sharing, advisors, equipment, and training. We are identifying remaining gaps and engaging our P3 (Permanent UNSCR members United Kingdom and France) and other partners to determine how best to fill those gaps and whether such assistance will be through contributions to a potential voluntary U.N. trust fund, contributions from a potential donors conference, or from the MNJTF countries themselves, especially Nigeria.

To date, State has obligated approximately \$4.5 million of Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funds to provide equipment and/or training support to the following countries by amounts (\$1 million for Cameroon, \$2.4 million for Chad, and \$1.1 million for Niger). Separately, State has identified \$15.5 million in PKO funds, which is currently notified to Congress and is in the process of identifying additional funding.

This approach supports our existing counterterrorism strategy to focus on building the capacity of willing partners to address regional threats. The region has experienced a series of security challenges during the past several years spilling over from North Africa, Mali, and Nigeria, but the collective and individual country responses to United States support, for the most part, have been positive and receptive. Primarily through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), the United States has provided bilateral and regional counterterrorism assistance to: (1) enable and enhance the capacity of North and West African militaries to conduct counterterrorism (CT) operations; (2) promote and facilitate regional CT cooperation; (3) enhance border security capacity to monitor, restrain, and interdict terrorist

movements; (4) strengthen the rule of law, including access to justice, law enforcement service delivery, and law enforcement's ability to detect, disrupt, respond to, investigate, and prosecute terrorist activity; (5) counter the financing of terrorism; and (6) reduce sympathy and support within communities for violent extremism. Separately, DOD, with State concurrence, has provided bilateral assistance through section 1206 (now 2282) funds to increase the capabilities of military partners in North and West Africa to counter the various terrorist threats. Finally, the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) program is contributing training and equipment to bolster regional border patrol operations, CT efforts and logistics capabilities for Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.

Question. Talks held on the margins of the African Union summit at the end of last month did not yield a final peace accord between President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar. Final negotiations for a comprehensive settlement—led by the Inter-Government Authority on Development—resumed on February 20, with a deadline to resolve all out-standing issues by March 5.

- ◆ What can the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and his team do to ensure that substantive issues—such as the objectives and tasks of the transitional government, a plan for the demobilization of forces, and the timeline for an inclusive reconciliation process—are discussed rather than focusing solely on how the two main actors will divvy up positions among themselves in the transitional government?

Answer. Since the beginning of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediation efforts to broker peace between the Government of South Sudan and the opposition, the United States has worked to ensure that substantive issues beyond power-sharing arrangements are fully integrated into the peace talks.

We believe that the path to real, broad-based and lasting peace in South Sudan cannot be obtained without fundamental reforms to the security sector, public financial management and the constitutional process, as well as a firm commitment to a robust reconciliation process that focuses on healing the deep wounds caused by the current crisis.

We will continue to work in close coordination with IGAD, the African Union and other key partners to support the peace process, and to continue to use all means available to us to apply collective pressure on the parties to focus on broad-based reforms and to overcome the remaining obstacles to a comprehensive agreement and agreement on the formation of a transitional government.

Question. I met with South Sudan President Salva Kiir in August and was shocked by his apparent lack of concern for suffering his people are enduring due to the conflict. I hear that the same can be said of Mr. Machar. President Obama issued an Executive order last April authorizing sanctions against those who obstruct the peace process, yet only four low ranking individuals have been named. IGAD and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council have proposed asset freezes, travel restrictions, and other punitive measures should Kiir and Machar fail to reach an agreement, and I understand that a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for such is in the works.

- ◆ Is the administration planning to put additional bilateral sanctions in place? In your estimation, what in addition to sanctions can be done to encourage a sustainable peace agreement?
- ◆ How robustly is the administration engaging IGAD member states on the imposition of sanctions? Should March 5 pass without a peace agreement, do you believe the regional states, particularly Kenya and Uganda, will follow through with their efforts to pursue punitive measures?

Answer. The United States has utilized its targeted sanctions Executive order to designate four individuals to date, two from the Government of South Sudan and two from opposition forces. We will continue to use the authority under the Executive order to hold accountable those who commit human rights abuses or obstruct the peace process, and can provide more detail on these plans in a classified staff briefing. This has been a necessary and effective tool to demonstrate the importance that the U.S. Government places on resolving this conflict and our commitment to hold accountable those who undermine peace and security in South Sudan.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional leadership requested that increased external international pressure be brought to bear on the parties in order to support their mediation efforts. Based on our extensive engagement with regional leadership and other international partners, we drafted a U.N. Security Council sanctions regime that allows for asset freezes and travel bans on those who hinder the South Sudanese peace process or commit human rights violations, mirroring our own Executive order. The resolution passed unanimously on

March 3, an important step in demonstrating the international community's resolve in helping end the needless suffering of millions of South Sudanese.

This Security Council resolution is specifically designed to enhance the IGAD mediation efforts by coordinating deadlines with those established in the IGAD process, and to allow for the adoption of further punitive measures beyond targeted sanctions as deemed necessary. This incremental approach increases the efficacy of measures imposed and ensures continued buy-in and support from IGAD regional leaders. The resolution was designed so that the Council can gradually ratchet up the pressure on the parties over a period of time. According to the resolution, the United National Security Council will closely monitor the situation in South Sudan and impose calibrated measures as needed, including consideration of an arms embargo.

Question. The President's Budget includes funding to support the "Asia Rebalance" which among its major initiatives is the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement. Ambassador Froman has repeatedly told the Congress that the agreement will have strong labor rights provisions in it.

- ◆ Can you tell me how the State Department and USAID programs will build the capacity of local civil society including trade unions to take advantage of these provisions so as to ensure that international labor standards are enforced and that gains from trade are widely shared?

Answer. Targeted technical assistance on labor issues, including capacity-building of trade unions to promote internationally recognized labor rights, supports our broader diplomatic engagement through bilateral and multilateral channels and is an integral part of the State Department's and USAID's labor diplomacy and assistance efforts. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), for instance, supports several programs in the Asia-Pacific region that foster the development of democratic and representative worker organizations as well as the promotion of internationally recognized labor rights. In Malaysia, DRL supports a program to empower migrant workers and local organizations to take effective action to protect and promote their rights by strengthening outreach and communication mechanisms; in Vietnam, DRL supports efforts to assist union officials, women union leaders, and workplace-level unions in developing the practical knowledge and skills needed to support workers in organizing grassroots unions. USAID is supporting labor rights and trade union capacity-building programming in one Trans-Pacific Partnership country, Mexico, through its Global Labor Program. USAID also is working with USTR to develop new labor programming in a second TPP country, Vietnam.

Trade capacity-building programs in these areas have been key to supporting the implementation of previous trade agreements, in particular the CAFTA-DR. As we look toward the completion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we anticipate growing demand for technical assistance on legal and institutional reform, the training of trade union leaders, and the training of legal experts to support trade union activities, among other matters. We look forward to working with Congress and other stakeholders to support its implementation and build off of the State Department's, USAID's, and the Department of Labor's ongoing labor diplomacy and assistance efforts.

Question. As I look at China's track record over the past several years I am increasingly concerned that China's foreign policy orientation is not, in fact, that of a state supporting the international order but rather one seeking to overturn it. Whether in the South China Sea or in its trade practices—let alone in its human rights practices at home—we see a nation that is aggressively seeking to overturn the accepted tenets of the international system, and not afraid to use coercion and force to get its way.

- ◆ How do you characterize Chinese foreign policy and assess these actions that appear, in some respects, to be aggressive and potentially revisionist in their tendencies?
- ◆ How should the United States construct its approach to China—including both incentives but also making clear potential costs—if we hope to see the emergence of a China that plays a positive and constructive role on the world stage?

Answer. The United States welcomes the rise of a peaceful, prosperous China that adheres to international norms and standards. There are some security concerns in Asia that require our sustained engagement with China, however. These concerns include tension between China and its neighbors over territorial and maritime disputes, respect for human rights, and adherence to the principles of free trade. Our most senior leaders consistently and frankly discuss these issues with Chinese lead-

ers, and the United States is clear-eyed about growing U.S. and regional concerns in these areas.

The United States-China relationship contains elements of both cooperation and competition. The United States will continue to make clear and promote our values, interests and principles; work with China to manage our differences; and seek to build a cooperative partnership across the range of bilateral, regional, and global issues that confront us today. U.S. actions will inevitably continue to include both costs and incentives to shape Chinese behavior.

Question. Given its “whole of government” approach to human rights, how is the administration preparing to raise human rights in the forthcoming U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, to be held in Washington this June? Or in the context of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to Washington, tentatively expected in September? Have senior State Department officials continued to ask their Chinese counterparts about the individual cases President Obama raised with President Xi in November 2014 and if so, to what end?

Answer. The President and the administration remain committed to raising human rights across the spectrum of U.S. Government engagement with the Chinese Government. The United States is fundamentally committed to the universal rights of all people—including freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression—including online. The President believes that respect for these rights strengthens nations, and that respect for the rule of law and protection of universal human rights will enhance China’s prosperity, security, and stability.

Senior U.S. officials regularly raise both systemic concerns and individual cases with Chinese counterparts. The administration will continue to press for individuals such as Gao Zhisheng and Dhondup Wangchen to be permitted to leave China. We will continue to press for Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo to be freed from his 11-year sentence for “subversion of state power.” We also will continue to call for Uighur Professor Ilham Tohti’s release from prison. The administration will continue to voice its concern for the human rights activists, lawyers, journalists, bloggers, and all others who have been arrested or detained for peacefully questioning official policies and actions in China.

As is customary, the administration also will use upcoming senior-level exchanges to press for progress on broad human rights and rule of law concerns, including at the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) and President Xi’s planned state visit to the United States later this year. Also this summer in Washington, women’s rights will be on the agenda for the Consultation on People to People Exchange. Ahead of this year’s S&ED, Special Advisor for Disability Rights Judith Heumann will host a Chinese delegation in April for the first U.S.-China Coordination Meeting on Disability—an agreed upon outcome from the 2014 S&ED. While we continue to have key differences with China on human rights issues, we also have demonstrated our ability to address these issues frankly and directly with Chinese counterparts, and will continue to do so.

Question. Can you share your understanding of why President Obama recently chose not to meet with, or speak directly to, the Dalai Lama at the National Prayer Breakfast? Doesn’t that undercut U.S. support for Tibet?

Answer. The President has a good relationship with the Dalai Lama. They have met three times, including in February 2014. The President is a strong supporter of the Dalai Lama’s teachings and preserving Tibet’s unique religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions. The President’s strong support was evident at the National Prayer Breakfast, where he acknowledged from the dais the Dalai Lama’s presence and stated in his remarks that the Dalai Lama is “a powerful example of what it means to practice compassion [who] inspires us to speak up for the dignity and freedom of all.”

The President and the administration remain committed to protecting Tibet’s distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity. We continue to urge China to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions. We also urge China to reform counterproductive policies that are a primary cause of grievances among Tibetans and allow Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, and without fear of retribution. The United States also supports Tibet through our humanitarian assistance and educational exchange programs.

Question. During the last Congress, our committee held two hearings on labor rights and safety practices in the Bangladesh garment industry. I and many others in the Congress continue to pay great attention to these issues as serious concerns remain. One of the things that we learned during the hearings is that labor rights abuses do not stop at one country’s border but are found throughout the global econ-

omy and that they are not just present in one sector. Recent hearings held by the Chair on forced labor, trafficking, and migration speak to this point. My understanding is that the multiyear USAID Global labor program will conclude next January.

- ◆ What is the State Department's understanding as to the timing to compete a new 5-year grant? Can you assure us there will be no gap between the old and new programs, and given the needs that are present, and that USAID is now willing to commit to funding the new award at no less than \$10 million a year?

Answer. The State Department and USAID have a strong tradition of supporting international labor programs designed to foster democratic development and inclusive economic growth. Our ongoing priorities for U.S. foreign assistance include the promotion of labor rights in context of our trade priorities. Our labor programming directly serves these priorities by strengthening independent and democratic trade unions and promoting international labor standards. USAID will release the solicitation for a follow-on award to USAID's current Global Labor Program (GLP) on a timeline that will avoid any programming gaps between the end of the current award and the start of the new 5-year GLP. The final estimated total value of the award will be determined based on FY15 and FY16 actual funding levels as well as projected future funding requests. USAID will continue robust support for global labor programs when the current GLP expires in January 2016.

Question. We know that among the major administration goals in the coming months for Africa is the reauthorization of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act which has bipartisan support in the Congress. Can you lay out for us how State and USAID will support the role of civil society to ensure the gains from this trade preference program are widely shared among nations that are to benefit from it. We know for example that only a few sectors have benefited from the program in the past and that with regard to the garment industry, while workers secured new jobs, wages, and conditions of work were often substandard.

Answer. While we recognize that civil society must necessarily operate autonomously from U.S. and African Governments, the U.S. interagency has actively supported both American and African civil society, particularly labor groups, in better taking advantage of AGOA and ensuring labor has a strong voice. Our Trade Hubs have also been active in addressing African supply-side barriers and promoting economic diversification, value addition, and greater utilization of AGOA, in sectors such as shea butter, horticulture, and cut flowers. Trade Africa and USAID's East Africa Trade Hub, with input from the private sector, has already helped to lower trade barriers, promote investment in regionally interlinked infrastructure, and streamlined regional border administration to facilitate increased exports from the East African Community (EAC). On February 28 the United States and EAC member states signed a technical cooperation agreement that provides for U.S. Government assistance to harmonize agricultural and industrial trade standards and implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and agreed to negotiate their first ever Regional Investment Treaty. As announced at the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit, we are further enhancing trade and investment capacity-building (TICB) to support trade facilitation and export growth through Trade Africa and our regional trade hubs.

The Department of State coordinates closely with the Department of Labor and USTR on a whole-of-government effort to monitor respect for workers' freedom of association and assembly, child labor, the vestiges of slavery, and human trafficking in AGOA member countries. In the last year the team has visited Swaziland, Niger, and Mauritania, engaging intensely with host government decisionmakers and labor unions to develop benchmarks for progress toward better fulfillment of AGOA's labor-related criteria. We have seen success in Niger, where the government has taken concrete action to prosecute instances of slavery and provide legal and material redress for former victims. Swaziland was suspended from AGOA last year due to the government's failure to take committed action to fully implement the benchmarks we had laid out over the course of more than a year addressing workers' freedom of association. We continue to engage with these and other governments via our Ambassadors and Labor Officers in the field. State's Office of International Labor Affairs (ILA) in the Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) bureau funds various civil society organizations to implement projects aimed at addressing labor rights violations in AGOA beneficiary countries, raising awareness among all stakeholders about AGOA eligibility criteria, developing trade union leadership capacity, and encouraging beneficiary countries to adhere to the statutory AGOA requirements. DRL/ILA also coordinates annually with the American AGOA Civil Society Network in the United States to organize civil society side events at the

annual AGOA Forum, where a range of topics relevant to benefiting from AGOA are discussed, resulting in better-informed AGOA stakeholders.

As USAID's trade programs have matured and expanded, the agency has prioritized building industry alliances, such as the African Cotton & Textile Industries Federation, African Cashew Alliance, and Global Shea Alliance, which have implemented certification schemes for standards such as quality, organic, labor, women-owned, etc. State, USAID, and Commerce have coordinated on efforts to bring African suppliers to U.S. trade shows and facilitate matchmaking with potential U.S. customers. USAID continues to subsidize the cost of bringing qualified and vetted African civil society leaders to the AGOA Forum each year as resources permit, and helps to facilitate dialogue between U.S. and African civil society, especially in the lead-up to the civil society side event at the Forum. At this year's Forum, we plan to address the needs articulated by African and American civil society with concrete programming to facilitate business matchmaking, professional networking, better design and marketing to the U.S. consumer, and navigation of U.S. import regulations, in order to help drive increased African utilization of AGOA. We also plan to address labor standards at the Forum, and have already solicited input from civil society stakeholders such as the ILO, Solidarity Center, the Global Fairness Initiative, and the International Labor Rights Forum.

State's African Affairs Bureau engages frequently with the American AGOA Civil Society Network to share information, promote action and input toward the renewal of AGOA, and solicit feedback. We will host members, in particular small, minority-owned, and diaspora businesses at an event March 27 to promote awareness of, and participation in, the AGOA Forum. We also regularly convene African civil society stakeholders with their American counterparts via digital video conference in order to facilitate dialogue and planning for the civil society component of the AGOA Forum.

State has also driven the impressive growth of the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program, AWEP, through visitor exchange programs, public-private mentoring and supplier development initiatives, and expert speaker programs, with excellent results in terms of diversified sales, impactful business networking, and healthy profits for the women members.

The concerns of African civil society are taken into consideration during the annual AGOA eligibility review process, and the U.S. Government requests countries that are not meeting the AGOA standards to develop a plan to address and correct those issues. Last year several warning letters and demarches were delivered to AGOA countries to convey U.S. Government concerns about political pluralism; human rights, including equal protection for LGBT citizens; and freedom of assembly and expression for workers and other citizens. The U.S. Government regularly meets with trade unionists, civil society, journalists, and opposition members throughout the year to monitor and measure AGOA governments' commitment to upholding the AGOA criteria.

Question. U.N. humanitarian agencies are currently dealing with a number of emergency situations around the world. In addition to their ongoing work in Syria, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, the U.N. is also working to reach hundreds of thousands of civilians who have been displaced this year by violence in Iraq.

- ◆ Given the current strains on the U.N. humanitarian system caused by these crises, can you describe how the United States is working to support them in their work, and what are the current funding shortfalls in these crises? What gaps are not being met in these emergency situations and what more can we do to ensure a robust global response?

Answer. The U.S. Government is the largest single donor to global humanitarian needs, providing over \$6 billion in FY 2014 in humanitarian assistance to the U.N. and other international and nongovernmental partners for needs around the world. While generous congressional appropriations have allowed the USG to respond to an unprecedented number of mega-crises, global needs continue to rise. In 2014, U.N. appeals, which are based on assessments of humanitarian need, totaled nearly \$17 billion, the highest total ever.

Despite strong USG financial support, the international community faces significant challenges. In 2014 some of the U.N.'s largest operations were only partially funded. For example:

- In Syria, 2014 appeals were only 58 percent funded;
- 2014 appeals for South Sudan were 54 percent funded;
- The 2014/2015 Iraq Strategic Response Plan is only 38 percent funded; and
- 2014 appeals for the Central African Republic were 71 percent funded.

Funding shortfalls translate into insufficient shelter and food, and limited provision of health services, education, and livelihoods opportunities for people displaced by conflict.

Cultivating new donors is crucial to making a dent in underfunded U.N. appeals. The USG has ramped up outreach to potential donors. After several years of diplomatic engagement, the State Department and USAID are pleased to see the Gulf States making sizeable contributions to U.N. agencies to support L3 crises. In 2014, Kuwait hosted a second Syria pledging conference and contributed \$300 million; a third conference will be held on March 31, 2015. The UAE pledged and contributed \$60 million to the U.N. for Syria last year. Saudi Arabia has contributed \$500 million to the U.N. for the crisis inside Iraq.

In addition to providing significant financial resources, the USG has been a leader in working with other donors to strengthen leadership and coordination within and among U.N. organizations to improve the overall response to these crises. Through our influence on U.N. executive boards, we urge U.N. agencies to implement their responsibilities under the “Transformative Agenda” aimed broadly at improving coordination and overall effectiveness. For example, we have championed efforts to reform and improve the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator system so that the most effective and qualified leaders are deployed. Similarly, the USG is strengthening partnerships with local and national NGOs, particularly in places where international NGOs face serious barriers to operating.

Question. On November 2014, the Government Accountability Office published a report on efforts to combat trafficking on U.S. Government contracts overseas—“Human Trafficking: Oversight of Contractors’ Use of Foreign Workers in High-Risk Environments Needs to Be Strengthened.” GAO investigators spoke to migrant workers on U.S. contracts overseas who had paid an equivalent of 1 year’s wages to unsavory recruiters in order to secure their jobs.

