

THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY AND FY20 BUDGET REQUEST

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

	Page
WITNESS	
Pompeo, Hon. Michael, Secretary, United States Department of State	7
ADDITIONAL MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD	
Information submitted for the record from Representative Cicilline	45
Information submitted for the record from Representative McCaul	93, 94
APPENDIX	
Hearing Notice	97
Hearing Minutes	98
Hearing Attendance	99
STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD	
Statement for the record submitted by Chairman Engel	100
Statement for the record submitted by Chairman Engel	102
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD	
Response to questions submitted by Chairman Engel	103
Response to questions submitted by Representative McCaul	222
Response to questions submitted by Representative Sherman	223
Response to questions submitted by Representative Perry	228
Response to questions submitted by Representative Sires	232
Response to questions submitted by Representative Burchett	239
Response to questions submitted by Representative Keating	240
Response to questions submitted by Representative Cicilline	242
Response to questions submitted by Representative Bera	262
Response to questions submitted by Representative Lieu	272
Response to questions submitted by Representative Allred	283
Response to questions submitted by Representative Houlihan	285

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Wednesday, March 27, 2019

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 12:35 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eliot Engel (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ENGEL [presiding]. The committee will come to order.

Without objection, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

Chairman ENGEL. This afternoon, we will hear testimony from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on the Trump Administration's 2020 international affairs budget request and a range of other issues dealing with the Administration's foreign policy and management of the State Department.

Welcome back to the House, Mr. Secretary. I know you spent many good days here, and I appreciated your reaching out shortly after the election when you were first nominated as Secretary of State. I value our open line of communication.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENGEL. Welcome to the public and members of the press as well, especially our friends from C-SPAN who are celebrating its 40th birthday this week.

So, let me, first of all, start with the budget. The Administration's first budget request before you were Secretary, Mr. Secretary, was deeply disappointing. Slashing investments in diplomacy and development by nearly a third, it met resounding bipartisan rejection here in Congress.

The second budget was baffling. After Congress made it clear we would not gut American diplomacy, the Administration made essentially the same request to do just that. Again, it was rejected.

And the third budget, which, once again, in my opinion, seeks to hobble the State Department and other agencies, this, in my view, demonstrates contempt for diplomacy and diplomats and contempt for the Congress, frankly, whose job it is to decide how much to spend on foreign affairs.

The first year, when the budget was sent, it was rejected, and we came up with our budget, in a bipartisan way I should say. And then, the second year, the Administration came to lowball us once again. And now, the third year, at the same time when the budget has been rejected twice before, why would the Administration send a similar budget, only to be rejected a third time?

So, Mr. Secretary, let me be clear, this budget request was dead the moment it arrived on Capitol Hill. I do not know whether the Administration really believes that we can mount an effective foreign policy, one that advances American interests, values, and security, on a shoestring budget, or if the people calling the shots just do not care. But Congress will not stand by and see American leadership on the global stage undermined, and that is not just our opinion; that is the power of the purse. That is what we are supposed to do. So, that is the good news.

The bad news comes when the Administration shows the world just how little stock it puts in diplomacy and development, in building bridges of friendship and forging alliances, in resolving conflict and crises. This budget, in my opinion, signals to the world that the Trump foreign policy is one of disengagement, of pulling back from places where American leadership is needed the most. And we know other countries that do not share our values, countries like China and Russia and Iran, those countries are more than happy to fill the void.

So, it also tells our diplomatic and development work force that their efforts are not valued. That has had an impact that we can already see. We see it in the plummeting morale at the State Department and the number of diplomats chased to the exits. We see it in report after report after report of politically motivated targeting and harassment of career employees, allegations on which the Department has failed to respond to multiple committee requests for information. We see it in the drop of the number of civil servants at the Department and the sharp decline in employee satisfaction, according to the Partnership for Public Service.

And when I look at the Administration's policies, I am left wondering how often, if State Department experts are being ignored completely. From denigrating our alliances; NATO; to cozying up to strongmen; to walking away from our international agreements and obligations; from an abortive summit with North Korea; to saber rattling in Venezuela; to clearing the way for Iran and Russia to run roughshod over Syria, if we leave; from waging a trade war with China that is hurting American farmers and consumers; to slamming the door on vulnerable people around the world seeking to come to our country, those do not seem like policies to me built on the expertise and experience that our diplomats offer. They seem like what I call fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants diplomacy.

And so, as Congress exercises its constitutional responsibility in rejecting the inadequate budget request, this committee will also conduct oversight to deal with what I consider major problems in foreign policy and at the State Department.

Mr. Secretary, I was hopeful that the Department would work collaboratively with us to allow this committee to carry out its constitutionally mandated oversight duties, but I must say, 3 months into this Congress, the response from the Department to our requests has ranged from foot-dragging to outright stonewalling. It is very frustrating, and that is not acceptable. I believe you would feel the same way, since I know you, if you were still a Member of this body.