- ◆ (a) How does the Department of State ensure that U.S. Government contracts overseas are not used as a vehicle for trafficking workers?

Answer (a). The State Department takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that its contracts overseas are not being used as a vehicle for trafficking workers. Since 2011, the State Department has issued Procurement Information Bulletins (PIBs) to provide guidance to its Contracting Officers (COs) and Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) on how to monitor contracts for compliance with antitrafficking provisions, and it has enhanced its training as well. The State Department and the Department of Homeland Security developed online training for acquisition professionals across the U.S. Government; a 35-minute course is currently available on the Federal Acquisition Institute’s Web site. (Federal agencies are working to update this training now that the FAR rule implementing Executive Order 13627, Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts (E.O. 13627), has been released.)

The State Department revised its COR course to include a detailed discussion on COR responsibilities for managing antitrafficking requirements, and updated its COR Handbook in the Foreign Affairs Handbook to reflect these requirements. A webinar on preventing trafficking in persons was developed specifically to target posts identified by the GAO as needing additional guidance.

The State Department strengthened contract review and staff review of procurement files at posts during periodic visits to verify that an antitrafficking clause is included. Contracts sent to Washington from posts for approval are reviewed by Washington staff for inclusion of the antitrafficking clause.

The State Department was an early advocate of prohibiting the charging of recruitment fees to employees because of the potential for abuse. This prohibition was incorporated into E.O. 13627. The Federal Acquisition Regulation rule implementing E.O. 13627, and similar provisions in laws make clear that federal contractors and subcontractors (and their employees) are prohibited from deceiving employees about key terms and conditions of employment; charging employees’ recruitment fees; and denying employees’ access to identity documents. They are also prohibited from using forced labor and from procuring commercial sex acts during the period of the performance of a contract or subcontract. Federal contractors performing work outside of the United States worth over \$500,000 need to maintain compliance plans and certify to the best of their knowledge that neither they, nor any of their subcontractors, have engaged in trafficking or trafficking-related activities. The State Department was instrumental in implementing the GAO report’s recommendation to define recruitment fees more clearly through the development of a new government-wide FAR definition. That change will be promulgated through a pending FAR case.

Finally, the U.S. Government is using all available tools to better assist procurement officers, federal contractors, and other interested corporations. For example, this includes a global project the State Department has funded to Verité, an award-winning labor rights NGO, to research the key sectors and commodities at risk for human trafficking, draft an extensive report summarizing its findings, and develop a set of online, public-facing tools. These resources will enable federal contractors and other businesses to adopt responsible sourcing guidelines and compliance plans that align with E.O. 13627, and will be available in 2015.

- ◆ (b) How is the Department of State working with transit countries, such as in the Middle East and the gulf, to improve conditions for workers and oversight of contractors recruiting and employing workers in these countries? How much funding is the Department of State providing to these efforts?

Answer (b). It is the responsibility of governments to hold employers accountable for adhering to labor laws and prevent the trafficking of workers. Visa sponsorship systems, including the kafala system in effect in many countries in the Middle East, can place significant leverage in the hands of employers and recruitment agencies and create the potential for exploitation. Additionally, labor laws in many parts of the region do not fully apply to migrant workers, in particular migrant domestic workers. The Department continues to encourage governments to pursue reforms of such systems and labor laws. Some governments in the region have announced plans to make such reforms. The Department also continues to encourage governments to better enforce existing laws that prohibit employers from withholding workers' passports and restricting workers' movements, including by denying exit visas, as a means of preventing trafficking abuses.

In 2012, sending and receiving countries agreed—through the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, a collaboration between gulf countries and South and Southeast Asian nations involved in the Colombo Process—to a framework that aims to increase intergovernmental partnerships in a number of areas, including through guidelines on labor recruitment, enforcement of labor standards, and training and support throughout the migration process. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) funds technical assistance efforts to improve labor governance and respect for internationally recognized worker rights as a key part of preventing extreme abuses, such as trafficking in persons. DRL funds a \$2.5 million, multi-country, regional program in the Middle East to strengthen workers' organizations through social, economic, and legal literacy and is reviewing submissions for a \$500,000 labor migration program to protect the human and labor rights of workers migrating from the Asia-Pacific Region to the gulf.

The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) is currently providing \$500,000 to the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (Solidarity Center) to implement a 2-year project in Jordan to reduce the risk of forced labor for vulnerable migrant workers in the textile and domestic work sectors. The program links a rights-based approach to victim protection and partners with trade unions in the key sectors to conduct outreach and education activities to identify victims, to create effective referral networks for services, and to advocate for improved migrant worker legal protections, increased prosecutions, and enhanced prevention efforts.

The TIP Office also funds the Daem Observatory for Consultation and Training (\$650,000) to implement a 3-year project in Jordan to increase the protection of vulnerable migrant workers. The project is analyzing existing antitrafficking frameworks and drafting recommendations to enhance protections for migrant workers, conducting awareness and capacity-building activities, and providing direct services to victims. Additionally, DRL provides \$198,000 in funding for an ILO project that works to protect the rights of migrant workers through organizing, empowerment activities, enhanced cooperation and trade union support in several countries, including Nepal.

In Nepal, USAID is funding a 5-year project that includes creating Safe Migration Networks and training Network members to increase their ability to promote safe migration. The Department has coordinated with other government and private donors to enhance use of foreign assistance funding and reduce duplication—to more effectively work toward ending these practices that contribute to human trafficking from the region.

- ◆ (c) How is the Department of State working with its partners to strengthen source country policies, such as in Bangladesh and Nepal, including the regulation of recruiting agencies?

Answer (c). In source countries, the Department advocates, as a key priority, that governments sharply reduce and eventually prohibit recruitment fees charged to

workers and criminally prosecute those suspected of fraudulent recruitment—two practices that increase the vulnerability of migrant workers to forced labor. The Department also advocates for governments to take action to ensure that those intending to migrate for work are informed of their rights and protected throughout the migration process. The Department is currently exploring ways to empower sending countries to have more leverage to protect their workers overseas, for example through effective and transparent MOUs.

Programmatically, the Department targets foreign assistance programming toward these objectives. In Bangladesh, the TIP Office is funding the Solidarity Center, which in partnership with local implementing partners has integrated basic antitrafficking training into the curriculum of the Dhaka Technical Training Center for Migrant Workers, disseminating valuable information on the rights and obligation of migrant workers, the telltale signs of trafficking, and mechanisms for recourse if they find themselves in exploitative and abusive situations overseas. Every month an estimated 1,000 migrant workers receive such training, and so far more than 7,000 migrant workers have benefited from the program.

DRL is reviewing submissions for a program in Bangladesh that will promote core labor standards, including freedom of association and occupational safety and health, and raise the standard of living and promote inclusive economic growth for all Bangladeshi citizens. Additionally, DRL provides \$198,000 in funding for a program that works to protect the rights of migrant workers through organizing, empowerment activities, enhanced cooperation and trade union support in several countries, including Nepal.

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- ◆ (d) How much funding is the Department of State providing to programs working in source countries to address these issues?

Answer (d). The TIP Office is currently providing more than \$3,650,000 to fund programs in source countries aimed at strengthening governments' antitrafficking policies, including on policies that address the regulation of recruiting agencies.

- South and Central Asia Region:
 - \$500,000 to Solidarity Center for work in Bangladesh, and
 - \$450,000 to IOM for work in Sri Lanka.
- Africa Region:
 - \$500,000 to IOM for work in Ethiopia;
 - \$750,000 to UNODC for regional work with Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States;
 - Global Programs (Projects to Implement the Executive order re Supply Chains): \$500,000 to ILO for work on global recruitment;
 - \$500,000 to UNODC for work on global recruitment; and
 - \$1,400,000 to Verité for work on supply chains and global recruitment.

DRL funds programs to protect the rights of migrant workers in the following source countries through worker organizing, empowerment activities, enhanced cooperation, and trade union support:

- Southeast and South and Central Asia Regions:
 - \$495,000 for activities in Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, and Laos, and
 - \$198,000 for activities in Indonesia, Burma, and Nepal.

Question. How are we utilizing our humanitarian assistance dollars to graduate programs from relief to early recovery, particularly in chronic crises such as DRC and Sudan? Throughout the Obama administration, OMB has been advocating for greater emphasis on relief to development transitions (RTDT) to increase the efficiency of U.S. assistance dollars. In chronic crises such as DRC and Sudan (two of the largest recipients of U.S. humanitarian assistance in Africa over the last decade), we need to be shifting toward resilience building efforts that start to change the status quo rather than repeating the same humanitarian interventions year after year. How are we doing this?

- ◆ In DRC specifically, do USAID and State have the funding necessary to implement their new country strategy? What could Congress do to be more supportive of the new mission strategy?

Answer. The State Department's Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources and USAID's Bureau of Resource Management work together to identify U.S. aid recipient countries ripe for Relief to Development Transitions (R2DT). These countries receive humanitarian assistance coupled with forward-leaning developmental assistance in underserved areas.

Sudan

The Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Donald Booth, has pressed the Sudanese Government and the armed and unarmed opposition to reach a negotiated resolution to Sudan's conflicts. The African Union High Level Implementation Panel's (AUHIP) "one process, two tracks" mediation presents the best opportunity to secure synchronized Cessations of Hostilities (CoH) agreements in Darfur and the "Two Areas" (Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States) which would open the way to a fuller discussion of the root causes of Sudan's conflicts, of political and economic reform, and of national identity through an inclusive and comprehensive National Dialogue. We continue to encourage the political leadership to deliver on their promise of a genuine, holistic, and truly inclusive dialogue that will include the armed and unarmed opposition, as well as civil society.

Even as we pursue peace, conflict continues in Darfur and the Two Areas. For this reason, the U.S. Government continues to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance to people in need.

The humanitarian environment in Darfur has deteriorated over the past 2 years. Conflict between government forces and armed groups, as well as intercommunal conflict over limited resources, forced more than 450,000 people from their homes in Darfur in 2014, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to over 2.5 million. We also remain gravely concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation in the Two Areas, where hundreds of thousands of Sudanese have been displaced and over 1.7 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

Increased conflict and insecurity have diminished optimism and the chances for early recovery in Sudan. Nevertheless, USAID will continue to support efficient, feasible, and appropriate early recovery activities. Most of these will be small-scale and build on established activities in areas that are secure and accessible.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the DRC, USAID and State are implementing a new country strategy. It seeks to build a durable peace in eastern DRC by identifying solutions to specific drivers of conflict, fostering stability, and providing humanitarian aid and protection programs where still needed.

The persistent insecurity in eastern DRC has forced almost 440,000 refugees and more than 2.7 million IDPs to flee over the last two decades. The Congolese Armed Forces have started the final campaign to disarm and eradicate rebel groups, namely the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), operating in the region. The fighting may take place near areas inhabited by unarmed civilian populations, posing a threat to refugees in the region. Moving Rwandan civilian refugees from FDLR-controlled territory would protect them and weaken the FDLR's false claim to be defending them. To protect vulnerable populations, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is supporting the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) program to register and accelerate the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees in the east. In addition, State/PRM directly contributes to UNHCR's and the International Committee of the Red Cross' country-wide efforts to protect and aid refugees, refugee returnees, IDPs, and other victims of conflict.

Though the Congolese Government has made gains in eliminating some of the causes of instability in the region, coordinated and targeted humanitarian programs will help set a solid foundation for a successful transition to economic development. The United States and the international community, in support of the Congolese Government, must remain engaged to ensure that security prevails in the region and that civilians can resume their lives in a safe and stable environment.

Question. Funding.—How much funding are the Department of State and USAID committing to atrocities prevention programming globally? Which offices and bureaus implement this funding and how?

Question. The FY 2016 State/USAID Request includes support for atrocity prevention and response programs. Funding to address these important efforts is incorporated within both bilaterally budgeted and centrally managed programs that target prevention, response, and recovery, which makes it difficult to disaggregate a specific funding request for atrocity prevention programs. Programs are context-

specific and may be included within those that advance security sector reform; support peacekeeping operations; build law enforcement capacity; provide humanitarian assistance; promote conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution; support post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction; and strengthen the democratic institutions and processes that help to ensure good governance, citizen participation, and redress of grievances that might otherwise lead to violent conflict. Conflict mitigation, human rights monitoring, and atrocity prevention programs are integrated into these activities as appropriate. In addition to these planned and ongoing efforts, State/USAID contingency resources provide a mechanism to respond to, emerging needs, unanticipated crises, and critical periods of transition. Precise funding levels for atrocity prevention from contingency accounts are not determined in advance due to the unknown, specific needs.

The State Under Secretary of Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J), the J bureaus, and USAID's Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/DCHA) constantly work to integrate atrocity risk assessment, prevention, and early warning systems work with technical leadership in conflict management and mitigation assistance. An example of recent atrocity prevention programming is the almost \$5 million of FY 2014 CCF provided for Burundi. The programs were designed to discourage political violence and provide a counterweight to political parties' manipulation of Burundian youth through the promotion of leadership and constructive engagement for youth in their communities.

As part of a comprehensive strategy to improve foresight, prevention, and response to mass atrocities, the Department also leads quarterly consultations with senior staff of the U.N. Secretariat and ongoing diplomatic efforts during U.N. Security Council and Human Rights Council sessions to work with member states and seek to better protect civilian populations, including by strengthening the capacity of the U.N. system to prevent and respond to atrocities, and by improving women's participation in political transitions to reinforce their contributions to atrocity prevention.

Question. Diplomatic Training.—What training is in place to train our Foreign Service officers as it relates to atrocities detection, early warning, and prevention, including materials available through the Foreign Service Institute?

Answer. The FSI courses listed below include training on atrocities detection, early warning, and prevention.

- A 2-day classroom course on the protection of civilians and atrocity prevention within a multilateral framework. The course, "Policy Priorities in Multilateral Diplomacy: The Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities (PP230)," responds directly to Presidential Study Directive 10 on the Prevention of Mass Atrocities and Genocide, and the QDDR.
- A 5-day classroom course titled "Promoting Human Rights and Democracy (PP530)." This course focuses on broad range of human rights issues, including atrocity prevention. The training includes a half-day training exercise called "Shrouded Horizons." Developed by the National Defense University, this experiential exercise focuses on an escalating ethnic conflict in two fictitious countries. Participants work collaboratively to identify tools/strategies for U.S. engagement, mobilize effective international action, prevent mass atrocities and reduce the risk of a growing humanitarian crisis.
- A 4-day classroom course on "Diplomacy at High Threat Posts (RS251)." Many of the designated high threat/high risks posts are similarly on the watch lists for potential mass atrocities. As part of this course, designed to prepare personnel for service in high threat/high risk posts, FSI incorporates instruction on the mass atrocities prevention board, warning signs, and techniques for identifying the potential for mass atrocities.

Question. President Obama released the PSD-10 in 2011. What elements of the directive have been implemented? What has yet to be implemented?

Answer. Since the release of PSD-10, a number of elements of the directive have been implemented, including the establishment of the interagency Atrocities Prevention Board (APB). Since the Board first convened in April 2012, State and USAID have helped oversee a number of lines of effort in support of PSD-10, including:

- Building our civilian surge capacity and enhancing our bilateral and multilateral partnerships for purposes related to atrocities prevention. For example, we have established quarterly dialogues with U.N. partners, including the U.N. Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with civil society partners, including the Prevention and Protection Working Group.

- The development of an atrocity assessment framework tool for decisionmakers and field officers to analyze and understand the atrocity risk factors and dynamics that could lead to atrocities.
- The piloting of a system to ensure that lessons-learned reviews are performed following any significant mass atrocity prevention or response engagement.
- New training modules to existing curricula at the State Department and a library of resources on atrocities prevention, including lessons learned from past cases. A new online training, which will be required for all USAID technical officers working in high-risk countries, as well as a field guidance manual.
- Increased authority to offer financial rewards for information leading to the arrest or conviction of persons indicted by international criminal tribunals for atrocities, thanks to bipartisan legislation signed by the President in 2013, which expanded the War Crimes Rewards Program.
- The launch of a technology challenge to identify innovative uses of technology in the service of atrocity prevention.
- There is still significant work to be done. State and USAID are continuing to work to reduce atrocity risk in a targeted set of countries through robust diplomatic engagement with our bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as programmatic interventions focused on reducing risk and building resiliencies in communities where risks are present. We also continue to institutionalize atrocities prevention by expanding our tools, lessons learned, and training opportunities for those officers in countries at risk.

Question. What early warning systems to mitigate potential mass atrocities are in place across the agencies?

Answer. To identify emerging risks, the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) relies upon a range of resources to identify countries at different levels of risk and assess opportunities for impact. The National Intelligence Estimate on the Global Risk of Mass Atrocities (and Prospects for International Response), completed in 2013, and other resources provides a rigorous analytical framework that allows the Board to anticipate and prepare for mass atrocities in the coming years.

The State Department shares concerns and raises awareness about countries at risk across the most appropriate channels of government. The State Department and USAID have also developed an atrocities assessment framework, which helps identify and assess countries at risk. In addition, we have developed training specifically aimed at sensitizing officers to early warning signs for atrocities. As in other agencies, channels have been identified to allow Department officials in the field or in Washington to share relevant unreported information about mass atrocity risks with others in the Department and with interagency colleagues.

Outside of the U.S. Government, we have strong relationships with partner nations, the U.N., and the NGO community to share resources, tools, and information on atrocity prevention and countries of concern. The State Department has been the focal point for U.S. Government support of the U.N.'s Human Rights up Front initiative, which aims at improving the U.N.'s capacity to assess and respond to risks of mass atrocities. The State Department and USAID also meet quarterly with the NGO community to discuss countries and situations of concern and to share early warning information, to the extent possible.

Question. Aside from the Atrocities Prevention Board as an interagency process, how is the U.S. Government collaborating across agencies to undertake early warning and prevention programming?

Answer. State and USAID collaborate across agencies to develop joint assessments of countries at risk for atrocities and plans that respond to this risk. Agencies play an important role in helping U.S. missions identify the ways in which existing policies and programs may be used to support prevention in specific contexts. This whole-of-government approach has resulted in more comprehensive early warning and prevention programming since we have access to information about risk from different agencies. For example, State and USAID coordinate closely to identify diplomatic engagement and programming on the ground that is complementary. The Intelligence Community assists with analytic support; DOD provides support relating to the security sector, and DOJ the justice sector.

Question. How is the State Department utilizing money appropriated to the Complex Crises Fund through Overseas Contingency Operations to address unforeseen crises, particularly the prevention of atrocities and violent conflict?

Answer. The \$20 million in FY 2014 funding and \$30 million in FY 2015 funding Congress appropriated to the Department of State in the Complex Crises Fund (CCF) account via the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) title has been held in reserve with funds from other accounts to support the U.S. Government's

response to unanticipated contingencies and opportunities where additional resources are needed to achieve important foreign policy, development, or national security objectives. In the past, we have used such reserves to enable a quick response to crises, for example, emergency peacekeeping requirements in Mali, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan; immediate reconstruction needs in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan; and loan guarantees for Jordan and Ukraine.

The Department's intention is to use the FY 2014 and FY 2015 CCF resources held in reserve consistent with the purposes of this account. We are in the process of making final deliberations on the disposition of the FY 2014 funds and intend to notify Congress in the near future regarding the programs they will be used to fund.

Question. With the high-level prioritization on preventing violent extremism, how does the State Department see this work intersecting with the prevention of mass atrocities, recognizing that the drivers of conflict are often the same? How are you working to ensure that both are being prioritized?

Answer. The State Department views violent extremism and mass atrocities as overlapping areas of concern that often share many of the same underlying drivers. Both challenges are best addressed through a preventive approach that mitigates the underlying conditions that give rise to these problems before they grow and spread. We are working to hone our understanding of the drivers of extremism and atrocities in a wide range of countries, and to implement targeted, effective interventions to prevent and mitigate them, whether these acts are motivated by religious beliefs, ethnic or other political conflict, or other factors.