I hope the trend changes, but if it does not, I will use every tool at this committee's disposal to get the answers we need. And I hope

we can get some of those answers today. I look forward to a frank conversation and to your testimony, Mr. Secretary.

And before I introduce you, I will call on my friend, the ranking member, Mr. Mike McCaul of Texas, for any opening statement he may have.

Mr. McCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Secretary. I applaud the work that you are doing for our country. Let me say, in my recent visit to the State Department, I found that the morale is very good.

Over the last 2 years, the Administration has embarked on a forward-leaning agenda which is putting America back where it needs to be. And I want to thank you for ending the era of leading from behind and strategic patience. The importance of our diplomatic mission cannot be overstated. With the growing crisis in Venezuela, an unpredictable North Korea, China and Russia creating mischief around the globe, terrorism on the rise in Africa, and Iran threatening Israel, we must show our strength through hands of diplomacy.

The President's budget request identifies our most challenging threats. For example, it includes \$662 million to counter Russia's malign influence in Europe and Eurasia. This vital assistance will support our allies like Ukraine to help enhance their cybersecurity infrastructure, to counter Russian attacks and their propaganda and disinformation campaigns.

In regard to the Ukraine's upcoming elections, I will closely watch, and I know you will as well, how the Russians interfere. It may be a precursor to what we will see here in 2020.

The President's budget proposal also contains some much-needed reforms. However, I do agree with the chairman; I believe that certain cuts have unintended consequences that cost us more in the long term. This is especially true of cuts to critical humanitarian and developmental assistance programs that promote democracy, support economic growth, and provide lifesaving resources to bolster stability in areas at risk of terrorism and extremist ideologies. As the former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis once said, "If you do not fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition."

On terrorism, a few years ago, you and I had the opportunity to travel to Northern Africa and the Middle East, and I remember watching the F-18s taking off in the Persian Gulf from the deck of the Harry Truman to hit ISIS targets in Syria. Today, it almost feels a little surreal to be able to finally say that their so-called caliphate is gone. And I applaud your efforts in that mission. But we also still note the threat from ISIS, al-Qaeda, and others still remains.

On fragile States, a key lesson from violent conflicts and fragile States is that they provide a fertile recruiting ground for terrorists and transnational criminal organizations. This broken model can be fixed, and we need to do more in terms of prevention. That is why Chairman Engel and I reintroduced our fragile States bill this Congress. It will require that the Administration launch a new initiative to coordinate our assistance to these broken States.

On the Middle East, any strategy there must always include strengthening our ties with Israel. And for starters, I was very

proud of your efforts and the President's to see our embassy move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Mr. Secretary, I want to applaud your efforts, also, in countering Iran. Some do not see their true menace. They are still the No. 1 State sponsor of terror. They support Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, hold Americans hostage. They have an assassination campaign in Europe, a reckless missile program, suppress their people's freedom, and let's not forget want to wipe out Israel, and chant death to America.

I applaud last week's sanctions that target Iranian weapons of mass destruction proliferators. We cannot let Iran get nuclear weapons ever.

On China, their government aggressively steals our intellectual property, threatens Taiwan, partakes in growing military adventurism, and targets both developed and underdeveloped nations through their One Belt One Road Initiative.

I am very supportive of the action items laid out in your Indo-Pacific speech last year. As you know, many countries tell us America is just not there the way the Chinese and other countries are. And that is why I introduced the Championing American Business Through Diplomacy Act with Chairman Engel. In sum, it bolsters U.S. economic and commercial diplomacy by mandating that our diplomats have better training and do more to ensure countries do business with American companies rather than with the Chinese.

On Venezuela, we can all agree that the socialist policies of Nicolas Maduro have turned the once rich country into a failed mafia State. With little food and medicine, millions of people are suffering more every day and forced to flee to other countries in the region. Maduro's armed thugs are blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid. They have shot innocent civilians, kidnapped the chief of staff of Interim President Guaido, and just yesterday attacked Guaido's motorcade. I would also like to note that Maduro has taken four Texans who work for Citgo and put them in a Venezuelan prison.

I commend the President for supporting the people of Venezuela in their quest to take back their country through free and fair elections, and applaud neighbors like Colombia, Brazil, and the Lima Group for their effort.

Secretary Pompeo, it is a great honor to welcome you today as a Secretary, as a former colleague, and a friend. And I have always said that partisanship, as the chairman says, must end at the water's edge. This hearing gives us a chance to put partisan politics aside and offer solutions to complex issues.

I look forward to your testimony.

And I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. McCaul.