Both issues are priorities of the President and the Department, and our work on both is coordinated closely among the relevant bureaus, particularly the country-specific experts and the functional bureaus focused on various aspects of these prevention challenges. The existence of policy processes and mechanisms focused on each of these distinct, but related, challenges helps us ensure we do not neglect either in a given country or region.

Our atrocities prevention agenda is advanced at the interagency level through the whole-of-government Atrocities Prevention Board, which helps us ensure that emerging risks are given appropriate attention and consideration, as well as through numerous efforts within State and USAID to reduce risk in a targeted set of countries and to institutionalize atrocities prevention in our agencies through the development of tools, lessons learned, and training.

Building on the success of the White House summit in February, preventing violent extremism is being prioritized through the international action agenda launched by delegates from more than 60 governments, civil society representatives from more than 50 countries, and more than two dozen private sector leaders. This process is building toward a Leaders' summit on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly, where heads of governments, organizations, and corporations will announce the programs and policies they have undertaken to address the drivers of violent extremism and implement the action agenda.

Question. The new National Security Strategy elevates the need to increase U.S. efforts to "Build U.S. Capacity to Prevent Conflict" and highlights conflict prevention as a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy. Does the FY 2016 budget request increase funding for conflict prevention? What bureaus or offices are primarily responsible for elevating the U.S. efforts to "Build U.S. Capacity to Prevent Conflict"?

Answer. Our FY 2016 request of \$342.6 million for conflict mitigation and reconciliation is an increase of \$101.5 million (42 percent) above the FY 2014 level of \$241.1 million, which reflects the administration's increased support for conflict prevention. The request includes funding in the Complex Crises Fund, Development Assistance, Economic Support Fund, and Transition Initiatives accounts. There are large increases requested for Burma, Central Asia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Lebanon, Somalia, Syria, and Ukraine, countries at elevated risk of conflict.

The Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights (J) and constituent bureaus, along with USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), have primary responsibility for U.S. Government efforts in building capacity to prevent conflict. The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development review specifically created the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)—part of the J family—to advance conflict prevention, including analysis and planning, in support of U.S. policy and program development. Mass atrocity prevention is a special area of focus. State and USAID conflict prevention efforts, as requested in FY 2016, advance U.S. national security by breaking cycles of violent conflict and mitigating crises in priority countries, aiming to address the

underlying causes of destabilizing violence. Conflict prevention is a key pillar of our work, and reinforces effectiveness in other security challenges ranging from human trafficking to preventing and combating violent extremism.

Question. In FY14, the U.S. Government mobilized a rapid and robust response to prevent mass atrocities against civilians in the Central African Republic under the auspices of Presidential Study Directive-10 to Prevent Genocide and Mass Atrocities (PSD-10). I am concerned that U.S. attention to CAR has waned and that if efforts are not sustained in this critical transition period, the Congress will be asked to once again mobilize huge amounts of resources to prevent atrocities and save human lives.

- ◆ How are we sustaining engagement in the Central African Republic to ensure that we build the foundations necessary for sustainable recovery once and for all?

Answer. Our national interest is in seeing the Central African Republic (CAR) become a stable, well-governed regional partner whose citizens live in peace with one another and without the specter of violence and hate has intensified, not waned. We are working with the people and leaders of CAR and other international partners to stabilize the country and put it on a trajectory toward long-term recovery and prosperity, understanding that this effort requires helping CAR to tackle the root causes of conflict, including intolerance and impunity, lack of governance, and lack of economic development.

In support of these goals, we resumed operations at U.S. Embassy Bangui in September 2014, after American staff had been absent for almost 2 years due to security concerns. Our Embassy plays a key role in establishing contacts and engaging with the CAR Government and political, religious, civil society, and business leaders to promote national reconciliation, a democratic political transition process, and economic revitalization. In addition, senior U.S. Government leaders remain closely engaged in CAR, including through the U.S. Special Representative for the Central African Republic. USUN Ambassador Samantha Power has visited the country and other high-level visits are anticipated in the near future.

Major U.S. investments in humanitarian aid and peacekeeping support in CAR have already saved lives, alleviated human suffering, and helped address the current crisis. In FY 2014 and 2015, the United States provided \$195.7 million in humanitarian aid to address the CAR crisis. We have provided \$100 million to support the force contributing countries of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA), in addition to our assessed contributions for the mission.

To promote longer term national reconciliation and good governance, we have invested \$7.5 million in local-level peacebuilding and community cohesion work to help reknit the communal ties that once held disparate communities in CAR together. We have invested over \$600,000 to support and expand the courageous work of CAR's faith leaders, who have come together across religious lines to advocate for peace and tolerance. We have dedicated \$7 million to a CAR peace-building partnership that will leverage additional private sector funding for community-level peace and reconciliation work. We are investing \$15.5 million to help reestablish CAR's criminal justice system, including bolstering its capacity to address sexual and gender based violence. We will continue to support CAR's planning for and execution of security sector reform.

To support accountability and avoid repeating the long history of impunity that has contributed to cycles of violence in CAR, the United States supported the establishment of a U.N. Commission of Inquiry, and supports the urgent consideration by the CAR Government of legislation which would establish a domestic Special Penal Court to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

I note that the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), at the request of national authorities, will investigate atrocities allegedly committed in the country since August 2012. The United States has also implemented U.N. Security Council and targeted U.S. sanctions against key individuals responsible for obstructing the political process and violating human rights. These sanctions send a powerful message that impunity will not be tolerated and that those who threaten the stability of the CAR will face consequences.

To help support the political transition process leading to elections, we have provided \$300,000 to help CAR implement needed technical fixes to its electoral code. A separate \$300,000 program is helping ensure that CAR's constitutional reform efforts—another key element of the transition process—are as inclusive as possible.

We will continue to work with CAR and its international partners to ensure that while addressing the crisis and saving lives, we help CAR build the foundations for sustainable peace and prosperity by addressing the underlying drivers of conflict.

Question. Embassy Management.—Agencies operating overseas continue to express concerns about rising ICASS costs and low satisfaction with the service provided. As ICASS costs are spread across numerous agencies, many of which no longer can “opt out,” there is minimal incentive to reduce costs.

- ◆ What changes are being made to establish incentives to manage ICASS cost increases for State and all agencies? What is State doing to continually improve the quality of ICASS service provision for its customers? How is State expanding the utilization of alternative service providers where it may be more cost effective for some or all agencies at post?

Answer. Survey data show that customers at post are satisfied with the quality of ICASS services. The average customer satisfaction score for the last 5 years is 4.09 on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest. Satisfaction is trending up over the same period from 4.03 in 2011, to 4.16 in 2015. The average number of responses is 52,864 per year over the last 5 years. The annual survey, sponsored by the interagency funded ICASS Service Center, is administered by an independent nonprofit quality management organization to all ICASS customers worldwide. Policy supervision on the survey instrument is provided by the interagency ICASS Working Group.

ICASS is a cooperative cost distribution system intended to lower overall costs for the U.S. Government. It is a voluntary system with the exception of medical, security, badging and credentialing, and family support services. That being said, most agencies opt in to the majority of services, including building operations, financial management, building and residential security, and others, because they lack the interest or the expertise to provide these services. The system, according to GAO, produces positive economic benefits for the U.S. Government. GAO’s analysis of ICASS cost and workload data shows that significant economies of scale can be achieved through greater participation in ICASS.

The GAO concluded in 2012 (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-09317>) that agencies opting out of ICASS because they believe they can obtain less costly services on their own may actually increase the overall cost to the U.S. Government. The GAO found that agencies that withdraw from services do not usually provide any formal rationale to ICASS management and often have not conducted any cost analysis to justify their decisions; a September 2014 policy decision by the ICASS Executive Board now requires agencies to complete an analysis before withdrawing from services.

There are very strong incentives for the Department of State, as the principal bill-payer, to contain the cost of services. The Department of State accounts for an average of 72 percent of the annual ICASS invoice. Thus, 72 cents of every dollar of cost containment benefits the Department of State.

The Department has a history of innovating in order to provide cost-effective, high quality administrative services around the world, often in dangerous, remote, or inhospitable locations that may lack basic infrastructure. The GAO closed a recommendation (effective March 14, 2014) in its duplication tracker concerning the issues of cost, quality, and innovation. For example, State implemented a furniture pool policy in 2012 that was adopted by the interagency in 2014, which allowed for greater consolidation, and has already reduced or eliminated warehouse facilities at six posts abroad. In addition, State has contained the number of American and locally employed service providers at high-threat posts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan—where services are more expensive than at other posts within the region—by expanding regional support models to provide administrative services from safer and less expensive locations. Specific examples include a unit created to provide administrative services for personnel in Iraq from the U.S. mission in Amman, Jordan, and providing some information technology support services to the U.S. mission to Afghanistan remotely from the U.S. mission in New Delhi, India. State is promoting further consolidation of some human resource and vouchering activities.

Along with interagency participation, State continues to improve its processes through an ongoing initiative that involves reviewing the levels of transactions and customer feedback for services. To date, an interagency committee has recalibrated 10 service standards—or criteria for effectively delivering services—for the four service areas that represent the most highly requested services in the field based on data collected over the last 4 years. State officials indicated that these efforts are intended to ensure maximum transparency to users regarding ICASS services, increasing customer satisfaction and cost-effectiveness.

The option to select an alternative service provider (ASP) is a customer-driven decision that is a long-standing policy in ICASS. Interagency ICASS councils at overseas posts select and evaluate service providers. Any agency can make a proposal to post-level ICASS councils provided that they can service all agencies at that location. This long-standing policy was restated in an official cable to all missions in February 2012. State supports the use of ASPs when it is in the best interest of the U.S. Government. USAID began providing building services at a facility it recently opened in Pretoria, though recent experience in Juba and Almaty—two posts that are converting to State ICASS—indicate the challenges that smaller agencies have providing the full spectrum of cost-effective, high-quality administrative services to the entire USG population in remote locations.

Question. In 2010, GAO reported that the comparatively larger size of new embassy compounds and the complexity of their building systems have resulted in higher operations and maintenance costs than at the facilities they replaced. However, State's Long Range Plan does not provide insight into operating costs, such as the costs for utilities, which would be paid for through ICASS.

- ◆ What actions has State taken to provide better information on the operating costs of embassy buildings?

Answer. Providing safe, secure, and functional facilities for the U.S. Government overseas requires the collocation of all U.S. Government staff onto one secure compound. In many cases these posts had previously been working in scattered, leased properties. In addition, the modern security systems required in our new embassy and consulate facilities operate 24-hours a day and require significant energy to operate.

Despite these challenges, the Department has analyzed options and implemented actions to reduce facility operating costs. For all new construction, the Department requires a minimum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) silver certification and, where possible and cost effective, gold and platinum are the goal. By Earth Day (April 22) we will reach a milestone of 31 LEED Certified facilities, which are modeled to use 27 percent less energy, 35 percent less potable water, and 75 percent less irrigation water than industry standard benchmarks as well as produce 41 percent less waste during construction. For existing facilities we have implemented cost-effective technologies for renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power and rainwater harvesting and have provided more efficient lighting and devices for reducing water use.

As noted, State and other agencies at overseas posts are responsible for funding operations through the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) process. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) as part of the planning/design process provides estimated costs to operate an NEC to its stakeholders prior to opening a new facility.

Three major cost components are used in the development of the buildings operating expense estimates for NEC/NCCs: 1. Local Maintenance Labor Costs; 2. Local Service Contract Costs; and 3. Utility Cost Estimates.

Question. Terrorists' ability to use fraudulent travel documents to travel to the United States remains a national security concern. State and other agencies try to address this by training foreign partners to identify and interdict fraudulent travel documents. However, in 2011 GAO found that these training efforts are sometimes fragmented and not well coordinated, including in key countries such as Pakistan.

- ◆ What steps has State taken to improve coordination regarding improving our foreign partners' capacity to identify fraudulent travel documents?

Answer. The Department works closely on an ongoing basis with our partners in the law enforcement and intelligence communities to review the tools at our disposal to hinder the use of fraudulent documents and foreign fighter travel, while not interrupting legitimate travel.

The State Department, together with these interagency partners, has in particular identified a mechanism for coordinating interagency fraudulent document training efforts, in accordance with GAO findings. At the same time, the U.S. Government continues to work closely with our foreign partners—including our Visa Waiver Program (VWP) partners—to resolve the identities of known or suspected violent extremists and potential foreign fighter threats emanating from Syria and Iraq, and continues to prioritize USG coordination of foreign partner trainings abroad to ensure coordination of our diplomatic efforts. Conducting trainings such as these improves the capacity of partner countries to stem the flow of foreign fighters, identify them in transit, and apprehend those who facilitate their travel.

Question. State's Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program is a critical component of U.S. efforts to build our foreign partners' capacity to combat terrorist organizations including al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab. State is requesting \$165 million in new funding for this program. However, this past year, GAO reviewed counterterrorism efforts in East and Northwest Africa and found that State managers were unaware of unobligated balances in ATA funding over several years, totaling millions of dollars.

- ◆ Has State taken steps to address these deficiencies so we can be confident that the ATA funds are well spent?

Answer. In order to enhance assurance that ATA program funds are being spent wisely and delivering effective outcomes in building civilian sector counterterrorism capacity, the Department has enhanced its program management and monitoring and evaluation efforts, including improved financial tracking and assessment of program outcomes. Specifically, the Department is now collecting semiannual financial data, as well as quarterly narrative reports to track results. It is worth noting that a significant percentage of the ATA funding referenced in the GAO reviews of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT) was ultimately deobligated due to factors beyond the Department's control, including security challenges and political turmoil.

Question. Mr. Secretary, last year Congress passed substantial legislation on both Ukraine and Venezuela, both bills calling for the imposition of significant new sanctions as part of a broader U.S. policy response to the significant acts of violence and human rights abuses that were at play in both nations. I am concerned that in both cases the situation has continued to deteriorate—and challenges to U.S. interests and values continue to mount—yet the administration has not yet availed itself of the tools that Congress, in these pieces of legislation, has provided. While I would not suggest that these sanctions are, or can be, the entirety of U.S. policy, surely they represent an approach and effective leverage that must be part of the U.S. response.

- ◆ Can you please tell us where things stand with implementation of these bills (the Venezuela sanctions were mandatory, I would note) and what more the administration intends to do to use the authorities Congress has provided—and wants to see used?

Answer. The United States remains deeply concerned by Russia's continued violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its increasing support for pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine. Additionally, we remain opposed to Russia's efforts to increase its administrative, political, and economic control over the Crimean peninsula. Crimea is sovereign Ukrainian territory and the United States does not recognize Russia's attempted annexation.

The United States stands with Ukrainians as they forge a brighter future for their nation and succeeding generations. In their October 2014 parliamentary elections, the people of Ukraine made a bold and clear choice for democracy, reform, and European integration, showing enthusiasm and support for parties with strong proreform agendas. The United States remains committed to Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and to increasing the costs for Russia should it fail to implement its Minsk agreements fully. In close cooperation with our international partners, we enacted a strong regime of targeted sanctions on key sectors of the Russian economy including energy, financial services, and defense. These sanctions, combined with structural weaknesses in Russia's economy and low oil prices, have produced undeniably negative effects—Russia suffered approximately \$150 billion of capital flight in 2014, the ruble is trading at all-time lows against the dollar, and Russia's credit rating is at junk level. Foreign investors are being frightened away and Russian economic growth remains near zero and is projected to go into recession in 2015.

With respect to additional sanctions mandated by the Ukraine Freedom Support Act (UFSA), President Obama determined that the sanctions already imposed, including those against Rosoboronexport and other Russian defense companies, satisfy the requirements of this statute. We will continue to assess the situation in Ukraine to determine whether additional sanctions are warranted, including under the UFSA.

On March 9, the President announced a new Executive Order (E.O.) "Blocking Property and Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Venezuela," which implements and goes beyond the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014 (the Act) signed into law by President Obama on December 18, 2014. We are committed to advancing respect for human rights,

safeguarding democratic institutions, and protecting the U.S. financial system from the illicit financial flows from public corruption in Venezuela.

This measure targets persons involved in or responsible for: actions that limit or prohibit freedom of expression or peaceful assembly; significant acts of violence and human rights violations; and abuses in response to antigovernment protest. It also covers those involved in actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions, and public corruption within the Government of Venezuela. The E.O. neither targets the people nor the economy of Venezuela.

Individuals sanctioned under the E.O., including the seven named in the Annex to the E.O., will have their property and interests in property, subject to U.S. jurisdiction, blocked. U.S. persons, wherever located, are generally prohibited from engaging in any dealings with listed individuals. The E.O. suspends the entry into the United States of any individual designated pursuant to the E.O.

We will continue our investigations pursuant to these authorities and stand prepared to take action against others as additional information becomes available and is assessed.

We will continue to work closely with Congress and others in the region to support greater political expression in Venezuela, and to encourage the Venezuelan Government to live up to its commitment to democracy, as articulated in the OAS Charter, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and other relevant instruments related to democracy and human rights.

Question. With respect to Ukraine, I understand that there are individuals on the EU and Canadian targeted sanctions list who do not appear on the American list. Why is this the case? Perhaps the most egregious example is Alexander Bortnikov, the head of the Russian FSB. Mr. Bortnikov is not on the U.S. lists in relation to either Ukraine or the Magnitsky act, but is on EU and Canadian lists. To make matters worse, Mr. Bortnikov was in the United States last week for President Obama's CVE conference.

♦ Could you please explain the administration's policy as it relates to Mr. Bortnikov and others who clearly belong on the U.S. targeted sanctions list?

Answer. The United States has been working closely with our G7 and European partners and allies to design measures that are coordinated and well-aligned. Together we have already enacted a strong regime of sectoral sanctions on key sectors of the Russian economy including energy, financial services, and defense that are imposing serious costs on Russia.

While we do not comment on specific cases, we have designated many of those directly involved in destabilizing Ukraine, including senior Russian officials such as FSB Colonel-General Sergey Beseda, head of the FSB's Fifth Service, also known as the Service for Operational Information and International Communications.

While the measures the EU has taken are not identical to ours, the clear message is that both we and the EU have determined that Russia's actions require us to impose costs. EU travel restrictions do not apply to U.S. travel, much in the same way that U.S. travel restrictions would not apply to travel to the EU. We continue to consult with our European partners on further sanctions pressure should Russia fail to implement Minsk.

Question. The new IMF program for Ukraine will bring the Fund's total assistance to that country to more than \$22 billion. The IMF has indicated that it expects foreign assistance for Ukraine to total \$40 billion over the next 4 years.

♦ Where concretely is the rest of that money coming from? How confident are you that Ukraine will actually receive the full sum?

♦ If Congress was to make additional funding available for assistance to Ukraine, how do you believe the money would best be allocated between economic and military assistance?

Answer. On February 12 the IMF announced a 4-year Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of \$17.5 billion. The IMF expects its program will be complemented by additional \$10 billion in bilateral and multilateral assistance, including from the World Bank, the European Union, and the United States. The United States has pledged up to \$2 billion in loan guarantees in 2015 to contribute to this effort, contingent upon Ukraine's continued progress implementing its IMF program and the support of Congress. The United States will work with various stakeholders to ensure Ukraine receives the assistance it needs to implement its reform agenda.

Ukraine also anticipates that upcoming consultations with creditors will free up \$12.5 billion or more through the 4-year EFF, though details of the arrangements are not yet known.

If Congress were to make additional funding available, the administration could use it to help Ukraine meet its financing needs as well as to address a range of

other urgent priorities. This would include assistance to help Ukraine strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity, address pressing humanitarian needs, enhance its economic resilience, increase its energy security, fight corruption, and advance key democratic and economic reforms.

Question. There are reports that the administration is using back channels to Russia as a means toward finding areas of common interest and perhaps an “off ramp,” as they call it, for Russia with respect to sanctions over its aggression in Ukraine.

- ◆ Do you think there is an appropriate “off ramp” to the current tension between the United States, Europe, and Russia? Have you seen any indication that the Russian position on Ukraine has changed, or that it will be less assertive in its so-called “near abroad”?
- ◆ How do we both find an off-ramp and at the same time uphold the proposition, which I agree with strongly, that a country can’t simply be allowed to slice off a part of another country?

I am concerned that sanctions pressure, particularly among the Europeans, will diminish before we see a significant change in the Russian stance in Ukraine, across Eastern Europe or elsewhere in the former Soviet space . . . and that unless we see a change and a willingness by Putin and Russia to be part of the solution, not the cause of the problem, the broader implications for stability in Europe are deeply troublesome.

Answer. Our focus from the outset of the crisis has been on supporting Ukraine and on pursuing a diplomatic solution that respects Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. What we have clearly seen over the past year is activity by Russia that flagrantly violates the territorial integrity of the sovereign nation of Ukraine, including Russia’s occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula, and its actions in support of pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Russia and the separatists continue to fail to fulfill all of the commitments to which they have signed up in the Minsk agreements and the February 12 implementation plan, which is simply unacceptable. If their failure to comply with these commitments continues, there will be further consequences that would place added strains on Russia’s already troubled economy. We will work closely with our allies and partners to ensure that additional costs are imposed together, which greatly magnifies their impact.

If, on the other hand, Russia and the separatists fully implement their commitments under the Minsk agreements of September 2014 and the commitments under the February 12 implementation plan, we will begin to roll back sanctions. This includes the complete withdrawal of all heavy weapons and foreign fighters from Ukraine, full and unfettered access by international monitors to separatist-controlled territory to verify cease-fire and withdrawal compliance, and the release of all hostages. Crucially, the conditions for rolling back sanctions also include the restoration to Kiev the control of its side of the border with Russia.

Question. As a Senator, you condemned the recall of U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, in 2006, after he spoke honestly about the Armenian Genocide. I understand that at the business meeting to confirm Ambassador Evans’ replacement, you voted against the nominee on principle stating, “For us to recall an ambassador because he utters the word “genocide,” is to cow-tow, to cave-in to those who change history, something we are witnessing today with [President] Ahmadinajad in Iran who says the Holocaust didn’t exist. So it is even more important that we say something to the contrary. We are not going to allow revisionism. We are not going to allow people to push the United States of America around and say what you can and can’t say about what’s happening with respect to history. We honor history and we honor the truth. I don’t think we do so if we allow this administration to take the contrary policy.”

- ◆ On this 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, will you allow our U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, Richard Mills, to “honor history” and “honor truth” by allowing him to speak frankly, openly and honestly about the Armenian Genocide?

Answer. The United States recognizes the events of 1915 as one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century. This year’s commemoration will have special resonance, as Armenia and the world mark the centenary of the atrocities, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. Our objective is to honor this centenary by standing in solidarity with the Armenian people to acknowledge the tragic events of 1915, honoring those—including the many Americans—who reached out to assist the victims. Acknowledging the painful elements of the past will help lead to the reconciliation

needed to heal the wounds of the past so the Turkish and Armenian peoples can move forward together in a shared future of security and prosperity in the region. No decision has yet been made on who will officially represent the U.S. Government at this year's memorial events in Yerevan, but Ambassador Mills will certainly participate.

Question. The renewal of the mandate for the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) will occur in July 2015. The United States contributes funding to support this and other important U.N. peacekeeping operations globally. As part of the U.N.'s mandate in Cyprus, it participates in the peace negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, which restarted in February 2014 but have been suspended until Turkey withdraws its research vessel Barbaros from Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone.

- ◆ What is the administration's policy on Turkey's continued provocations in Cyprus' EEZ? How is the administration working with all parties to create an environment that is conducive to restarting peace talks aimed at fulfilling the bizonal, bicomunal federation that was agreed to by both parties in the joint communique of February 2014?

Answer. The Obama administration remains strongly committed to supporting efforts to reach a just and lasting settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation. We support the Republic of Cyprus' right to develop its hydrocarbon resources in its exclusive economic zone and believe that revenues from the resources should be shared equitably between both communities within the context of an overall settlement. Reducing tensions and getting the parties back to the negotiating table as soon as possible are critical to advancing the peace process.

The administration continues to engage actively with all stakeholders, and in support of United Nations Special Advisor Espen Barth Eide's efforts to reduce tensions, move past the current impasse, and resume talks. Recent senior-level engagement includes Vice President Biden's November 2014 visit to Turkey, where he discussed Cyprus with government leaders. Following a meeting with Turkish President Erdogan, the Vice President emphasized the need to "focus on de-escalating tensions and returning to the negotiating table." In addition, Secretary Kerry met with Cypriot President Anastasiades on the margins of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2015.

Question. How much does the United States spend on anti-Semitism programs in Europe? Please provide information on programs conducted through the Special Envoy's office as well as those conducted by all other U.S. Government-funded implementers. Which countries in Europe have appointed Special Envoys to combat anti-Semitism abroad and within their own countries? Which countries in Europe have dedicated funding to confront anti-Semitism internally and abroad?

Answer. DRL is currently spending approximately \$796,000 on programs worldwide that seek to: combat public and online anti-Semitic rhetoric; create coalitions of NGOs to combat anti-Semitism; and promote Holocaust education. We do not delineate this data by region. In order to protect program participants, DRL does not share details about the programs it is funding in writing. However, DRL would be happy to provide an in-person briefing on all of its activities related to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism.

The Special Envoy for Anti-Semitism, Ira Forman, routinely travels to Europe to meet with elected officials, religious leaders, and leaders within civil society to discuss ways to monitor and combat anti-Semitism in Europe. Furthermore, the Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues works with European-based international organizations, such as the European Shoah Legacy Institute, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and the International Tracing Service, and it manages the State Department's \$15 million contribution to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation. The Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues engages these organizations to ensure they are effective multipliers in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and in using Holocaust education to combat anti-Semitism. The European members of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance include: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The Department of State is aware of special envoys that focus on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, and Greece. Additionally, the European Parliament has a Working Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief and anti-Semitism. Through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United States actively supports the Chairmanship's Personal Representatives on Tolerance and other programs to combat anti-

Semitism and other forms of intolerance throughout the OSCE area. In November 2014, the United States sent a Presidential delegation led by Samantha Power, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, to attend the 10th anniversary commemoration of the OSCE Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism. This was followed by the adoption of a declaration to enhance efforts to combat anti-Semitism during the OSCE foreign ministerial meeting in Basel, Switzerland, in December 2014.

Question. When Turkey entered Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) last October with its seismic vessel the *Barbaros* accompanied by Turkish warships, I sent a letter to Vice President Biden calling on the administration to join the European Union and the United Nations in publicly condemning Turkey's actions and call for the immediate withdrawal of the *Barbaros* from Cyprus' EEZ. I have not yet received a response to my letter. As stated in your testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 24, you have had several meetings on this issue. Unfortunately there has been no discernable progress. Peace negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots have been suspended until Turkey withdraws its ships.

- ◆ What is the administration's policy on Turkey's continued provocations in Cyprus' EEZ? What specific diplomatic steps will the administration take to encourage Turkey's withdrawal from Cyprus' EEZ?

Answer. The Obama administration remains strongly committed to supporting efforts to reach a just and lasting settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation. We support the Republic of Cyprus' right to develop its hydrocarbon resources in its exclusive economic zone and believe that revenues from the resources should be shared equitably between both communities within the context of an overall settlement. Reducing tensions and getting the parties back to the negotiating table as soon as possible are critical to advancing the peace process.

The administration continues to engage actively with all stakeholders, and in support of United Nations Special Advisor Espen Barth Eide's efforts to reduce tensions, move past the current impasse, and resume talks. Recent senior-level engagement includes Vice President Biden's November 2014 visit to Turkey, where he discussed Cyprus with government leaders. Following a meeting with Turkish President Erdogan, the Vice President emphasized the need to "focus on de-escalating tensions and returning to the negotiating table." In addition, Secretary Kerry met with Cypriot President Anastasiades on the margins of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2015.

Question. How do you evaluate the socioeconomic impact on the countries of Central Asia of the economic downturn in Russia? Will the United States provide additional assistance to help ameliorate these consequences and, if so, will any new assistance include human rights/democratization conditionality?

Answer. We recognize the impact that the economic downturn in Russia is having on the peoples and economies of Central Asia and are working with our Central Asian partners to support strong and diversified economic development. Central Asian economies are closely linked to the Russian economy—from business and financial ties to the remittances many Central Asian migrant workers send home to their families. Russia's downturn, coupled with the depreciation of the ruble, has reduced Russian demand for imports from Central Asia and made Russian nonoil exports more competitive in Central Asian markets. It has also reduced remittance flows, particularly to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, where governments must deal not only with the challenge of reduced financial flows but also with providing social support and employment opportunities for workers returning from Russia.

To address these challenges, we have encouraged Central Asian countries to adopt economic reforms to make their markets more competitive and attractive to foreign investment, while also supporting efforts to build diverse trade linkages among Central Asian economies and with the growing economies of South Asia. This is a key goal of our New Silk Road initiative, including support for projects like CASA-1000. USAID's Regional Economic Cooperation program (REC) has organized successful trade fairs and forums to introduce businesses from Central Asia to those in South Asia.

Through a U.S. grant to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), we assisted 76 small and medium enterprises of the region in meeting requirements of more sophisticated markets, including those in Western Europe and North America. Companies receive mentorship from local and international experts in their sector. As a result of this project, these companies successfully raised \$87 million of external financing, including \$26 million from EBRD.

Membership in the World Trade Organization can also deepen Central Asia's links to the global economy, and we welcome Kazakhstan's efforts to join Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as a WTO member, as well as expressions of interest from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. We regularly address these and other issues through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement discussions with Central Asia and through working groups targeting customs reform, nontariff barriers to trade and phytosanitary standards.

Additional resources have been requested in the President's FY 2016 budget to build on past programs and further increase the economic resiliency of the Central Asian countries. The additional funds will focus on supporting job creation activities to address the growing number of unemployed returned migrant workers from Russia, and the decreasing flow of remittances.

Meanwhile, human rights and good governance will remain central components of our bilateral relationships with our Central Asian partners. We consistently press our partners to take an approach that is more responsive to human needs and more accountable to the citizenry. Those goals will be integral to any assistance we provide in response to the current economic downturn as well and, in fact, built into program design. For example, to address concerns about transparency and accountability in the Central Asian states, we prefer to utilize technical assistance, training and exchanges in these countries, rather than providing budget support to government agencies. We also use our programs to promote constructive interaction between government and civil society organizations, as a way of providing models for government transparency and illustrating the useful role civil society plays in a developed, democratic society.

Question. Sri Lanka.—The recent historic elections in Sri Lanka could serve as an important inflection point for U.S. relations with the country, but concerns remain with respect to accountability following the end of the country's brutal civil war. I am concerned that pressure on Sri Lanka for accountability will diminish in the coming months. I am very cognizant of the pressures that the new government is under, but the United States cannot in any way diminish the constructive role that it has played in recent years in support of human rights and the democratic process.

- ◆ (a) Will the United States continue to support the U.N.'s investigation into Sri Lanka's civil war?

Answer (a). The United States fully supports the U.N.'s investigation, and we look forward to reviewing the investigation's findings and recommendations.

- ◆ (b) Does the administration support the release of UNHRC's report in September? Are there any circumstances under which the United States would not support the release of the report in September?

Answer (b). The administration supports the release of the U.N. investigation's report in August, as well as the presentation of the report to the U.N. Human Rights Council during the September 2015 session. We have emphasized to U.N. High Commissioner Zeid, U.N. Human Rights Council member states, and the Sri Lankan Government that the report must be presented at the September 2015 session.

- ◆ (c) If the Sri Lankan Government does not implement a credible domestic investigation, how would this impact U.S. relations with the country?

Answer (c). We commend the important steps already taken by the Sirisena Government and welcome its pledges to address reconciliation and accountability issues. The United States will continue to encourage and support credible, transparent, and independent justice mechanisms. We will not waver from our commitment to supporting efforts to ensure respect for human rights and the promotion of justice, accountability, and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans.

- ◆ (d) How much funding does the USG and NED currently provide for democracy programs in Sri Lanka? Will the administration increase democracy and governance programs to Sri Lanka in the wake of this political opening?

Answer. The United States Government currently provides \$1.6M in FY14 assistance for democracy and governance programs that support training for investigative reporting with a focus on the parliamentary elections and post-election accountability, as well as advocacy for the Right to Information Act. USAID currently provides \$1M in FY14 within the democracy and governance sector, primarily supporting civil society's work with vulnerable groups to protect human rights, enhance civic dialogue and peace-building, combat gender-based violence, document land claims, and provide legal aid services. USAID is currently reviewing its FY15 con-

tributions based on the changed political environment after January's change in government.

NED is providing \$670,000 in FY 2014 assistance on grants in Sri Lanka. The Endowment grants will focus on the rollback of authoritarian practices and reestablishment of institutions that promote democratic governance. NED will continue to focus on programs promoting a democratic reform agenda within both majority and minority communities, including promoting tolerance; addressing wartime accountability and reconciliation; encouraging greater civic participation in political processes; promoting good governance at the local level; and strengthening the rule of law and independence of the judiciary. The U.S. Government continues to assess the situation in Sri Lanka to determine what additional resources are necessary to support democracy and governance and how they might best be directed.

- ◆ (e) I am very concerned that the United States will move too quickly in enhancing security assistance and programming with the Sri Lankan military in the wake of these political changes. Please provide a full summary of current U.S. programming in this area. Are there plans to expand this programming in FY15 or FY16? If so, please provide a detailed description of what is planned.

Answer (e). There is no Foreign Military Financing programmed for Sri Lanka in FY15 or FY16. Decisions have not yet been made about out-year funding. We continue investing in the enhanced International Military Education and Training (IMET) program in Sri Lanka to deepen respect for democracy and human rights in the military. For FY15 we requested \$500,000 IMET for Sri Lanka and for FY16 the OMB submission was also \$500,000.

Current defense engagement with Sri Lanka is limited to a few key areas, including maritime security, human rights education, demining support, and classroom training focused on peacekeeping and disaster response. The United States is closely monitoring changes to the Sri Lankan military under the Sirisena administration, including changes to personnel, policies, and military culture. We can envision benefits to both our countries, and to peace and security in the Indian Ocean region as a result of a strengthened military relationship in tandem with progress on reconciliation, accountability, and human rights. Future security assistance and programming will also be greatly influenced by efforts to hold human rights violators accountable as well as greater institutional reforms, and Leahy and other human rights vetting procedures will continue. We will continue to urge reforms to ensure the Sri Lanka military functions as a professional, peacetime force.

- ◆ (f) Will the United States continue to support the U.N.'s investigation into Sri Lanka's civil war?

Answer (f). The United States fully supports the U.N.'s investigation, and we look forward to reviewing the investigation's findings and recommendations.

- ◆ (g) Does the administration support the release of UNHRC's report in September? Are there any circumstances under which the United States would not support the release of the report in September?

Answer (g). The administration supports the release of the U.N. investigation's report in August, as well as the presentation of the report to the U.N. Human Rights Council during the September 2015 session. We have emphasized to U.N. High Commissioner Zeid, U.N. Human Rights Council member states, and the Sri Lankan Government that the report must be presented at the September 2015 session.

- ◆ (h) If the Sri Lankan Government does not implement a credible domestic investigation, how would this impact U.S. relations with the country?

Answer (h). We commend the important steps already taken by the Sirisena Government and welcome its pledges to address reconciliation and accountability issues. The United States will continue to encourage and support credible, transparent, and independent justice mechanisms. We will not waver from our commitment to supporting efforts to ensure respect for human rights and the promotion of justice, accountability, and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans.

- ◆ (i) How much funding does the USG and NED currently provide for democracy programs in Sri Lanka? Will the administration increase democracy and governance programs to Sri Lanka in the wake of this political opening?

Answer (i). The United States Government currently provides \$1.6M in FY14 assistance for democracy and governance programs that support training for investigative reporting with a focus on the parliamentary elections and post-election accountability, as well as advocacy for the Right to Information Act. USAID currently provides \$1M in FY14 within the democracy and governance sector, primarily sup-

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- ◆ (j) I am very concerned that the United States will move too quickly in enhancing security assistance and programming with the Sri Lankan military in the wake of these political changes. Please provide a full summary of current U.S. programming in this area. Are there plans to expand this programming in FY15 or FY16? If so, please provide a detailed description of what is planned.

Answer (j). There is no Foreign Military Financing programmed for Sri Lanka in FY15 or FY16. Decisions have not yet been made about out-year funding. We continue investing in the expanded International Military Education and Training (e-IMET) program in Sri Lanka to deepen respect for democracy and human rights in the military. For FY15 we requested \$500,000 IMET for Sri Lanka and for FY16 the OMB submission was also \$500,000.

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Question. I am very concerned about the political deadlock and associated violence in Bangladesh. I strongly support a robust dialogue between the two main parties in order for political disagreements to be discussed around a table and not violently fought in the streets.

- ◆ How are you using all the democracy and governance programming tools at your disposal to ensure that the United States can play an objective, nonpartisan, and constructive role in supporting more nonviolent and constructive Bangladeshi political process?
- ◆ Do I have your commitment that the State Department and USAID will continue to conduct robust programming in support of freedom of association in Bangladesh?
- ◆ I have been a strong supporter of the deployment of a Department of Labor attaché to work on freedom of association issues in Bangladesh. The State Department should continue this important program and I urge you to consider it elsewhere in posts where freedom of association is under assault. Is the State Department considering similar arrangements elsewhere? If so where and in what capacity?

Answer. We share your concerns and are working to foster an end to the current political violence, which has killed innocent Bangladeshis and disrupted daily life throughout the country. We condemn violence by any party toward political objectives, which is unacceptable in a democracy. We also urge the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the necessary space for peaceful political disagreement. Such space for free association and expression must be used responsibly by the opposition.

We continue to use all of the tools at our disposal to support Bangladesh's democratic traditions. Our democracy and governance programs bolster the independent institutions and civil society organizations that underpin a democracy and empower youth to serve as agents of positive social change. Following the January 5, 2014, elections, USAID restructured the Bangladesh Election Support Activities project to

withdraw direct support for members of the government and promote constructive engagement of civil society and media, as well as women and youth across the political spectrum. USAID's \$12 million, 5-year Democratic Participation and Reform project works to improve leadership roles by women and youth in political parties; helps political parties with research-based data in decisionmaking; and assists parties in messaging and media outreach, organizational best practices, and compliance with electoral law.

The administration remains committed to robust programming in support of freedom of association in Bangladesh. U.S. programs on labor empower Bangladeshi workers to organize, help strengthen the independence and good governance of trade unions, and facilitate modern industrial relations.

The State Department and Department of Labor work together closely on labor diplomacy, including the labor attaché program in Bangladesh. The State Department has over 30 designated labor officer positions overseas who promote respect for labor rights, but the State Department and Department of Labor are looking to further expand the labor attaché program. We have established a labor attaché position at U.S. Embassy Bogota, whose duties will include helping to facilitate full implementation of the Labor Action Plan, and we will continue to identify future positions.

Question. Over the last year it has become clear that the GOB has refused to protect the rights of garment workers to organize independent unions and has instead blamed outside conspirators and foreign elements for trying to destroy the country's garment industry. We know that our Embassy has worked with other Embassies in Dhaka to press the GOB to enforce its labor laws but progress has been slow.