And now, let me introduce our witness. Michael Pompeo is the 70th United States Secretary of State, taking office April 26th of last year. From January 2017 until he became our top diplomat, Mr. Pompeo served as the sixth Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. From 2011 until 2017, he represented Kansas' 4th congressional District right here in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is a lawyer, an entrepreneur, and from 1986 until 1991, served in the United States Army.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back to the House. We are pleased to have you with us today. And I now recognize you for 5 minutes to summarize your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL POMPEO, SECRETARY, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary POMPEO. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Engel. Thank you, Ranking Member McCaul. I will be brief this morning.

Thanks for the opportunity to discuss the Administration's Fiscal Year budget. It is designed around the national security strategy to achieve our foreign policy goals. The request for \$40 billion for State Department and USAID puts us in position to do just that. These moneys will protect our citizens at home and abroad, advance American prosperity and values, and support our allies and partners overseas. We make this request mindful of the burden on American taxpayers and take seriously our obligation to deliver exceptional results on their behalf. This budget will achieve our key diplomatic goals. Let me walk through many of them.

First, we will make sure that China and Russia cannot gain a strategic advantage in an age of renewed great power competition. We will continue our progress toward final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, and we will support the people of Venezuela as they work toward a peaceful restoration of their democracy, so they can achieve prosperity in their once rich nation. And we will continue to confront the threat posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and its maligned behavior. We will work to help our allies and partners around the world to become more secure and economically self-reliant as well.

I take it as a personal mission to make sure that our world-class diplomatic personnel have the resources they need to execute America's diplomacy in the 21st century. Mr. Chairman, I know that you, too, care deeply about the welfare of our dedicated professionals. I have seen it. They get up every day and carry out the Department's vital national security and foreign policy missions. And like you, my foremost priority is to ensure we have the resources to recruit, hire, develop, retain, and empower them to remain the world's finest diplomatic team. We especially need the extremely qualified individuals we nominated to serve in important management positions across the Department, many of whom have been awaiting Senate confirmation since last year. I also appreciate this committee's focus on ensuring that the 75,000 men and women of the Department's work force are treated respectfully and justly.

I have great respect for the committee's oversight role, and I work to ensure that those commitments are carried out. When I served in this chamber, I pressed Administration officials hard about the importance of executive branch responsiveness to requests from Congress, and my team will continue to work with yours to fulfill your requests for briefings, meetings, information from the Department, to work constructively to identify how we can appropriately respond to the committee's oversight and investigative requests.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on all of these key foreign policy priorities and many more. And I will now end my remarks, so that we will have fulsome time for a good conversation.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Pompeo follows:]

**SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO
WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ON THE FY 2020 BUDGET
MARCH 27, 2019**

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the Administration's FY 2020 budget request for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

To support our National Security Strategy and achieve our foreign policy goals, the President has submitted an FY 2020 budget request of \$40 billion for the State Department and USAID.

The proposed request will allow us to protect our citizens at home and abroad, advance American prosperity and values, and support our allies and partners overseas.

It will promote partner countries' economic and security self-reliance as they begin to transition away from U.S. assistance programs, which the American people have generously underwritten for decades.

We make this request mindful of the burden on American taxpayers, and our obligation to deliver exceptional results on their behalf.

In an era of great power competition, the State Department and USAID's work is key to our

security, the protection of our freedoms, and the promotion of American values.

China is proactively applying its power and exerting its influence in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Under President Trump's leadership, the United States is responding decisively to China's aggressive actions. The United States' future security, prosperity, and leadership depends on maintaining a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific. To advance the Indo-Pacific strategy, the budget request nearly doubles U.S. foreign assistance resources targeting this crucial area compared to the FY 2019 request.

Russia poses threats that have evolved beyond external or military aggression, and now include influence operations targeting America and the Western world. This budget prioritizes countering Russian malign influence in Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia, and further strengthens the Department's own systems against malign actors.

Our diplomatic efforts toward the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea are the most successful that have ever been undertaken. We remain committed to that goal. This budget provides for our diplomatic outreach to continue, and to continue implementation and enforcement of sanctions until we achieve our objective.

We know that the Islamic Republic of Iran's authoritarian regime will continue to use their nation's resources to proliferate conflict in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and beyond. It will continue to bankroll terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

The United States will therefore work together with our allies and partners to counter Tehran's aggressive actions to undermine peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

As the people of Venezuela continue to fight for their freedom, the budget request includes funding to support democracy and prosperity in Venezuela. The budget also requests new authority to support a democratic transition in Venezuela, including transferring up to \$500 million to foreign assistance accounts.

The budget also delivers on the President's commitment to optimize the effectiveness of our outdated and fragmented overseas humanitarian assistance. It ensures the United States will remain the world's largest single donor of humanitarian assistance. The proposal maximizes the impact of taxpayer dollars, helps more beneficiaries, and delivers the greatest outcomes by consolidating our humanitarian programming in a new bureau at USAID. This budget request also preserves the State Department's lead role on protection issues, as well as the U.S. refugee admissions program. Further, through available funding in 2019 and 2020, the United States will have on average approximately \$9 billion available per year to support overseas humanitarian programs, maintaining the highest level of U.S. overseas humanitarian funding ever.

President Trump has made the protection of religious freedom a key priority at home and abroad. The Fiscal Year 2020 budget supports our efforts to continue U.S. leadership in the promotion of global religious freedom and the protection of persecuted religious and ethnic minorities all around the world. This July, the State Department will host the second annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom.

American assistance is helping to reverse the devastation and suffering caused by ISIS and associated terrorist groups. But much work remains to be done. Working by, with, and through local partners and community leaders, our assistance programs clear explosive remnants of war to help keep families safe, restore access to critical health and education services, improve economic opportunities, and more.

As we work to promote economic growth, the Fiscal Year 2020 budget includes a request for \$100 million for a new Fund at USAID for the White House-led Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. Through the Fund, we will work to find and scale proposals that advance women's economic empowerment across the developing world, in support of the Initiative's goal of reaching 50 million women by 2025.

There are few efforts as important to this Administration and to the safety and security of the American people as border security. The State Department and USAID budget request will strengthen visa vetting, and improve our targeting of illicit pathways that transnational criminal organizations use to traffic people, drugs, money, and weapons into our nation.

President Trump has made it clear that U.S. foreign assistance should serve America's interests, and should support countries that help us to advance our foreign policy goals. This budget therefore maintains critical support for key U.S. allies, including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Colombia, among others.

The FY 2020 request also includes \$175 million for a Diplomatic Progress Fund. These funds will be used to respond to new opportunities arising from potential progress in diplomatic and peace efforts around the world.

Finally, the diplomatic challenges we face today are compounded by rapid advancements in technology and an ever-changing media environment. We need our colleagues to be safe, prepared, and ready to take on any challenge at a moment's notice. The FY 2020 budget will fully fund State and USAID's current workforce levels, enabling us to take on emerging policy challenges. We are also modernizing our human resources, IT infrastructure, and organizational structures to stay on the cutting edge of 21st century innovation.

We must continue to put American interests first and remain a beacon of freedom to the world. With the support of Congress, and through the strategic, efficient use of resources, this budget will do just that.

Thank you.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

I will now begin with my questions, and after my time has expired, I will recognize members for 5 minutes for the purpose of questioning the witness.

So, I have three questions. I am going to try to get them in. And so, if you could give us a short answer, perhaps it would work, and then, we will follow it up.

Mr. Secretary, from your experience in Congress investigating Benghazi, you know, of course, that we cannot conduct our constitutional oversight duties effectively if the executive branch stonewalls or drags its feet on committee requests for information. I want you to know, for over a year, the State Department has not responded to my concerns about allegations that senior officials targeted career employees for improper reasons, including their work for previous Administrations, their sexual orientation, and even their national origin. As you know, the Inspector General will finish his investigation of this matter shortly. You testified last May that people engaged in such targeting should not be working at the State Department.

I am holding two emails from 2017 right here from a senior official, Brian Hook. In one, he pledges to gather intel on an employee who was, quote, "born in Iran". On the other, he makes a list of employees. I was shocked to see how he characterized these employees, not by anything related to their job performance, but by national origin, ethnicity, perceived political affiliation, and even gossip that some might be troublemakers.

So, I want to ask you an easy question. Is targeting employees for these reasons appropriate?

Secretary POMPEO. I came onboard and immediately made sure that both the Office of Special Counsel and the OIG had all the information they needed to complete their investigation. And I am disappointed that they have not completed their work yet and hope that they will do so soon. Other than that, I am not going to respond to anything about any particular person, but I can assure you I want every employee at the Department of State treated with the dignity that they deserve because of their humanness.

Chairman ENGEL. Can you tell us, then, Mr. Secretary, why have not you shared with us any of the information?

Secretary POMPEO. I think we have shared a great deal. We have come over and we have talked with you. We have talked with folks on the Senate as well. We are working diligently to comply with the requests that you have.

It is complicated when you have IG investigations and Special Counsel investigations. You would be the first to remind me that, if we started asking hard questions of the IG, it would suggest that I might be trying to improperly interfere with their work. And I have tried to do everything I can to make sure that accusations like that could not possibly be leveled.

Chairman ENGEL. I just want you to know that I have here the OIG's email confirming that they have no problems with the Department providing these documents to Congress. It has just been very frustrating, and I am sure you can understand, the stonewalling we have been getting for over a year now. And it is very frustrating. All we want to know is what we are entitled to

know. A call from your staff just days before this hearing in which they did not agree to produce any documents is really not a good-faith effort. So, I would hope, based on what you have said, that you will provide us the documents the committee requested, and I hope you can do that within 1 week. There is nothing outlandish or outrageous. We are just trying to do our jobs.