- ◆ What strategy does the State Department have to increase pressure on the GOB? For example, would the Department consider a joint mission with Assistant Secretary level envoys from Europe to press the issue with officials in Dhaka?
- ◆ We know the problems of the Bangladeshi garment industry did not arise over night and will not be solved easily. Congress over the past 2 years has made it clear that the State Department and USAID need to have a long-term commitment to fighting worker exploitation—we know that conditions in other countries will not improve as long as Bangladesh sets the floor for global garment production. Has the State Department adopted a strategic approach to fighting worker exploitation?
- ◆ How is this reflected in the State Department and USAID budget?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka is working closely with our partners in the international community toward greater progress on worker safety and labor rights by engaging with the Ministries of Commerce, Foreign Affairs, and Labor. In Washington, the State Department is working strategically with counterparts in USAID, USTR, and the Department of Labor to provide technical expertise and funding for Bangladesh. Together with the EU we are exploring the options for a joint high level meeting in Dhaka to follow up on the commitments Bangladesh made in the EU-U.S.-Bangladesh-International Labor Organization (ILO) Sustainability Compact. We will continue to use the Compact and the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Action Plan to urge the Government of Bangladesh to ensure free association and protect workers' rights and safety.

Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal regularly raises labor issues in her meetings with senior government officials, including her visit to Dhaka in November 2014 and during the visit of Foreign Minister Ali in February 2015, and will continue to do so on future trips to Dhaka. Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs Charles H. Rivkin traveled to Bangladesh in November 2014 to encourage labor, business, and government leaders to address labor rights. Newly appointed State Department Special Representative for International Labor Affairs, Sarah Fox, will play an important role to promote workers' rights and improve economic security and working conditions, and stands ready to visit Bangladesh as needed.

In accordance with FY14 appropriations legislation, the State Department, through our Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Rights (DRL), and USAID have allocated funding for programs to carry out a strategy based primarily on a 2014 joint USAID-Department of State-Department of Labor assessment to address worker exploitation. USAID is in the process of evaluating proposals for a new \$5 million 3-year "Workers' Empowerment Program" on labor concerns such as protection of labor organizers, workplace safety, mitigation of environmental hazards, and lack of enforcement for accurate and timely payment of wages. The \$3.2 million USAID Global Labor Program trained workers and provide legal and technical assistance on labor laws and organizing, while \$4.7 million from USAID and

the Department of Labor supports the ILO's efforts to improve workers' rights and factor safety. DRL is reviewing submissions for a program to promote core labor standards, including occupational safety and health, in Bangladesh.

Beyond Bangladesh, the U.S. Government globally advances freedom of association and respect for internationally recognized labor rights by promoting inclusive economic growth, supporting freedom of association and healthy industrial relations systems, pursuing trade policies that support more widely shared prosperity, and advocating for business to respect human rights.

Question. What further steps can we take to ensure a more stable operating environment for international civil society groups in Pakistan?

Answer. The ability of civil society groups to operate in a predictable, transparent, and legal basis in Pakistan is important for Pakistan's stability and democratic growth, and is an issue we take very seriously. A handful of U.S.-based INGOs have sought U.S. intervention with the Ministry of Finance's Economic Affairs Division (EAD), which is responsible for implementing the Government of Pakistan's relatively new policy on international nongovernmental organization (INGO) registration that came into force in 2013. In recent meetings with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar, I raised issues faced by INGOs. Other U.S. officials, including Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Feldman and Ambassador Olson, have also raised specific concerns, including the slow registration process and the need for timely issuances of No Objection Certificates (NOCs), with relevant Pakistani officials on a number of occasions over the last several months. The Department, in all appropriate channels, will continue to engage on this issue.

While the registration process is unacceptably slow, it is moving. As of late February, the Pakistani Government has finalized memoranda of understanding with 19 out of 59 INGOs that have applied under the 2013 Registration Policy. While it is likely all INGOs are undergoing additional scrutiny under the current registration process, we have no reason to believe the Pakistani Government is targeting specific INGOs only due to their particular work in-country. Pakistani officials have also stated this position clearly to us, in response to our specific questions. The bureaucracy associated with the new policy has absolutely resulted in a slowdown in the registration process for all INGOs operating in Pakistan. We recognize the importance of this issue, will monitor further developments as they unfold, maintain close contact with affected INGOs, and continue to work with like-minded countries to push for a positive resolution.

Question. With the U.S.–Pakistan partnership now on better footing and the war in Afghanistan over, it would seem the administration's need to maintain the status quo with Uzbekistan has diminished. As you know, that country has a particularly appalling record on religious freedom and human rights, which has led the State Department designating it a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) annually since 2006. Despite the tools available, there's been no further action outside the annual designation due to a waiver that's been in place since January 2009. In light of the larger geopolitical changes, how do you justify the continued use of this waiver given that Uzbekistan still regularly arrests, imprisons, and tortures people for the peaceful exercise of their religious beliefs?

Answer. The United States has enduring national security interests in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, that go beyond the effort to stabilize Afghanistan. We seek to ensure that the region does not become a safe haven for terrorists that could threaten the United States. As with the rest of the Central Asian states, we support Uzbekistan's independence and sovereignty, and would like to see it develop as a stable and prosperous nation, better integrated into the broader region. Our strongly held belief is that these goals can only be achieved if Uzbekistan also develops a more open, accountable, and democratic system, that respects fundamental human rights, including the right of its citizens to worship freely. For this reason, we constantly raise human rights concerns with the highest levels of the Government of Uzbekistan.

CPC designations and accompanying sanctions are a valuable tool to advance our religious freedom agenda, but in addition to sanctions, there are many other tools at our disposal, such as our bilateral and multilateral engagement. We frequently recommend policy and legislative changes, and offer our support to achieve these changes. Progress has been very slow, but Uzbekistan is aware of our priorities and that, without progress, we cannot realize the full potential of our bilateral relationship. Religious freedom equities are an integral component of our U.S.-Uzbekistan Annual Bilateral Consultations, where we discuss opportunities for progress in the

coming year. This year, we anticipate some exchanges that should allow us to discuss the technical aspects of our recommendations in further detail.

One recent positive development was the release of a number of religious prisoners in February 2015 as part of Uzbekistan's annual humanitarian amnesty, including journalist Khayrullo Khamidov, whose case has been mentioned in the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report. Additionally, based on the latest reports from the human rights community, we have also heard reports of up to 50 religious prisoners released in this year's general amnesty.

On July 28, 2014, the Secretary of State waived sanctions for Uzbekistan pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, determining that "the important national interest of the United States requires the exercise of such waiver authority." Though our relations with Pakistan have improved since the disruption of the supply lines for our troops in Afghanistan in 2012, it is critical that the United States maintain alternative routes for supplies to and from Afghanistan for as long U.S. troops remain on the ground there. Although the U.S. combat mission has concluded, we continue to have roughly 10,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan supporting the NATO mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces (ANSDF). It is also important that the United States maintain the ability to support the ANSDF with supplies and equipment. Uzbekistan remains a vital link in the Northern Distribution Network, and as such, is an important partner in the region.

Question. Overall declining funding levels for democracy and governance assistance by USAID—from \$2.2 billion in FY 2009 to \$1.4 billion in FY 2014—are deeply concerning. It is good to see that this year's budget includes a \$1 billion initiative to address root causes of social, political, and economic instability in Latin America, including democracy, human rights and governance (DRG) funding as well as proposed doubling of the DRG budget for Africa from FY 2014 levels. In advance of FY 2016, the administration is now determining the FY 2015 653(b) level and we hope to see \$1.8 billion for DRG funding which is the level that was provided for the Omnibus appropriations bill. If the global decline is not reversed, the United States will forfeit its leadership role on democracy issues, resulting in further democratic setbacks in the developing world. Our overall foreign aid objectives are going to suffer unless our programming reflects the direct linkages between political and economic development.

- ◆ What levels do you expect to see for global DRG funding through the FY16 request? How would you propose to ensure to match these resources with the areas where they can make the greatest impact in mitigating crises and solidifying democratic progress?

Answer. For FY 2016, the administration has requested \$2.9 billion for global DRG assistance, the same as the FY 2014 request, but an increase of nearly \$1.0 billion (50 percent) over the FY 2014 Actuals, reflecting a strong support for democracy, human rights, and governance around the world. As in past years, once the FY 2016 appropriation is finalized, the Department of State and USAID will develop an allocation of FY 2016 resources that balances foreign policy priorities, including DRG programs, while ensuring we have met statutory congressional sector directives included within the bill. In the past, annual appropriations bills have reduced funding for the key foreign assistance accounts that support DRG programs, which has made it difficult to fully fund DRG programs included within the President's Request.

When formulating the FY 2016 request, the administration leveraged knowledge from experts to match resources to areas where strategies have identified opportunities to make the most impact. We also apply this analysis to develop 653(a) allocations for DRG programs to ensure that available funds are used in the highest priority and highest impact areas.

We know that it requires many years of strategic effort on the part of countries, with the assistance and support of the United States and other nations, to achieve well-functioning democracies and market-based economies. The FY 2016 DRG funding request corresponds to the reality that a country's success in democracy and governance is a crucial underpinning to its security, its development, and to our initiatives. More robust democracy programs will be better placed to promote democratic institutions, support transparent and accountable governments, and protect and expand civil and political rights and freedoms around the world.

To ensure that resources are matched with areas that will have the greatest impact in mitigating crises and solidifying democratic progress, each overseas mission creates a whole-of-government, multiyear Integrated Country Strategy, a coordinated and collaborative effort among all U.S. Government agencies in each mission that incorporates the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy. These

strategies enable us to align foreign assistance programming to the specific needs and challenges of a country, reflect the development agenda of the host nation itself, and align U.S. efforts with host nation, international, and other bilateral donor programs working in the country. Nearly every strategic planning document includes a country-specific DRG strategy that takes into account the particular country context, resources, political system, key actors and institutions, and other relevant factors that may influence the determination of the most appropriate approach to solidifying democratic progress.

RESPONSES OF JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Ukraine.—Corruption has been a central concern of the Ukrainian people since the beginning of protests in 2013. Western nations have provided substantial support to the Ukrainian Government, but we have seen little movement from the European Union or others to help the Ukrainians tackle this issue.

- ◆ What do you believe the European Union and the United States can do to help the Ukrainians begin to tackle this endemic problem?

Answer. The Ukrainian Government has set an ambitious reform agenda in response to the economic crisis brought on by Russian aggression and decades of corrupt mismanagement. We will continue our diplomatic engagement with the Government of Ukraine, partners, and the international donor community to assist Ukraine in implementing its reform agenda and to fight corruption.

We are providing \$38 million in assistance to help Ukraine counter corruption and strengthen the rule of law. This includes deploying technical advisers for reform of the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs; support for the new anticorruption agencies (National Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Anti-Corruption Bureau), reform of the Prosecutor General's Office and recovery of stolen assets; police reform and the establishment of the new Patrol Police; civil society and media to monitor and publicize the government's anticorruption efforts. In addition to these efforts, we are also providing technical advisors to the financial sector and the state oil and gas company.

We are working with European partners through international financial institutions to help Ukraine address corruption by conditioning financial support on reforms and to involve Ukraine more closely in multilateral institutions that counter corruption and offer guidance on reforms and best practices. In addition, the EU bases its anticorruption efforts on the principles of openness, accountability, and effectiveness, and is providing a total of €365 million in development assistance over the period of 2014–2020 to support Ukraine's transition, including anticorruption efforts. The European Commission also is committed to helping Ukraine build institutions that promote a healthy social contract between the people and accountable government at all levels by fighting corruption. Among other things, the Commission is discussing with Ukrainian authorities the creation of a joint, independent body to investigate fraud and corruption-related matters.

Question. In recent months, we have seen an increasingly assertive Russia challenge our Eastern European allies, from kidnapping an Estonian officer on Estonian soil, warning Latvian officials of “unfortunate consequences” for alleged mistreatment of ethnic Russians, increasing probes by Russian military aircraft of NATO countries' airspace, to holding extensive military exercises along the borders of NATO countries.

- ◆ Do you believe Russia has violated the NATO-Russia Founding Act with these and other provocative actions?
- ◆ Is President Putin's strategic objective to undermine the credibility of NATO's Article V guarantee?

Answer. The greatest responsibility of the NATO alliance is to protect and defend our territories and our populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

If President Putin's goal is to undermine NATO's credibility, he has failed. NATO's actions in the face of Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine and elsewhere in the region demonstrate the allies are united, our commitment to Article 5 remains ironclad, and we are ready and able to defeat any attack against any of the 28 allies.

At the September NATO summit in Wales, allied leaders agreed to measures to ensure NATO will be able to respond quickly and effectively to current and future threats to the NATO space, wherever those threats may arise. Allied leaders also decided that in view of Russia's continuing aggression against Ukraine and its

breach of the commitments it made under the NATO-Russia Founding Act, NATO will continue to suspend all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia; the sole exception to the suspension is political dialogue that is first and foremost about the situation in Ukraine.

Question. European Energy Security.—While South Stream was cancelled by Gazprom, there is still a need to assure a more diverse supply of energy sources for Europe away from Russia. What sources and routes do you believe provide the best opportunity to increase European energy security?

Answer. Energy security in Europe has been a long-standing U.S. foreign policy priority. Efforts to establish the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline in the 1990s, steadfast support for a Southern Gas Corridor in recent years, and our current work to assist Ukraine end the gas crisis with Russia and address Ukraine's immediate and long-term energy needs attest to our commitment.

We continue to advocate for increased energy security in Europe through diversification of fuel types, supply sources, and delivery routes. We advocate a project-based approach to energy diversification in Europe; our top priorities include: the completion of the southern Corridor to bring gas from Azerbaijan to Europe, the construction of the Greece-Bulgaria Interconnector which would allow Bulgaria, and possibly also Serbia, Romania, and Hungary, to access to non-Russian pipeline gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) via Greece, an LNG terminal in Croatia, and completion of interconnections to interconnect Baltic electricity infrastructure with Sweden and Poland.

We also support full implementation of the EU's Third Energy Package, which provides a legal basis for deeper power and gas sector integration in Europe, and we are following the EU's new Energy Union proposals with interest.

Additional information:

- Vice President Biden noted the strong role of U.S. energy diplomacy and the need for Europe to identify and build the most important infrastructure projects in his November 22, 2014, speech in Istanbul (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/22/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-european-energy-security-atlantic-council>).
- In the Joint Statement of the U.S.–EU Energy Council on December 3, 2014, Secretary Kerry and his European counterparts noted the joint U.S.–EU prioritization of many of these projects (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/12/234638.htm>).

RESPONSES OF JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Last Tuesday, Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro visited Cuba for consultations with the Castro brothers. Upon his return, Maduro began a new wave of repression, including the violent arrest of Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma.

- ◆ What consideration do you give Cuba's continued efforts to subvert democratic institutions in Latin America, including within your review of the state-sponsors of terrorism list, on which Cuba was placed in 1982 precisely for its subversive tactics in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The Department is reviewing Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. We are undertaking a serious review of Cuba's designation based on all relevant, applicable information and the statutory standard. We will not prejudice the outcome of that process.

Question. Do you believe FARC, ELN and ETA should remain listed as "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" by the U.S. Government? If so, how would you justify removing Cuba from the state-sponsors of terrorism list while it continues to provide sanctuary to members of these FTOs? Wouldn't you be putting the cart before the horse?

Answer. The FARC, ELN, and ETA are Foreign Terrorist Organizations as designated by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended.

The Department is reviewing Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST). We are undertaking a serious review of Cuba's designation based on all relevant, applicable information and the statutory standard. We will not prejudice the outcome of that process.

Question. February 24 marked the 19th anniversary of the shoot-down of two civilian aircraft over international waters by Cuban MiG fighter jets, which resulted

in the murder of three Americans and a permanent resident of the United States. This shoot-down over international waters has been named an act of state terrorism, including by the U.S. Congress. A 2001 federal indictment remains open for three senior Cuban military officials for the murder of these Americans.

♦ Do you think Cuba should be removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list prior to these senior Cuban officials facing justice for an act of state terrorism that resulted in the murder of three Americans?

Answer. The Department is reviewing Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. We are undertaking a serious review of Cuba's designation based on all relevant, applicable information and the statutory standard. We will not prejudge the outcome of that process.

Question. In the last two weekends, over 300 Cuban dissidents have been arrested by the Castro regime. Yet, you have issued no condemnation. Can you explain if this silence is because you don't want to "offend" the Castro regime before the new rounds of talks this week or is such silence part of the administration's new Cuba policy?

Answer. We frequently speak out on human rights issues in Cuba and other countries, and we will continue to do so. The Department is constantly monitoring reports of arrests of human rights activists. Human rights are central to our discussions with the Cuban Government and we continue to press for an end to practices that contravene international human rights commitments in our conversations with the Cuban Government.

We have no illusions that the Cuban Government will change its behavior overnight. At the same time, we are convinced that, through a policy of sustained engagement, we can more effectively stand up for our values and help the Cuban people help themselves.

Question. Secretary Kerry, would you provide our office with written confirmation that the U.S.'s Cuba democracy programs will continue to be executed independently from the Castro regime—as mandated by law—pursuant to the administration's changes in U.S.-Cuba policy?

Answer. We will continue to use U.S. foreign assistance funds to support democratic principles, human rights groups, and the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba and to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of political repression and their families. Our efforts are aimed at empowering independent civil society and promoting the independence of the Cuban people and reducing their reliance on the Cuban state, if they so choose.

Question. Will the United States guarantee the direct participation of Cuba's independent civil society in the Summit of the Americas scheduled in April in Panama?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the participation of independent civil society from throughout the hemisphere in the summit, including from Cuba. We are working closely with the Panamanian Government, the host of the 2015 summit of the Americas, to ensure it reflects our hemisphere's continued efforts to support democracy, promote human rights and social inclusion, and empower an active, independent, and vibrant civil society.

The Department has held extensive discussions with the Panamanian hosts and other governments on the need to focus on core democratic principles and the role of civil society at the summit, and have established a Civil Society Forum that promotes an agenda ensuring meaningful engagement among government leaders and civil society representatives. The United States, Panama, and our key partners are committed to the participation of independent Cuban civil society at the summit, along with civil society from all other countries in the hemisphere. Panama has made clear that the Organization of American States(OAS) registration guidelines for civil society organizations do not apply to the summit; therefore, governments are unable to block—in effect—the registration of NGOs or social actors to attend the summit. Any civil society representatives may apply for registration, regardless of their registration status before the OAS. Cuban civil society groups have already begun applying to attend the Civil Society Forum.

Question. Can you please provide an update on whether Argentina has done anything to normalize relations with its private creditors, and if so, what it has done?

Answer. Following its approximately \$100 billion sovereign default in 2001, the Argentine Government made attempts to normalize its relationship with its private creditors. In all, an estimated 92 percent of its bondholders participated in debt restructurings in 2005 and 2010.

Argentina has failed to agree on terms with creditors who did not exchange their bonds, including investors who initiated litigation against Argentina in U.S. Federal Courts. The United States is not a party to that litigation, which remains active, nor to any discussions with the special master appointed by the Federal District Court to conduct and preside over settlement negotiations.

RESPONSES OF JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. On October 2, 2014, I led eight of my Senate colleagues in a letter to you urging the United States to resume funding for the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. While I was pleased that the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request proposes an increase in funding for U.N. Women, I was disappointed it did not include funding for the Trust Fund.

- ◆ Can you address why the administration did not include funding for the Trust Fund in its budget request?
- ◆ Does the administration support the resumption of funding for the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in fiscal year 2016?

Answer. The administration strongly supports U.N. efforts to end violence against women, including the work of U.N. Women and the U.N. Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The creation of U.N. Women in 2010 was part of the U.N. reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merged and built on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the U.N. system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment. U.N. Women works for, among other things, the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

For this reason, following the creation of U.N. Women, the Department has focused on supporting efforts to eliminating violence against women through our annual contributions to U.N. Women's core budget. So while the FY 2016 IO&P request does not include a contribution to the U.N. Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, our support for eliminating violence against women and girls is reflected in our request for \$7.7 million for U.N. Women. The FY 2016 IO&P request for U.N. Women is an increase of \$200,000 from the level that the Appropriations Committees specified in the Statement of Managers explaining agreement by House-Senate conferees on the FY 2015 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act.