I want to ask you a question about Syria. I am very worried about President Trump's statement that we are going to pull out of Syria. I do not want the United States to be in a foreign country any more than we have to, but pulling out of Syria would be a betrayal to the Kurds, our faithful allies for many, many years; saved American lives. It would create problems for our ally Israel because it would put the Iranian regime right on Israel's border. And if and when we ever had to come back, it would probably result in more American casualties. Right now, we seem to have the situation pretty much in hand.

So, I hope that the President's precipitous statement that we were going to, after he allegedly spoke with Mr. Erdogan of Turkey, that we were going to pull out of Syria soon, immediately, or whatever, is not the truth, is not so, and that we have rethought it. And can you give us some assurances on that?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not want to speak about particular troop levels. I will leave that to the Department of Defense. But I can talk about the policy. The President has made clear he wants to put as few American soldiers' lives at risk as he possibly can and do so while achieving America's important policy interests. I think we can do that.

By the way, I have a senior State Department official who is working diligently to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254 and to work with the Turks and with the Kurds to create conditions on the ground, in the real estate that separates Syria and Turkey, so that we can continue to maintain the vigilance that led to the destruction of the caliphate.

It is a longer answer, but this fits inside our policy throughout the Middle East, whether it is Iraq or in Syria, the work that we are doing to help Lebanon, the work we are doing with our Gulf partners to achieve precisely what it is I think you describe, a secure situation for the American people and an increase in the stability throughout the Middle East.

Chairman ENGEL. And, of course, we do not need Iran in Syria or Russia in Syria, right up to Israel's northern border.

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct.

Chairman ENGEL. Let me finally ask you this question: the Balkans, how is the U.S. pushing back on Russian encroachment in the Balkans? I am very supportive of the independence of Kosovo, very supportive of the U.S. alliance with Kosovo. I would like to see Kosovo in the United Nations, in all the international organizations. I know they are having negotiations with Serbia, but Serbia is actually trying to undermine them the minute they walk away by trying to get other nations to withdraw their recognition of Kosovo, by making noise in terms of preventing them from getting into INTERPOL, and some of the other international organizations.

I just want to say that I hope the Administration stands by our ally. I know of no country that is more pro-American than Kosovo. And I just would like to hear you respond to that.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are watching the situation closely. We understand all the rest. Under Secretary Hale was in the region not too terribly long ago. He reported back to me on the challenges. We understand Russia's efforts to influence and use various forms of power to control that region.

And I would be happy—I know you want short answers—I would be happy to talk to you in detail about how it is we are trying to achieve those through all the diplomatic tools we have, not only the soft power of diplomacy, but through our economic tools as well.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. McCaul?

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first say, Mr. Secretary, that the chairman and I will be working in a bipartisan fashion to plus-up your budget. I think we need stability throughout the globe, and we look forward to working with you on that issue.

Tomorrow, the chairman and I will be traveling to the Venezuelan border in Colombia. And I have kind of a two-part question. First is I do not think failure is an option here, but what would be the consequences for the United States and the region if Maduro succeeds in Venezuela? And the second part is, if Maduro does not succeed, what would a post-Maduro reconstruction strategy look like?

Secretary POMPEO. So, I am of the nature that I try not to contemplate failure too often, but we have certainly considered what the risks are associated with the efforts that we have provided to date and the efforts. Frankly, you mentioned the Lima Group, all the countries in the region now, some 50-some that have recognized the proper leader, as designated by the Venezuelan people through their constitution.

Look, we have seen Russia continue trying to exert influence. We know that the Cubans are providing substantial support to the Maduro regime. Allowing Maduro to continue will have as its primary negative outcome continued destruction of the Venezuelan economy and real hardship for the Venezuelan people. It will certainly have an importance in terms of the risk of terror, the risk of chaos, the economic, and refugees flowing from those regions, from Venezuela to the region as well. So, there is lots of downside if the Venezuelan people's objective is not achieved.

Second, the day and week after is going to be a long process. The Maduro regime's destruction of the economy in Venezuela is not as a result of the sanctions that the United States has put in place over the last months. This is years of socialist leadership that has completely put their primary revenue source, their fossil fuel resources, in a place that is going to cost, I have seen estimates between \$6 and \$12 billion, and years to repair. So, the day after means making sure the Cuban and Russian influence are out; Maduro and his cronies are all gone, and we begin to rebuild the democracy. And the world will have to provide the economic assistance to get them through this transition period.

The United States will certainly be part of it, but I am confident we will find the coalition that we have built, some 50 countries strong, that our State Department has built, will be part of that as well.

Mr. MCCAUL. And thank you. I think it is an historic opportunity for the region, the hemisphere. I think it will transform Venezuela, which is now a failed State. It was a prosperous nation. Now, 20 years later, it is in utter chaos. And I think it would also impact Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia. It could really transform the Western Hemisphere and be a major foreign policy victory.

On China, as I get my threat briefings, Islamist terror has always been the focus, but it seems to me that China now is becoming more the No. 1 threat in nation States. Can you tell me about the threat from China? In particular, what I am concerned about is the One Belt One Road Initiative. You know, their theft of intellectual property—they are in our medical institutions, our universities. But the One Belt One Road, they are literally overleveraging countries, and particularly in Africa, too, where they can take over these countries without a shot fired. And they are in Sri Lanka now—they have that port—and in Djibouti.

What is the Administration doing to counter the Chinese threat?

Secretary POMPEO. So, the first thing we did is we identified it, something previous Administrations were loath to do. I get it. We have important economic interests with China. Many American jobs depend on that. President Trump is doing his level best to set the trade relationship so that it is fair and reciprocal. So, I would describe that as the first thing the Administration did.

The second thing is we recognize this is a great power battle and we are engaged in it across the world. It is our support of ASEAN. It is identifying the threat from Chinese State-owned enterprise technology companies, sharing that with countries in the Middle East and in Europe, identifying these risks, so that Western democracies around the world will wake up to the risks and will push back.

And you mentioned One Belt One Road, in particular. We are doing our best to make sure that there are Western competitors every place there is a project that China is putting forth. We are happy to compete. If it is fair, transparent, open transaction, you know, the Chinese may win a few, but I am very confident that American businesses will do incredibly well there.

What we have seen is just the opposite. We have seen transactions that were not straight-up, that were not fair, that were designed with a national security interest, and not an economic interest for the people of their country. The State Department has shared with these countries and their people and their leadership the risks from entering into these. And frankly, I think countries throughout Asia/Southeast Asia are waking up to this concern as well.

Mr. MCCAUL. And let me just close. I know my time has expired.

Just commending you for your engagement with Kim Jong-un in North Korea. I think that is vitally important, given the threat that we face in the region. I also commend you for walking away from the table. I think the best thing Ronald Reagan did was walk-

ing away from the table from the Soviets, and then we, ultimately, saw the end of the cold war.

And I think just to get a deal, like the Iran deal, for instance, it is not adequate. We need a good deal. And so, thank you, sir.

I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. McCaul.

We will now go to Mr. Sires.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary of State, thank you and welcome.

I want to talk a little bit about the Western Hemisphere and what is going on. I see a bigger plan in what is going on in Venezuela I think than most people. I see a lot of similarities of what happened with Cuba and what is happening in Venezuela. In Cuba, they allowed the people to leave that were disenchanted with the government. In Venezuela, there are 5,000 people leaving every day. They expect, by the end of this year, to be about 5 million people that have left Venezuela, those who are disenchanted with this government.

I really believe that there is a bigger plan here to destabilize the Western Hemisphere with what is going on in Venezuela. You have a million people putting a great deal of pressure on Colombia, and they have opened their doors and they have done a great job in helping these people. You have 700,000 people going into Peru. You have people all the way down to Argentina. Some of these countries cannot absorb the quantity of people that are leaving Venezuela daily. So, to me, I think this is part of a bigger plan to destabilize this whole region.

It continues to keep us busy. It continues to make America the bad apple in all this. And I would hope that we will continue to put pressure on Maduro. I do not believe in military action, but I do believe that sanctions will be effective and working with the Lima Group will be very effective.

This afternoon, I am meeting with Fabiana Rosales, the wife of Guaido. She is very concerned about her husband. She feels that any day now they are going to pick him up, and God knows where they are going to put him.

Are we prepared to increase our sanctions and make it even harder for Maduro to continue being in power if anything like this happens?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. SIRES. Do you know, can you share with us kind of sanctions would you be considering?

Secretary POMPEO. What we have done so far is historic.

Mr. SIRES. I agree with what they are doing so far.

Secretary POMPEO. And your analysis, I actually share most all of the analysis that you just laid out as well of the risks to the region. I would prefer not to get out ahead of what we are prepared to sanction and what we are not, but suffice it to say, you have this Administration's commitment to continue to work to deliver for the Venezuelan people. Whether that is economic sanctions, sanctions on family members, military leaders, our outreach through diplomats to try and convince the Venezuelan army of the fool's errand it is to stand with this thug, we are hard at it.

Mr. SIRES. I am concerned that it is going to go from Venezuela to Nicaragua. I mean, Nicaragua last year bought \$80 million worth of tanks from Russia. They are one of the poorest countries, if not the poorest, in the region. So, to me, they are going on the same path.