Question. Azerbaijan has threatened to shoot down any aircraft that fly into the airport in Nagorno-Karabakh. What has the State Department done to respond to this threat and to any new acts of aggression from Azerbaijan?

Answer. The United States opposes any steps by the sides that would escalate tensions or increase the risk of violence in the region. As a cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, along with Russia and France, the United States has consistently urged the sides bilaterally and through the Minsk Group process to avoid provocations and threats of violence. We remain committed to working with the sides to reach a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Question. I was proud when in August 2012 President Obama announced the release of the first-ever U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally. The Strategy states that it will provide "Federal agencies with a set of concrete goals and actions to be implemented and monitored over the course of the next 3 years" and that "At the end of the 3-year timeframe, the agencies will evaluate the progress made and chart a course forward."

- ◆ With the 3-year deadline fast approaching, how will the administration continue to build on and enhance efforts to combat gender-based violence?
- ◆ Will you commit to updating and continuing to implement the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally after the expiration of its 3-year timeframe?

Answer. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) is a cornerstone of the Obama administration's commitment to advancing gender equality. The United States recognizes that GBV significantly hinders the ability of individuals to fully participate in and contribute to their families, communities, and societies—economically, politically, and socially. This is why the administration launched the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally in August 2012.

In December 2013, the White House launched three interagency committees to implement the strategy and the accompanying Executive order from President

Obama. The Department of State and USAID are playing a leading role in these committees in collaboration with other government agencies. The committees are currently working to identify pilot countries, which will be critical to ensuring that GBV prevention and response efforts are holistic, multisector, and based on best practices. Department of State and USAID are also working on an evaluation of the strategy, which we hope to submit to the White House later in 2015. The Department continues to be committed to preventing and responding to GBV globally and will look to incorporate lessons learned into future updates to the Strategy.

Question. How will you work to ensure that this year's comprehensive review of the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security includes an evaluation of the metrics being used to monitor and evaluate the State Department's implementation plan?

- ◆ How will the State Department's review of the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security incorporate the perspectives of local women-led civil society organizations that have received U.S. support to evaluate the strategy's effectiveness?

Answer. Recognizing the influential role women can play in advancing international security, the Department of State is fully committed to supporting the United States unqualified commitment to protect and empower women in countries threatened and affected by war and conflict, violence, and insecurity. Given the Department's leadership role in U.S. diplomatic engagement, its foreign assistance programming, and robust relationships with civil society across the globe, it remains a key U.S. Government implementer of the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP).

In line with Executive Order 13595, the Department and several other interagency actors, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Defense (DOD), will lead a periodic review of the NAP, informed by consultations with women and relevant civil society organizations throughout 2015.

Moreover, the year 2015 marks several opportunities to take stock of global commitments on gender equality, development, and conflict resolution. In addition to an interagency review the NAP, several multilateral events and processes will elevate gender in international security and development in 2015, including the 15th anniversary of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the ongoing process to develop a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (to succeed the Millennium Development Goals). Given this backdrop, 2015 is truly the year for the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda—and it must be a year of resounding affirmation that including women in decisionmaking is not just a nice thing to do; it is the strategic thing to do.

The Department plans to leverage the review to identify gaps, challenges, and recommendations regarding NAP implementation. An important part of this process will be a survey of metrics used to monitor, evaluate, and track implementation—measuring not only foreign assistance activities but also diplomatic engagement.

Additionally, the Department accords high priority to incorporating the perspectives of international civil society and grassroots civil society groups, especially women, in countries affected by conflict and insecurity in its efforts to advance peace and security. In collaboration with USAID and DOD, the Department has already launched consultations with international civil society constituencies and U.N. actors, including women, and plans to host further in-depth, issue-specific consultations with international civil society groups and grassroots civil society in conflict-affected countries to inform a review of the NAP.

Question. A legacy of this administration has been its focus on women and girls as a cornerstone of foreign policy. I was pleased that the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request continues to prioritize investments in international family planning and reproductive health.

- ◆ How is the United States working to expand access to voluntary family planning services as part of broader efforts to support the goals of equality and empowerment of women and girls worldwide?

Answer. With the help of Congress, the United States continues to be the largest bilateral donor for voluntary family planning around the world. This further demonstrates the U.S. Government's firm commitment to helping men and women across the globe meet their reproductive health needs. Enabling an individual or couple to decide whether, when, and how often to have children is vital to safe motherhood, healthy families, and prosperous communities. USAID-supported research shows that voluntary family planning could prevent up to 30 percent of the

estimated 287,000 maternal deaths that occur every year, because women can delay their first pregnancy and space later pregnancies at the safest intervals.

Through USAID, the U.S. Government advances and supports voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs in more than 45 countries around the globe. As a core partner in the Family Planning 2020 Initiative, USAID is committed to working with the global community to reach an additional 120 million women and girls with family planning information, commodities, and services by 2020. These services empower individuals to choose the timing and spacing of their pregnancies, bear children during their healthiest years, prevent unintended pregnancies, and nurture healthier families and communities.

The U.S. Government will continue to show leadership on this issue in multilateral fora such as the U.N. Commission on Population and Development, the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, and the U.N. Human Rights Council. We persistently make the argument at these venues and elsewhere that sexual and reproductive health services, especially voluntary family planning, are essential to promote sustainable economic development, advance gender equality, and contribute to the U.S. Government's goals of Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths and Creating an AIDS-free Generation.

Additionally, the U.S. Government actively supports the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA), the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and many other development and humanitarian organizations to provide reproductive health services in crisis settings. This includes training staff, offering community education, establishing client followup, providing a variety of family planning methods, and maintaining a contraceptive supply chain system. These life-saving interventions help women, girls, and entire communities recover from crises and conflict.

Furthermore, as we take stock of the 20-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action and focus on the 20-year review of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the review of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, the U.S. Government will continue to work toward advancing these goals.

RESPONSE OF JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Each year, an estimated 22 million women and girls have an unsafe abortion, almost all in the developing world. As a result, the World Health Organization estimates that 47,000 lose their lives, and millions more suffer serious injuries. In places where women cannot get a safe abortion, they end their unwanted pregnancies unsafely. Furthermore, according to WHO, legal restrictions, in addition to other barriers, contribute to the likelihood of women seeking unsafe abortion care. The Helms amendment, appended to the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act in 1973, prohibits the use of U.S. funds for the performance of abortion "as a method of family planning." Under the law, foreign assistance funds could legally be used to support abortion services in the cases of rape, incest, or where the pregnancy threatens a woman's life—as these cases do not constitute a family planning act. However, relevant U.S. Government agencies, including the State Department and USAID, will not fund abortion services in these cases, even where local law allows it. This is particularly disheartening for the 30 million women and girls around the world who access U.S.-funded programs for their reproductive health care.

- ◆ What steps is the administration taking to apply the Helms amendment correctly and allow foreign assistance funds to support abortion services in the cases of rape, incest, or if the life of the woman is in danger due to pregnancy?

Answer. The administration takes this issue very seriously. We know the value of providing survivors of sexual violence with much-needed sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial services and believe it essential to helping them recover from trauma so that they can rebuild their lives and their communities. As such, the administration regularly reviews our policies to ensure we are taking all appropriate measures to improve the health and status of women and girls around the globe, including survivors of sexual violence.

RESPONSES OF JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. You recently named Randy Berry to serve in the newly established position of "Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons" at the Department of State. I have expressed the need for such a position for some time, having reintro-

duced S. 302 the “International Human Rights Defense Act of 2015” on January 29, 2015, with support from 26 original cosponsors. I am pleased that the position is coming to fruition.

- ◆ What resources are now available to support this position that will ensure foreign policy includes a coordinated effort to defend LGBT rights around the world?
- ◆ How many full-time employees will be dedicated to the Special Envoy’s efforts?
- ◆ What additional resources do you anticipate will be needed in the future to ensure that the Special Envoy is adequately equipped to advance LGBT rights abroad?

Answer. The Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons will coordinate the Department’s diplomatic engagement on advancing the human rights of LGBT persons. Within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, four employees are engaged full-time on LGBT issues and approximately a dozen other staff spend a significant portion of their time on these issues. There are numerous others within the Department and at our overseas missions who also work to advance this agenda in the context of the U.S.’s bilateral and multilateral relationships. The Special Envoy will continue and deepen the efforts already underway in the State Department, including coordinating and shepherding implementation of the Department’s strategy on human rights for LGBT persons, adopted in 2011, and the Presidential Memorandum issued later that year. He will also work to strengthen our relationship with like-minded countries, including through coordinated diplomacy and programming, and with those governments that see things differently. The Department’s work with LGBT persons, allies, and activists abroad will be an important component as well.

The Special Envoy will have a direct role in leading assistance efforts as part of the DRL-managed Global Equality Fund, which since its founding in 2011 has programmed over \$17 million in 50 countries. He will play an integral part in identifying needs of LGBT communities and developing appropriate programmatic responses. While a number of governments, including our own, have made substantial contributions to the Fund, the number of viable program applications well exceeds the budget available, so the Special Envoy will also seek additional resources as part of his overall outreach.

Question. The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is regarded as one of the most successful global health programs in history. It is currently helping to provide lifesaving HIV treatment to 7.7 million people and has provided HIV testing and counseling for more than 56.7 million people. The UNAIDS has set up some laudable targets that call for 90 percent success rates in three categories by the year 2020:

- (1) 90 percent of all people living with HIV should know their status;
 - (2) 90 percent of all those who are diagnosed HIV positive to be on antiretroviral treatment (ART); and
 - (3) 90 percent of those on antiretroviral treatment should have an undetectable viral load.
- ◆ Do you expect that the current U.S. investments will achieve the UNAIDS target of 90–90–90 in that timeframe? If not, what is needed to meet these goals by 2020?

Answer. Achieving the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) global goals of 90–90–90 by 2020 requires a shared responsibility by partner countries, PEPFAR, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund). PEPFAR is shifting the way it does business to help reach the UNAIDS ambitious 90–90–90 global targets, have the greatest impact, and accelerate progress toward an AIDS-free generation. PEPFAR can best contribute to achieving the UNAIDS targets of 90–90–90 and controlling the epidemic by employing a data-driven approach that strategically focuses resources on geographic areas, at the subnational level and populations that have the highest burden of HIV/AIDS.

In FY 2016, PEPFAR’s efforts will be driven by five action agendas: Impact, Efficiency, Sustainability, Partnership, and Human Rights. These agendas—combined with PEPFAR’s overriding commitment to transparency, accountability, and impact—will continue to guide our work.

PEPFAR will focus on doing the right things, in the right places, and at the right time to control the HIV/AIDS epidemic and, ultimately, achieve an AIDS-free generation. This will entail using the best available data to direct PEPFAR resources toward bringing evidence-based interventions (e.g., ART, prevention of mother-to-child transmission [PMTCT], voluntary medical male circumcision [VMMC], and condoms) to scale for populations at greatest risk and in geographic areas of great-

est HIV incidence. PEPFAR will prioritize reaching scale quickly and with quality because an expanding HIV epidemic is not financially sustainable.

Question. I continue to be concerned by the number of families in the United States who are trying to bring home their legally adopted children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo but are being denied exit permits. Secretary Kerry has engaged on this matter personally, and yet our partners in the DRC Government have made limited progress on the existing cases.

- ◆ Please explain what steps we are taking to resolve this issue, including any consideration of limiting the issuance of U.S. visas for visiting members of the DRC Government?

Answer. Our strategy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been threefold. First, we have pressed the DRC Government at every opportunity and at the very highest levels, including during Secretary Kerry's meetings with President Kabila last May and August, to lift the suspension immediately for families who have already completed the adoption process in good faith under existing Congolese adoption laws. Second, we have pressed the DRC Government to consider the issuance of exit permits on an expedited basis for those adopted children requiring urgent, life-saving medical care abroad. Third, to address Congolese concerns about significant flaws in their current system, we have offered technical consultations aimed to improve the Congolese intercountry adoption process.

Since the start of the suspension in September 2013, our efforts have led to the issuance of exit permits to more than 30 families that had completed their adoptions prior to the start of the suspension or had children with life-threatening medical conditions that required immediate treatment outside of the DRC. However, the list of families adopting in the DRC despite the suspension continues to grow, and the Department will not cease its efforts until all the families receive relief.

Ambassador Swan and the team at Embassy Kinshasa continue to engage regularly on this issue with the DRC Government as well as with the families. We are pressing the DRC Government to hold a previously promised interministerial meeting to address the adoption suspension, including the question of how to manage already completed adoptions once new adoption legislation is enacted. Embassy Kinshasa recently submitted to the DRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs a list of children whose adoptions were final prior to the suspension. The accompanying diplomatic note reiterates that our families have already legally adopted their children, and that the rigorous process and investigations completed by the State Department and USCIS mitigate any deficiency in the DRC system. The note requests that these children receive exit permits to join their adoptive families in the United States immediately. In December 2014, Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Ambassador Susan Jacobs, led a delegation to the DRC to discuss pending adoption cases and proposed adoption reforms. In March 2015, the State Department and USCIS plan to send a followup technical team to consult on adoption reforms in the DRC and to encourage the DRC Government to pass and implement new adoption-related legislation.

The Department continues to press the DRC Government at every opportunity to lift the suspension. We do not believe unilateral restrictions of visas for Congolese officials would be effective in helping to resolve the complex issues underlying the adoptions suspension and could, in fact, trigger reciprocal restrictions against U.S. officials seeking to visit the DRC. We also have specific treaty obligations for individuals traveling to the United Nations. Broad visa restrictions imposed by the DRC in response to U.S. restrictions on visas could harm vulnerable populations by affecting the travel of U.S. aid workers and even the adoptive families themselves, who need Congolese visas to visit their children.

Question. 2015 marks the final year of the Millennium Development Goals. While we have made incredible and important progress in the last 15 years, there is still so much work to be done—especially to improve the health and well-being of women. The world has not yet achieved MDG5 to improve maternal health by reducing maternal mortality and providing universal access to reproductive health.

- ◆ How are U.S. global health programs working to deliver on this unfinished business of preventing maternal mortality and expanding reproductive health access?

Answer. USAID and other U.S. Government global health programs remain committed to ending preventable maternal mortality and increasing access to reproductive health services. Maternal and reproductive health programs are key to achieving the U.S. Government's goal of Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths. USAID focuses its maternal and reproductive health programs in countries where the need is the greatest. With the support of Congress, the United States continues

to be the world's largest bilateral donor for international family planning. USAID supports voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs in more than 45 countries around the globe, and to date, has helped 24 countries increase their modern contraceptive use and decrease fertility rates to levels that qualify them for graduation from family planning assistance. Our 24 priority countries for maternal health and voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs represent 70 percent of the burden of maternal deaths, and approximately half of the unmet need for family planning, worldwide. In the USAID 24 priority countries, the percentage of births in a facility have increased from 20 percent in 1990 to 47 percent in 2013, and skilled birth attendance in both home and facility deliveries has increased from 32 percent in 1990 to 60 percent in 2014.

The Millennium Development Goals have an end date of 2015, and the international community is in the process of developing the Post-2015 Development Agenda—likely to be called the Sustainable Development Goals, which will be adopted at a Presidential summit in September 2015 in New York. The U.S. Government has strongly advocated for a focus on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as part of any stand-alone gender goal, recognizing the crucial link with maternal health outcomes. USAID has aligned with partners to ensure that maternal and reproductive health continue to be global development priorities. USAID, with other international organizations, has proposed two key benchmarks for maternal and reproductive health to be achieved by 2030: (1) a global maternal mortality ratio of less than 70 per 100,000 live births, with no country level greater than 140 per 100,000 live births; and (2) at least 75 percent of demand for family planning is satisfied with modern contraceptives in all countries.

USAID will continue to harness proven high-impact practices and innovative approaches to: empower individuals to choose the timing and spacing of their pregnancies; bear children during their healthiest years in a clean, safe, and respectful environment; prevent unintended pregnancies; and nurture healthier families and communities. In addition to our maternal health and voluntary family planning programs, USAID supports a range of related reproductive health interventions, including post-abortion care, transformation of gender norms, elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting, and fistula prevention and repair.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. Lethal Assistance to Ukraine.—On February 3, 2015, I joined 14 U.S. Senators in sending a bipartisan letter to President Obama on Ukraine. It explains that Ukraine needs an immediate infusion of effective defensive military equipment including antitank weapons, counterbattery radars, armored Humvees and increased training.

The Ukraine Freedom Support Act, which passed Congress and was signed into law in December, authorizes military equipment to Ukraine.

On February 21, 2015, you responded to a question about lethal assistance to Ukraine by stating, “No decision has been made by the President at this time, and I think we have to see what happens in the next few days with respect to the events that are taking place now on the ground.”

- ◆ In light of the recent events on the ground, is the administration now willing to provide lethal assistance to the Ukraine? If not, what additional economic sanctions does the administration plan to impose on Russia?

Answer. The United States remains deeply concerned by Russia's continued violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its continuing occupation of Crimea, and its support for pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine. Russia and the separatists it backs continue to fail to fulfill the commitments they made in the September Minsk agreements and the February 12 implementation plan.

The United States has provided significant nonlethal defensive security assistance to Ukraine to help address the crisis, committing over \$120 million in 2014, but our focus remains on finding a diplomatic solution. We continue to monitor the situation closely and remain in constant contact with our Ukrainian counterparts on our next steps in defense cooperation.

If Russia fails to implement Minsk agreements, there will be further consequences. If, on the other hand, Russia and the separatists it backs fully implement their commitments under the Minsk agreements of September 2014 and the commitments under the February 12 implementation plan, we will roll back significant sanctions. Fulfilling Minsk commitments includes the complete withdrawal of all heavy weapons and foreign fighters from Ukraine, full and unfettered access by international monitors to separatist-controlled territory to verify cease-fire and with-

drawal compliance, and the release of all hostages. Crucially, the conditions for rolling back sanctions also include restoring to Kiev the control of its side of the border with Russia.

Question. International Climate Change Negotiations.—In November 2014, President Obama announced a pledge of \$3 billion to create a brand new Global Climate Fund. His fiscal year 2016 budget request asks for \$500 million to start funding that pledge.

- ◆ a. What was the process the administration used for determining the appropriate commitment to the Global Climate Fund? What consultations did the administration have with Congress on this commitment?

Answer (a). The United States pledged to contribute \$3 billion to the GCF, not to exceed 30 percent of total confirmed pledges to the GCF. The GCF has so far received pledges totaling \$10.2 billion from 31 countries, including eight non-traditional donors: Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama, Peru, and Republic of Korea. More are expected to pledge in the future. The U.S. pledge currently represents 29% of all pledges. We expect that to decrease as more contributors make pledges, possibly later this year or in 2016.

The amount of the U.S. commitment to the GCF is calculated to build on prior support to similar multilateral funds (i.e. Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Climate Investment Funds (CIFs)) while remaining within a percentage range traditionally provided by the U.S. to such funds. By way of example, in 2008, the Bush administration spearheaded the establishment of the CIFs, a set of World Bank trust funds with nearly \$8 billion in total contributions, of which \$2 billion was pledged by the Bush administration. The CIFs were intended as a transitional mechanism until the GCF becomes fully operational. Developed countries established the GCF in recognition that the kind of support provided by the CIFs would need to continue and would require a more inclusive governance structure.

Prior to the President's announcement of the pledge, staff from the Department of the Treasury and the Department of State met with HACFO staff to consult on the pledge.

- ◆ b. What impact evaluations have been completed on the previous \$2 billion in U.S. funding for international climate change already provided to the Climate Investment Funds? Why is it responsible for the administration to recommend closing down the current Climate Investment Funds and creating a larger brand new Global Climate Fund if no evaluations have been done on the impact and results of U.S. funding to the current international climate change programs?

Answer (b). The establishment of the GCF was a central provision of the Copenhagen Accord, an important agreement that recognized the need for developing countries to take action to reduce their carbon emissions and combat climate change. In contrast to the Kyoto Protocol, in which only developed countries have emission-reduction obligations, the Copenhagen Accord contains commitments by a wide range of emerging economies, including major emitters like China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia.

The Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) were intended as a transitional mechanism and are expected to sunset once the GCF is fully operational and our obligations to the CIFs are complete. The U.S. has an outstanding \$230 million commitment to the CIFs. Beyond this, the administration is not planning to make additional pledges to the CIFs, and if our FY 2016 request is fully appropriated, we do not plan to make a funding request in FY 2017. Treasury, through the CIF Trust Fund Committees, is already engaged in a discussion with the CIFs' Administrative Unit and Trustee as to when and how to sunset the CIFs. Once the sunset is decided, the CIFs will stop accepting new funds and will only approve new projects to the extent that they have funds on hand.

An independent evaluation of the CIFs was released in June 2014 and is available on the Internet at <http://www.cifevaluation.org>. Because of the early stage of most CIF investments (many of which are of very long duration), the evaluation focused more on institutional issues such as the process for developing country investment plans. We expect further CIF level evaluations to be conducted in the future. Each multilateral development bank that participates in the CIFs is including CIF programs or projects into their evaluation work program.

Question. On August 26 of last year, the New York Times had a story entitled "Obama Pursuing Climate Accord in Lieu of Treaty." The article states, "The Obama administration is working to forge a sweeping international climate change agreement to compel nations to cut their planet-warming fossil fuel emissions, but without ratification from Congress." It also talks about the administration working on

a “politically binding” deal to cut emissions rather than a legally binding treaty that would require approval by two thirds of the Senate.

- ◆ a. What form of an international agreement is the United States pursuing at the international climate change negotiations?

Answer (a). The 2014 decision of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, taken in Lima, Peru, recalls a 2011 decision of the Parties adopted in Durban, South Africa. That decision launched a process to develop a “protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties. . . .”

The Durban mandate makes clear that the Paris agreement is to further the objective of the Convention (i.e., to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate), yet leaves the parties with substantial flexibility regarding its form and the legal nature of its provisions.

At this stage, the international discussions are more focused on the substance of the agreement than on whether it should be a protocol, etc., or whether particular provisions should be legally binding. The United States seeks an agreement that is ambitious in light of the climate challenge; that reflects nationally determined mitigation efforts in line with national circumstances and capabilities; that provides for accountability with respect to such efforts; that takes account of evolving emissions and economic trends; and that promotes adaptation by parties to climate impacts.

- ◆ b. Will the agreement be legally binding on the United States and other countries, including funding commitments for any provision contained within the agreement?

Answer (b). See answer to question (a) above.

- ◆ c. Can the administration enter into a “politically binding” international agreement without congressional approval?

Answer (c). To the extent that the referenced NY Times story used the term “politically binding” to describe a nonlegally binding outcome, it would follow that such an outcome would be within the authority of the executive branch to conclude.

- ◆ d. What state, local governing entity, or community would not be subject to a “politically binding” treaty?

Answer (d). To the extent the question refers to a nonlegally binding outcome, such an outcome would not take the form of a treaty.

- ◆ e. Why would this administration bypass the Senate on any climate change deal?

Answer (e). The appropriate domestic form of the Paris outcome, whether a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force, will depend upon several factors, including its specific provisions.

As Secretary Kerry testified during his confirmation hearing, any international agreement brought into force for the United States will be done so consistent with the United States Constitution.

- ◆ f. If Congress is not going to be allowed to ratify any climate change agreement that results from the Paris negotiations, what role, if any, do you see for Congress to play in this international process?

Answer (f). As noted above, it is an open question whether the Paris outcome will be of a nature that requires Senate approval before the President may ratify it. In any event, the administration will continue to consult with the committee regarding the negotiations.

Question. What progress has been made on the ballistic missile issue? Has Iran even been willing to engage on its missile program?

Answer. The Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) has created time and space for the negotiation of a comprehensive deal that would prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and ensures that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. During these negotiations, all U.N. Security Council resolutions (UNSCR) prohibitions and sanctions related to Iran’s ballistic missile program, as well as relevant U.S. sanctions on Iran’s ballistic missile program, remain in full force.

We have taken up the issue of how to deal with ballistic missiles capable of delivering a nuclear warhead as part of the P5+1 negotiations. This issue has been discussed and will continue to be discussed.

Even as we work to achieve a comprehensive solution, the United States will continue to vigorously enforce all sanctions not covered by the narrow categories of relief provided for under the JPOA. Moreover, we will continue to work with our

allies and partners to enforce the proliferation-related sanctions against Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Question. Democratic Republic of Congo.—In September 2013, the Democratic Republic of Congo stopped issuing exit permits for Congolese children adopted by foreign parents. The suspension of exit permits for legally adopted children is having a terrible impact on hundreds of American families. In fact, there are several families in Wyoming who have shared their experiences with me and are still trying to bring their children home. In July 2014, 167 Members of Congress sent a letter to President Obama asking for his direct engagement on this issue and to press for an expeditious resolution. In October 2014, 183 Members of Congress wrote to the President of the DRC asking to expedite the process of medical fragile children and allowing the hundreds of American families who have legally completed the adoption process to bring their children home.

- ◆ Will you commit to providing the resources and focus needed to resolve this terrible situation?
- ◆ What is the administration's strategy to get these adopted children home to their loving American families?
- ◆ What is being done to ensure that these families are grandfathered into the new adoption legislation being considered by the Parliament of the DRC?

Answer. Our strategy in the DRC has been threefold. First, we have pressed the government at every occasion and at the very highest levels, including during my meetings with President Kabila last May and August, to lift the suspension immediately for families who have already completed the adoption process in good faith under existing Congolese adoption laws. Second, we have pressed the DRC Government to consider the issuance of exit permits on an expedited basis for those adopted children requiring urgent, life-saving medical care abroad. Third, to address Congolese concerns about significant flaws under their current system, we have offered technical consultations aimed to improve the Congolese intercountry adoption process.

Since the start of the suspension in September 2013, our efforts have led to the issuance of exit permits to over 30 families that had completed their adoptions prior to the start of the suspension or had children with life-threatening medical conditions that required immediate treatment outside of the DRC. But the list of families that are adopting in the DRC despite the suspension continues to grow, and the Department will not cease its efforts until all the families receive relief.

Ambassador Swan and the team at Embassy Kinshasa continue to work regularly on this issue with the government as well as with the families. They are currently pressing the DRC Government to hold a previously promised interministerial aimed at addressing the adoption suspension, including the question of how to manage already completed adoptions once new adoption legislation is enacted. Embassy Kinshasa recently submitted to the DRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs a list of children whose adoptions were full and final prior to the enactment of the exit permit suspension. The accompanying diplomatic note reiterates that our families have already legally adopted their children and that the rigorous process and investigations completed by the State Department and USCIS mitigate any deficiency in the DRC system. The note requests that these children receive exit permits to join their adoptive families in the United States immediately. Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Ambassador Susan Jacobs, led a delegation in December to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to discuss pending adoption cases and proposed adoption reforms. In March, the State Department and USCIS plan to send a followup technical team to consult on adoption reforms in the DRC and to encourage the DRC Government to pass and implement new adoption-related legislation. Consular Affairs and Embassy Kinshasa also continue to press for already completed adoption cases to move forward without restarting the DRC process from the beginning.

Question. Accountability Review Board's Recommendations.—In a response to a question for the record during the confirmation process, you stated that "Secretary Clinton accepted all 29 recommendations from the Benghazi Accountability Review Board." You also assured this committee that you would personally oversee the implementation of the Accountability Review Board's recommendation and have your senior leadership make it a top priority.

- ◆ How many of the Accountability Review Board's recommendations have not been completed and why have they not been completed? What budgetary resources are needed to complete those recommendations? What is your timeline and plan to ensure they are completed quickly?

Answer. The Department has closed 26 of 29 Benghazi ARB recommendations and has made significant progress in implementing the remaining 3. One recommenda-

tion is expected to be closed shortly, while the other two involve long-term overseas construction projects. As we move to close these remaining recommendations, we remain focused on the enduring implementation of all closed Benghazi ARB recommendations.

Recommendation 7, which we expect to close shortly, stated, "All State Department and other government agencies' facilities should be collocated when they are in the same metropolitan area, unless a waiver has been approved."

To implement this recommendation, the Department conducted a worldwide review of all facilities to determine which could be collocated and which could not. For those that could not, the Department worked to ensure that a collocation waiver was warranted and on file. It was determined that collocation waivers were needed for several facilities; those waivers are almost completed. Before closing this recommendation, the Department is reviewing its policies, procedures, communications, and training to ensure that the institutional processes are in place to maintain the waiver process going forward.

Implementation of recommendation 20 is still in progress. This recommendation stated, "Diplomatic Security (DS) should upgrade surveillance cameras at high threat, high risk (HTHR) posts for greater resolution, nighttime visibility, and monitoring capability beyond post."

The Department is upgrading all High Threat, High Risk facilities with more modern surveillance cameras. The Department does not require additional funding to implement this recommendation.

The third recommendation that is still in progress is classified. Implementation requires a multiyear construction effort, and design and procurement details are still being assessed. The Department can brief the Congress on implementation in an appropriate location.

Question. What is the total amount spent on professional, educational and cultural exchange programs in fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015 by the U.S. Government?

Answer. The Department of State's FY 2014 Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) was \$576.4 million in FY 2014 and FY 2015 enacted level is \$589.9 million. These figures do not include exchange programs conducted by other agencies, such as USAID, the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture, or the Department of Commerce.

Question. Why is the U.S. Department of State requesting a \$33 million increase in the educational and cultural exchange programs? What gap would this money fill in the current programming?

Answer. As the world becomes ever more networked, and youth movements increasingly influence the course of their nations' policies, the U.S. Government has greater needs and opportunities to reach growing and increasingly activist audiences to advance U.S. policies and exert lasting influence. Exchanges are a powerful tool of foreign policy—often the most effective in reaching those key audiences outside of governments. We can advance many of our highest priority policy goals most substantially with exchanges, for example, in countries and regions undergoing profound transformations. We often don't have enough exchanges capacity to meet the high demand from our own senior policymakers as well as from partner governments, international civil society groups, and the U.S. educational and nonprofit sectors. ECA's FY 2016 request of \$33.2 million is a 5.6-percent increase over last year's budget. Such a level would allow us to continue strong U.S. support for Fulbright, the International Visitor Leadership Program, the Citizen Exchange programs, the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative. It would provide new funding to support a Young Leaders Initiative in the Americas. We also request funding for an Exchanges Rapid Response (ERR) capability to allow ECA to respond quickly when a crisis like Crimea, a transition like the Arab Spring, or a transformation like Burma opens opportunities for the U.S. Government to engage quickly and support policy objectives. The Department of State's exchanges funding is mostly granted out to U.S. partners a year and more in advance of the exchange program. This long lead time does not give us sufficient agility to respond to immediate and critical priorities. This increased funding request also places a high priority on supporting the policy rebalance to Asia.

ECA's FY 2016 request also includes \$66.8 million for Exchanges Support, a \$8.6 million increase from the FY 2015 enacted level. While Congress has generously funded programs, ECA's operational budget has not kept pace and inflation has also eroded the bureau's operational capabilities. In FY 2015, Congress cut ECA's operational budget by \$1.7 million, requiring the bureau to use a great deal of recoveries

money on basic operational expenses. (ECA normally uses the great majority of recoveries to fund pilot or experimental exchanges.) The drastic cut in administrative funding means that ECA does less monitoring of the health and welfare of young participants who come from various corners of the world, less oversight of the contributions of foreign governments to the Fulbright program, less use of new technologies for virtual exchanges, and less interaction with program participants and more ceding of the connections to participants to the U.S. program partners (which decreases the participants' perception that the U.S. Government is responsible for the benefits which accrue from the exchange program).

Question. In order to prepare for a U.S. Department of State reauthorization, please provide the following information regarding the professional, educational, and cultural exchange programs for fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015. Please identify and provide the following information on every academic program, professional and cultural exchange, and youth leadership initiative funded by the U.S. Department of State or jointly with other U.S. agencies.

For each of the programs and exchanges, please provide:

- a. The official name of the program or exchange;
- b. The objective and goal;
- c. Total amount of funding;
- d. Number of participants;
- e. Length of time; and
- f. Countries represented and number of people from each country in the program or exchange.

Answer. The goal of Department of State's exchange programs is to bring Americans together with people from across the world to build lasting relationships that bridge political and cultural divides, in support of U.S. foreign policy. These exchanges range from 10-day professional exchange programs, to 1-year high school exchanges and full graduate degree programs. Please see the two documents attached for details. The first document lists the budget by program for FY 2014 and FY 2015, a description of each program, length of time, number of participants and countries. The second document is a list of exchange participants by country.

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS (ECE)
Detailed Allocation—FY 2014–2015
(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2014	FY 2015	Program Description	Participants*	Length of time	Regions
Academic Programs	\$316,511	\$331,636				
Fulbright Program	\$236,974	\$236,485				
Fulbright Program	\$185,074	\$184,585	The Fulbright Program offers grants to study, teach and conduct research for U.S. citizens to go abroad and for non-U.S. citizens to come to the United States.	8,000	2 weeks to 1 year	Global (150+ countries)
Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program	\$11,000	\$11,000	One-year program of non-degree academic study, leadership training, and professional development for young and mid-career professionals from developing countries.	150	1 year	Global (100+ countries)
Teacher Exchanges	\$10,600	\$10,600	Professional development programs for K-12 teachers focused on improving teaching and language skills, leadership development, and integrating educational best practices	350	2 weeks to 1 year	Global (75 countries)
Study of the U.S. Institutes	\$8,600	\$8,600	Five- to six-week academic programs focusing on U.S. studies for groups of foreign undergraduate students, scholars, and secondary educators.	700	5 to 6 weeks	Global (80 countries)
UCRAD	\$6,800	\$6,800	One semester and academic year scholarships to outstanding undergraduate students from underrepresented sectors in many countries for non-degree full-time study combined with community service internship.	250	1 semester to 1 year	Global (60 countries)

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS (ECE)—Continued
 Detailed Allocation—FY 2014–2015
 (\$ in thousands)

	FY 2014	FY 2015	Program Description	Participants*	Length of time	Regions
Community College Initiative	\$5,900	\$5,900	One-year scholarships at U.S. community colleges to talented, underserved students and young professionals overseas and builds international capacity at U.S. host institutions.	150	1 year	Global (12 countries)
Critical Language Scholarships	\$9,000	\$9,000	Intensive summer language institutes in thirteen critical foreign languages.	550	8 to 10 weeks	EAP, EUR, SCA, NEA (13 countries)
Global Academic Exchanges	\$55,017	\$58,351				
Educational Advising and Student Services	\$12,241	\$12,241	400+ EducationUSA advising centers in 170 countries provide accurate info to international students about U.S. higher education through in-center, virtual and outreach sessions. EducationUSA also assists the 4500+ accredited U.S. institutions with recruitment.	na	na	Global (170+ countries)
English Access Microscholarships	\$25,750	\$24,250	After-school English language and American cultural programming for bright, economically disadvantaged 13- to 20-year-olds in-country	\$5,000	2 years	Global (80+ countries)
English Language Fellows/Specialists	\$10,000	\$10,000	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Fellows are sent overseas to strengthen teaching and promote English language learning	240	2 weeks to 10 months	Global (100+ countries)
RELOS	\$5,100	\$5,260	Local programming, travel and mandatory expenses for Regional English Language Officers overseas	na	na	Global

E-Teacher	\$1,800	\$2,500	Uses innovative distance learning technology to improve the quality of English Language Teaching overseas	virtual 1,200	10 weeks	Global (150+ countries)
Materials	\$126	\$100	Online and print resources for English language teachers and learners overseas	na	na	Global
American Overseas Research Centers		\$4,000	American Overseas Research Centers are located throughout the world — in Europe, Latin America, the Near and Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and West Africa — and provide services to scholars, including assistance with research and publication.	na	na	Global (x countries)
Special Academic Exchanges	\$24,520	\$36,800				
American Overseas Research Centers	\$4,000		American Overseas Research Centers are located throughout the world — in Europe, Latin America, the Near and Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and West Africa — and provide services to scholars, including assistance with research and publication.	na	na	Global (x countries)
South Pacific Exchanges	\$435	\$350	The USSP Scholarship Program was established by the United States Congress to provide opportunities for U.S. study to students from the sovereign island nations of the South Pacific in fields important for the region's development. Public Law 103-236 authorized academic scholarships to qualified students to pursue undergraduate and graduate study at institutions of higher education in the U.S.	4	four years	EAP (South Pacific)

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS (ECE)—Continued
Detailed Allocation—FY 2014–2015
(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2014	FY 2015	Program Description	Participants*	Length of time	Regions
Timor Leste Scholarship Program	\$435	\$350	The USTL Scholarship Program was created in FY 1999 in response to Public Law 103-236, which directed the Bureau to provide scholarships for Timorese students. The objective of the program is to provide academic scholarships to potential leaders from Timor-Leste for undergraduate study at U.S. universities in selected areas of critical development to help strengthen the human resource capacity of the Timorese people	3	four years	EAP (Timor Leste)
Mobility (Disability) Exchange Clearinghouse	\$450	\$450	The Clearinghouse works to encourage people with disabilities to participate in international exchange and to provide technical assistance to international exchange practitioners, including colleges and universities and other institutions/organizations, on how to increase the number of people participating with disabilities in their exchange programs and ensure that they have successful experiences.	na	na	Global
Gilman Scholarship Program	\$12,100	\$12,500	The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program offers grants for U.S. citizen undergraduate students of limited financial means to pursue academic studies or credit-bearing, career-oriented internships abroad.	2,850	2 weeks to 1 year	Global (100+ countries)

Young African Leaders Initiative	\$5,000	\$15,000	The Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) that empowers young people through academic coursework, leadership training, and networking. Fellowships provide outstanding young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa with the opportunity to hone their skills at a U.S. university and support for professional development in the U.S. and after they return home.	500	6 weeks study + 6 weeks internship	AF (49 countries)
Youth South-East Asian Leaders Initiative	na	\$5,000	YSEALI includes academic and professional exchanges for Southeast Asian youth to deepen their knowledge about economic development, education, environment and civic engagement issues and to develop a regional network.	250	4 to 5 weeks study or internship	EAP (10 countries)
Fulbright University: Vietnam	na	\$2,500	Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV) will be the first independent, non-profit, U.S. affiliated university in Vietnam, and will embody core principles of good governance, including academic freedom, meritocracy, transparency, and equal access.	na	na	EAP (Vietnam)
Tibet Fund	\$710	\$650	The program's goal is to foster mutual understanding between the Tibetan people and the people of the United States and to educate future Tibetan leaders.	16	1 to 2 years	SCA (India/Nepal)
Study Abroad Capacity Building	\$1,390	na	Awards to U.S. institutions to help develop new study abroad programs and opportunities	na	na	Global
Professional and Cultural Exchanges	\$192,617	\$185,240				
International Visitor Leadership Program	\$91,007	\$89,665				

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS (ECE)—Continued
Detailed Allocation—FY 2014–2015
(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2014	FY 2015	Program Description	Participants*	Length of time	Regions
International Visitor Leadership Program	\$91,007	\$89,665	A short-term professional exchange for foreign participants to travel to the U.S. to network with their counterparts.	4,665	2 to 21 days	Global (181 countries)
Citizen Exchange Program	\$101,035	\$100,000				
Professional Fellows	\$18,049	\$18,049	ECA's Professional Fellows. Division provides grants to U.S. non-profit organizations to conduct two-way exchange programs that provide substantive professional development and support to emerging leaders from the U.S. and foreign countries. The purpose of each exchange program is to engage with foreign leaders in critical professions, to demonstrate respect for foreign cultures and to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries.	approx. 844		
Youth Programs	\$67,292	\$66,257	The Youth Programs division primarily programs academic-year and short-term exchanges with U.S. and international high-school aged youth that promote leadership skills, civil society and democratic ideals, volunteerism, and community service.	approx. 4190	3 weeks to 1 academic year	Global (100+ countries)
Cultural Programs	\$10,199	\$10,199	The Cultural Programs Division partners with the American arts community and U.S. missions abroad in the creation of arts-based people-to-people exchanges that advance a variety of U.S. foreign policy goals, including outreach to youth and promoting opportunities for women and girls and underserved audiences.	approx. 800	5 days to 9 months	Global (x countries)

Sports Programs	\$5,495	\$5,495	\$5,495	approx. 530	4 to 30 days	Global (x countries)
Special Professional and Cultural Exchanges	\$575	\$5,575	SportsUnited works with public and private partners to provide international exchanges for athletes and coaches. These exchanges address key themes such as countering violent extremism and HIV/AIDS education and reach key audiences including women and girls, underserved/underprivileged youth, and persons with disabilities in an effort to bring people together and foster greater understanding through sports.			
Ngawang Choephel Fellows (Tibet)	\$575	\$575	This grant competition supports exchange projects involving ethnic Tibetans in Tibet and in the Tibetan regions of China.	Tibet 27 U.S. 16		
J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative	na	\$5,000	A virtual exchange for youth in the Middle East/North Africa and the U.S.	na		
Program and Performance	\$3,500	\$4,752				
Alumni Affairs	\$2,282	\$3,500	Advances U.S. foreign policy by programs that are mutually beneficial to the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The International Exchange Alumni website (https://alumni.state.gov) is among these programs. Alumni engagement is integral to public diplomacy and generates maximum return on the U.S. government's investment in exchange programs.	> 1 million > 140,000 registered on IEA website		
Program Evaluation	\$1,218	\$1,252	The Evaluation Division is dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of ECA's exchange programs	na		

Question. Please outline the total U.S. contributions to the United Nations from the U.S. Department of State and all other U.S. Departments and agencies including the total amount of all assessed and voluntary contributions, including in-kind, of the United States Government to the United Nations and United Nations affiliated agencies and related bodies.