This idea that somehow they are having this dialogue now, they keep walking away from this dialogue with the opposition. And it is only a matter of time until they pull one of these Maduro issues where they become absolute power.

Are we willing to put sanctions on Nicaragua if they go the same way as Venezuela?

Secretary POMPEO. I am confident that we will respond. If the threat is similar and the risks are similar, we will respond in a similar fashion.

Mr. SIRES. And the last thing I have is, Uruguay, Mexico, they were talking about somehow some sort of dialogue to see if they could move Maduro out. Has the Administration talked to these two countries in terms—I think Brazil was probably involved in that also—to see if they could help in moving this guy out of there before more people die?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, we have been in conversations with, I personally have been in conversations with each of those two governments. And I must say, there is no evidence that there is any value in speaking with Maduro at this time. His time has come; his time has gone. It is time for him to leave.

Mr. SIRES. I have so many questions, but my time is running out. But I know the Turks—

Secretary POMPEO. I tried to be brief.

Mr. SIRES. You are; you have been.

The Turks, the Iranians are in Venezuela. Very concerned.

And thank you for being here.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Chairman.

Secretary POMPEO. May I just add to that? And they have provided financial assistance and support to the Maduro regime at a time when it was incredibly unconstructive.

Mr. SIRES. And I see that the Russians landed 100 soldiers, or something, the other day?

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Smith?

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

Mr. Secretary, welcome and thank you for your great leadership and for being here today.

A few months ago, I chaired a hearing on the Chinese government's complicity in the production and trafficking of fentanyl. As we all know, 29,000 people in the United States have been killed, the most recent numbers in 2017. I have a bill, H.R. 1542—Mr. Suozzi is my principal Democrat cosponsor—called the Combating Illicit Fentanyl Act of 2019. And what we are looking for is a listing of people who are complicit. At the hearing, I walked away thinking we are not doing perhaps all that we can do. I know you

are doing much. But it seems to me the Magnitsky Act sanctions and other things ought to be brought to bear against those people.

Second, thank you, on Ambassador John Richmond and Special Envoy Elan Carr, for two very superb choices, the Special Envoy on Antisemitism and Ambassador Richmond heading up the trafficking office. So, thank you for that leadership because they are two wonderful people that are doing a good job already.

Let me just jump back to a second ago. Last night I was at a premiere of a brand-new film called "Unplanned," which opens this weekend at over 1,000 theaters, based on the life of Abby Johnson and her book *Unplanned*, which I have read. The film chronicles Ms. Johnson's life as a Planned Parenthood student activist, followed by almost 8 years as director of a large Planned Parenthood clinic in Texas where over 20,000 abortions were performed.

In *Unplanned*, Ms. Johnson points out that she assisted in the first ultrasound-guided abortion at that clinic and she says, and I quote her, "The details startled me. At 13 weeks, you can clearly see the profile of the head, arms, and legs, even tiny fingers and toes. With my eyes glued on the image of this perfectly formed baby, I watched as a new image emerged on the video screen. The cannula, a straw-shaped instrument attached to the end of the suction tube, had been inserted into the uterus and was nearing the baby's side. It looked like an invader, out of place." She then says that, "at first, the baby did not seem aware of the cannula. "The next moment there was a sudden jerk of the tiny foot of the baby as it pressed in." And then the doctor's voice broke in and said, "Beam me up, Scottie," telling the assistant to turn on the suction, and the child crumpled right before her eyes.

I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary. In this country, we have lost 61 million unborn babies to abortion, a number that equates with the entire country, the population of Italy. And yet, there are many of those who would like to export abortion through our foreign policy.

So, I want to thank you for your faithful implementation of the Protecting Life and Global Health Assistance Policy, which continues to be a significant reiteration and expansion of President Reagan's Mexico City policy. Members might recall that, announced by Ronald Reagan at the U.N. conference in 1984 in Mexico City—hence, its name—the policy was and is designed to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funding is not funneled to foreign NGO's that perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning.

Thirty-four years ago, in July 1985, I authored the first of several successful amendments that became annual amendments to preserve this policy. People said then that NGO's would not accept those conditions. We found out very quickly that they did, and they divested themselves, if they were complicit in the taking of life, to what their mission happens to be, malaria and some other important program. So, I want to thank you for that.

Let me also remind my colleagues—and you know this so well, and special thanks—that President Trump has said he will veto any bill that weakens or nullifies any pro-life policy, any of them, and that includes Mexico City. And we will sustain that veto.

More than 169 Members have signed the letter to the President in the House, 49 in the Senate, saying clearly, if it is on any bill,

that bill, we will sustain your veto, Mr. President. And I want to assure you, because life is so precious and we need to protect it, we will do that and those Members will be true to their words.

If you could speak on those issues briefly and on fentanyl.