For each such contribution, please provide:

- a. The amount of the contribution;
- b. A description of the contribution (including whether assessed or voluntary);
- c. The department or agency of the United States Government responsible for the contribution;
- d. The purpose of the contribution; and
- e. The United Nations or United Nations affiliated agency or related body receiving the contribution.

Answer. The Department is currently preparing a report to Congress that will provide this information, as directed by House Report 133–499, which accompanied the House State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2015. The Department is also preparing an annual report to Congress on U.S. contributions to international organizations as required by section 405(b) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003. The Department is planning to submit these reports by July 1, 2015.

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)
U.S. and Foreign Participants*
Country/Regional Summary
FY 2013

	U.S.	Foreign	Total
East Asia and Pacific			
Australia	78	61	139
Brunei		10	10
Burma	32	251	283
Cambodia	45	193	238
Federated States of Micronesia	5	14	19
Fiji	4	29	33
French Polynesia	1		1
Hong Kong	46	27	73
Indonesia	205	875	1,080
Japan	360	155	515
Kiribati	1		
Korea, Democratic People's Republic of			8
Laos	17	166	183
Macau	8		
Malaysia	147	230	377
Marshall Islands	6	8	14
Mongolia	30	129	159
New Zealand	48	55	103
Niue			1
Palau	9	6	15
Papua New Guinea	1	13	14
People's Republic of China	760	664	1,424
Philippines	38	436	474
Republic of Korea	423	197	620
Samoa	37	14	51

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)—Continued
U.S. and Foreign Participants*
Country/Regional Summary
FY 2013

	U.S.	Foreign	Total
Singapore	34	39	73
Solomon Islands			1
Taiwan	111	74	185
Thailand	117	299	416
Timor-Leste	6	103	109
Tonga	1	3	4
Vanuatu			1
Vietnam	59	375	434
Total	2,629	4,437	7,066
Europe/Eurasia			
Europe/Eurasia	3,513	5,465	8,978
Albania	8	38	46
Andorra	5	3	8
Armenia	20	225	245
Austria	53	48	101
Azerbaijan	38	338	376
Belarus	20	89	109
Belgium	18	53	71
Bosnia and Herzegovina	39	221	260
Bulgaria	48	74	122
Croatia	22	35	57
Cyprus	17	86	103
Czech Republic	62	62	124
Denmark	40	28	68
Estonia	14	40	54
Finland	41	59	100
France	156	117	273
Georgia	22	260	282
Germany	688	558	1,246
Greece	40	54	94
Hungary	39	58	97
Iceland	14	24	38
Ireland	61	59	120
Italy	151	95	246
Kosovo, Republic of	15	86	101
Latvia	26	25	51
Lithuania	21	29	50
Luxembourg	5	7	12
Macedonia	16	46	62
Malta	7	7	14
Moldova	21	199	220
Montenegro	4	33	37
Netherlands	41	47	88
Norway	35	60	95

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)—Continued
U.S. and Foreign Participants*
Country/Regional Summary
FY 2013

	U.S.	Foreign	Total
Poland	44	109	153
Portugal	12	37	49
Romania	24	66	90
Russia	341	1,136	1,477
Serbia	26	120	146
Slovakia	17	37	54
Slovenia	22	22	44
Spain	287	90	377
Sweden	38	40	78
Switzerland	17	21	38
Turkey	253	251	504
Ukraine	48	645	693
United Kingdom	243	112	355
Total	6,692	11,314	18,006
Near Eastern Affairs			
Algeria	40	347	387
Bahrain	5	170	175
Egypt	33	647	680
Gaza Strip		1,382	1,382
Iran		7	27
Iraq	27	555	582
Israel	86	755	841
Jordan	165	670	835
Kuwait	3	115	118
Lebanon	10	749	759
Libya	1	302	303
Morocco	292	975	1,267
Oman	107	176	283
Qatar	4	27	31
Saudi Arabia	14	124	138
Syria		5	35
Tunisia	12	521	533
United Arab Emirates	25	28	53
West Bank	21	154	175
Yemen	1	496	497
Total	846	8,255	9,101
South Central Asia			
Afghanistan	24	1,025	1,049
Bangladesh	64	248	312
Bhutan	4	11	15
India	445	1,450	1,895
Kazakhstan	37	458	495

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)—Continued
U.S. and Foreign Participants*
Country/Regional Summary
FY 2013

	U.S.	Foreign	Total
Kyrgyzstan	36	382	418
Maldives		3	63
Nepal	62	251	313
Pakistan	29	986	1,015
Sri Lanka	28	138	166
Tajikistan	86	284	370
Turkmenistan	5	70	75
Uzbekistan	22	248	270
Total	842	5,614	6,456
Sub-Saharan Africa			
Angola	2	55	57
Benin	6	47	53
Botswana	20	30	50
Burkina Faso	10	189	199
Burundi	6	39	45
Cabo Verde			5
Cameroon	4	120	124
Central African Republic			5
Chad		45	145
Comoros	1	8	9
Congo	1	19	20
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	9	123	132
Cote d'Ivoire	7	118	125
Djibouti			9
Equatorial Guinea	1	3	4
Eritrea		1	11
Ethiopia	27	234	261
Gabon	1	25	26
Gambia, The	4	13	17
Ghana	132	118	250
Guinea	5	27	32
Guinea-Bissau			3
Kenya	30	164	194
Lesotho	1	8	9
Liberia	6	53	59
Madagascar	7	85	92
Malawi	22	55	77
Mali		3	93
Mauritania	1	138	139
Mauritius	7	21	28
Mozambique	11	76	87
Namibia	13	22	35
Niger	1	93	94

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)—Continued
U.S. and Foreign Participants*
Country/Regional Summary
FY 2013

	U.S.	Foreign	Total
Nigeria	24	212	236
Reunion	1		
Rwanda	29	107	136
Sao Tome and Principe			6
Senegal	33	74	107
Seychelles	1	2	3
Sierra Leone	4	39	43
Somalia			3
South Africa	172	483	655
South Sudan, Republic of	1	20	21
Sudan	1	66	67
Swaziland	2	15	17
Tanzania, United Republic of	38	104	142
Togo	4	82	86
Uganda	35	96	131
Zambia	24	62	86
Zimbabwe	43	144	187
Total	747	3,677	4,424
Western Hemisphere Affairs		n	
Antigua and Barbuda			1
Argentina	127	459	586
Bahamas, The		8	18
Barbados	7	8	15
Belize	28	16	44
Bolivia	43	194	237
Brazil	325	729	1,054
Canada	50	66	116
Chile	115	279	394
Colombia	93	440	533
Costa Rica	142	189	331
Cuba	4	8	12
Dominica			1
Dominican Republic	23	108	131
Ecuador	79	201	280
El Salvador	9	247	256
Grenada	1	1	2
Guatemala	30	646	676
Guyana	9	5	14
Haiti	20	76	96
Honduras	12	252	264
Jamaica	19	32	51
Mexico	104	593	697
Netherlands Antilles	2	1	3

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)—Continued
U.S. and Foreign Participants*
Country/Regional Summary
FY 2013

	U.S.	Foreign	Total
Nicaragua	19	402	421
Panama	25	412	437
Paraguay	47	171	218
Peru	77	287	364
St. Lucia			2
Suriname	14	13	27
Trinidad and Tobago	15	25	40
Turks and Caicos Islands	1		
Uruguay	31	211	242
Venezuela	43	243	286
Total	1,514	6,336	7,850

* Participant totals include support from foreign partner governments.

Question. United Nations Peacekeeping.—Why is the administration requesting a significant increase of almost 38 percent above fiscal year 2015 funding for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities Account for Fiscal Year 2016? What other countries have committed to a similar increase in their peacekeeping contributions, and what is the dollar amount for those additional commitments?

Answer. The request is \$2.93 billion, of which \$2.55 billion would fund the U.S. share of U.N. peacekeeping assessments during FY 2016 for 14 ongoing U.N. peacekeeping missions, a war crimes tribunal, and logistical support for U.N. Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) as well as the monitoring of mission effectiveness. An additional \$380 million is included to partially cover projected FY 2015 shortfalls.

The Department recognizes that this request represents an increase of \$811 million (or 38.2 percent) over the amount Congress appropriated in the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (“FY 2015 Act”) for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account. However, the FY 2016 request is based on an assumption that our U.N. peacekeeping assessment will be about equal to the FY 2015 estimated requirements of \$2.55 billion.

Peacekeeping missions are critical tools to maintain international peace and security, and to advance U.S. interests around the world, including in Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Haiti. International peacekeeping efforts are cost-effective means for countries to work together toward the same ends, resolve conflicts, contribute to international stability, and mitigate humanitarian crises. We continue to regularly review missions to determine where we may be able to downsize, close, or transition them to a peace-building or other arrangement, as appropriate, as well as encourage the U.N. to further pursue cost saving measures and efficiencies.

Every U.N. member state pays a percentage share of the U.N.’s peacekeeping costs according to the U.N. peacekeeping scale of assessments. Overall U.N. peacekeeping costs are increasing significantly, not just for the United States. Every member state is committed to paying its share of the peacekeeping costs under Article 17 of the U.N. Charter.

Question. Evaluations.—In January 2015, the U.S. Department of State made changes to its program evaluation policy and guidance.

- ◆ Please explain the changes, why they were made, and how the agency plan to effectively evaluate both foreign assistance and diplomacy programs at the U.S. Department of State.

Answer. After analysis of the first 2 years of implementation, the Department's evaluation policy has been updated to simplify its language and structure and to clarify requirements for evaluation. The policy update clarifies that the evaluation requirement is not bound by dates and that it covers the full spectrum of activities, projects and programs the Department engages in. As a result, it will be more sustainable than the original policy.

The updated policy makes plain that efforts and interventions funded by Diplomatic-Engagement (DE), such as those carried out by CA, FSI, HR, R/PPR, OBO, H, L, IRM, etc., are covered. In addition, other types of DE-funded evaluations, such as an organizational assessment carried out by a regional bureau, would also be covered. The intent is for bureaus and independent offices to look at the full spectrum of activities, programs and processes they perform and determine where more information is needed for improvements, developing priorities, or making decisions. The policy sets a consistent threshold for each bureau and independent office to conduct at least one evaluation per year and does not include any new requirements from the previous policy. It does:

- Include a general requirement for all bureaus and independent offices to conduct at least 1 evaluation per year, with more expected of offices managing more than \$1 million;
- Clarify that it includes not only programs, but the activities and processes most prevalent in the Department;
- Include all bureaus and offices, with the expectation that all have a process or activity that could benefit from review;
- Expand the kinds of evaluations and methods available, including low and no cost evaluations done internally;
- Introduce collaborative evaluation to minimize duplication of effort;
- Incorporate the new foreign assistance policy guidance on transparency and public dissemination of evaluation report summaries as a requirement;
- Eliminate the requirement for overseas post to comply with the policy; and
- Include expanded guidance, which will be issued annually.

STATEMENT FROM ADMINISTRATION ON NO BOOTS ON THE GROUND
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

PRESIDENT OBAMA

—“I think we always have to guard against mission creep, so let me repeat what I've said in the past: American combat troops are not going to be fighting in Iraq again.”

○ June 19, 2014

—“As I have said before, these American forces will not have a combat mission—we will not get dragged into another ground war in Iraq.”

○ September 10, 2014

—“. . . nor do we intend to send U.S. troops to occupy foreign lands.”

○ September 24, 2014

—“Instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East, we are leading a broad coalition, including Arab nations, to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist group.”

○ January 20, 2015

SECRETARY KERRY

—“That is to say that we need to do kinetic, we need to attack them in ways that prevent them from taking over territory, that bolster the Iraqi security forces, others in the region who are prepared to take them on, without committing troops of our own, obviously. I think that's a redline for everybody here, no boots on the ground.”

○ September 5, 2014

—“This is not the prelude to another U.S. ground war in the Middle East. President Obama has said repeatedly that U.S. ground troops will not engage in combat roles. He means it. I volunteered to serve and fought in a war I came to believe was a mistake. I take that lesson seriously. This will not be another one of those interventions.”

○ September 26, 2014

—“The President has been crystal-clear that his policy is that U.S. military forces will not be deployed to conduct ground combat operations against ISIL and that will be the responsibility of local forces, because that is what our local partners and allies want, that is what we learned works best in the context of our Iraq experience, that is what is best for preserving our coalition, and most importantly, it is in the best interest of the United States.”

○ December 9, 2014

CRS MEMORANDUM ON THE MEANING OF “ENDURING”
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER



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MEMORANDUM

February 24, 2015

To: Senator Barbara Boxer
[REDACTED]

From: Jennifer K. Elsea, Legislative Attorney, [REDACTED]

Subject: The Meaning of “Enduring” in the Context of Military Operations

This memorandum responds to your request for an analysis of the meaning of the word “enduring” as it is used in President Obama’s proposed Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).¹ Section 2(c) of the proposed joint resolution provides that the authority to use force “does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces in enduring offensive ground combat operations.” In a letter accompanying the draft AUMF, President Obama stated that the proposal “would not authorize long term, large-scale ground combat operations like those our Nation conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan.”²

We assume that “offensive ground combat operations” is a term of art describing certain military operations. In an effort to discern how “enduring” military operations might differ from military operations that are not so described, we will explore the common meaning of the word and how Congress has used it in various contexts.

Merriam -Webster’s dictionary defines “enduring” to mean “lasting” or “durable.”³ “Lasting,” in turn, is described to mean “existing or continuing a long while.”⁴ Synonyms for “lasting” include “permanent” and “stable,” and are described as meaning “enduring for so long as to seem fixed or established.” “Lasting” is said to imply “a capacity to continue indefinitely.”⁵ Merriam -Webster’s online dictionary offers the following near antonyms: antiquated, archaic, dated, obsolete, outdated, outmoded, out-of-date, outworn, passé.⁶ Few of these terms seem to fit well as modifiers for military operations. A common thread running throughout synonyms for “enduring” seems to be the lack of a foreseeable end point. Consequently, military operations that are not described as enduring might have a fixed timetable, or they might be more intermittent or sporadic in nature.

¹ The proposed joint resolution is available on the White House website at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/aumf_02112015.pdf.

² Letter from the President -- Authorization for the Use of United States Armed Forces in connection with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, February 11, 2015, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/11/letter-president-authorization-use-united-states-armed-forces-connection>.

³ MERRIAM -WEBSTER’S COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY (10th ed., 2001).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/enduring>.

Congress uses the term “enduring” infrequently, most often in statements of policy to indicate the goal of establishing something worthwhile and long lasting, perhaps permanent.⁷ For example, one mission of the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office is to “ensure an enduring national technical nuclear forensics capability to strengthen the collective response of the United States to nuclear terrorism.”⁸ In implementing the New START Treaty, Congress expressed its sense that “the United States should undertake and support an enduring stockpile stewardship program.”⁹ A peace initiative in a certain region has the goal of “ensur[ing] peaceful and enduring solutions to the Central American conflicts.”¹⁰ Military overflights in California “are essential in order to secure for the American people of this and future generations an enduring and viable national defense system.”¹¹

Congress has contrasted enduring solutions with short term assistance:

In addition to short term disaster assistance, United States policy toward the region should focus on expanding international trade with the Caribbean Basin region as an enduring solution for successful economic growth and recovery.¹²

Rarely, it is a problem or obstacle that is described as enduring. For example, educational laboratories are to “contribut[e] to the current base of education knowledge by addressing enduring problems in elementary and secondary education....”¹³

Congress has not used the term “enduring” in an AUMF, except for one reference in a whereas clause to describe the aim of U.S. foreign policy “to develop and sustain a just and enduring peace for all.”¹⁴ The only current instance we have found in which Congress has used the term “enduring” as a benchmark has to do with building construction and maintenance on overseas bases. Certain funds are to be available to the Secretary of Defense in connection with “military construction, facility maintenance and repair, and compliance with applicable environmental laws at military installations outside the United States at which the Secretary anticipates the United States will have an enduring presence.”¹⁵ This usage seems noteworthy in that it requires an official to determine whether U.S. military presence is anticipated to be enduring or not. If the presence is planned indefinitely, then it would seem to qualify as an enduring presence. But a finite period of time, if lengthy enough, might be deemed to constitute an enduring presence at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense.

We have found no examples where Congress has endeavored to prohibit or regulate any kind of operations that reach the threshold to qualify as enduring in nature. There is consequently no case law interpreting similar language. War powers jurisprudence suggests that courts would be unlikely to substitute their own interpretation of what military operations might qualify as unauthorized “enduring offensive ground combat operations” for that of the executive branch. As an example, courts were

⁷ A search of the current U.S. Code at <http://uscode.house.gov> for “enduring” yielded 81 hits, most of which were references to Operation Enduring Freedom.

⁸ 6 U.S.C. §592.

⁹ 10 U.S.C. §494.

¹⁰ 22 U.S.C. §2273.

¹¹ 16 U.S.C. §410aaa-82 note.

¹² 19 U.S.C. §2701 note.

¹³ 20 U.S.C. §9564.

¹⁴ Authorization for the President To Employ the Armed Forces of the United States for Protecting the Security of Formosa, the Pescadores, and Related Positions and Territories of That Area, Act of January 29, 1955, ch.4, 69 Stat. 7.

¹⁵ 10 U.S.C. §2687a.

reluctant to rule on whether the executive branch impermissibly “escalated” the Vietnam conflict after Congress had rescinded statutory authorization and directed the Executive to end the conflict at the earliest date possible.¹⁶ It seems doubtful that a limitation on “enduring offensive ground combat operations” would present sufficient judicially manageable standards by which a court could resolve any conflict that might arise between Congress and the executive branch over the interpretation of the phrase or its application to U.S. involvement in hostilities.

¹⁶ See *DaCosta v. Laird*, 471 F.2d 1146 (2d Cir. 1973) (dismissing challenge to the mining of North Vietnamese harbors as presenting a nonjusticiable political question).