Secretary POMPEO. Let me take two of them briefly.

President Trump has made this a priority. He got a commitment from President Xi that President Xi would do all he could in his space to stop fentanyl from moving out of China. We have not yet seen as much action as we had anticipated we would see. The day I was there I heard President Xi make that commitment.

This Administration is determined. This crisis, this opioid crisis is real. It is tragic. We do not have our hands around it yet, but know that the State Department and my colleagues across the Cabinet understand the risk that this presents to the United States and its people.

Second, your statements on the Mexico City policy I appreciate. We made an extension of it yesterday. I am very confident that the things that we did yesterday will be absorbed by the NGO community. They will continue to deliver on the health needs that you and I both are so committed to delivering. Not a single dollar will be reduced in terms of spending, and we will make sure that those dollars go to the right place and that not one dollar of taxpayer funding goes to the tragedy of abortion around the world.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

As you can see, we have a vote on the floor right now, and it is 4 minutes 40 seconds. There are only two votes, though, luckily. So, I am going to recess for now.

Secretary POMPEO. Great.

Chairman ENGEL. Mr. Secretary, there is a room we were in before if you would like to go in.

And we will be back and start as quickly as we can. It should only be about another 15 minutes or so.

So, we stand in recess until then.

[Recess.]

Chairman ENGEL. Mr. Secretary, we are about to get some of our members. I know you remember the days fondly.

Secretary POMPEO. I do.

Chairman ENGEL. So, what we will do is we will start. OK, as our members are coming back, we will start immediately, and then, we will continue to the end. I am told we are not expecting any more votes. So, that should be a good thing.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your patience.

It is now my pleasure to call on Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hi, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary POMPEO. Hello.

Mr. MEEKS. I missed your testimony, but I read it, and I thought it was an important point that you made when you mentioned Colombia and this whole scenario that is dealing with Venezuela. I guess you would say that the people of Venezuela—I think we would agree on this—are in crises, correct?

Secretary POMPEO. I am sorry, the people in Venezuela? Yes. Yes.

Mr. MEEKS. And so, they are fleeing and, fortunately, they are going to Colombia. And we have got a great ally in Colombia, and Colombia is doing the right thing by taking care of these folks who are in crises.

It just seems to me that it is in contrast to the position that we are taking on our southern border, because I do not hear any talks—I am now speaking to the members of the Colombian government—they are not saying they are being invaded. They have got millions of people crossing their border every day. They are not saying they are being invaded. There is no talk about building a wall. But, rather, they are calling for a coordination of humanitarian assistance and working within their group.

The fact of the matter is, in talking to some of the Colombian members of their government, I was talking to them not too long ago, yesterday to be a fact, they expect the possibility of a bigger crisis. They say 2–3 million people may be coming across. But they were going to try to make sure they take care of them, not prevent them from coming across.

A stark contrast to the policies that we have on our southern border. Do you see a difference from people trying to flee for their life and safety on the southern border of the United States and the border between Venezuela and Colombia?

Secretary POMPEO. In what respect?

Mr. MEEKS. Well, in the respect of being humanitarian and trying to take care of people that is in crises, people that are fleeing their homeland because of their safety. And what we have seen on our southern border, families who are fleeing their homeland for fear in losing their life. And we have had the policy of either building a wall, so they will not come over here, separate them from their families, locking them up. That has been our policy, as opposed to what I see happening on Colombia and Peru and the other bordering countries around Venezuela. And there is nowhere near the amount of people on our southern border that are now crossing the border in Colombia, but the response is substantially different from our Administration and President Duque's Administration in Colombia.

Secretary POMPEO. Well, every nation gets to make its own sovereign decisions about how to handle crises of this nature. I think that is to be sure. Our President—

Mr. MEEKS. Well, you praise them. So, then, maybe you should say something different about us because we are having a situation completely different than they are.

Secretary POMPEO. We—

Mr. MEEKS. Let me just go from there. Let me ask, because you are here about budget also, and I understand that there was a cut, somewhere between 17 and 20 percent reduction, for embassy security, construction, and maintenance, is that not correct?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not have the numbers in front of me. I know that we have increased our budget for the overall scope of security inside the Department of State. It is something I have as a real priority.

Mr. MEEKS. But I just want to be sure because, look, last time we had a conversation, we talked about security and you said at that time that you take a backseat to no one with respect to caring

about protecting the people that work for us. Cutting their security, given what is going on, I know it is concerning to me because I want to make sure that we protect our diplomats.

In fact, do you recall the incident in Dhaka, Bangladesh? I think that took place on August 4th of 2018.

Secretary POMPEO. I am sorry, where was this?

Mr. MEEKS. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Secretary POMPEO. I do not know what incident you are referring to. We have security incidents with great frequency, and we do our level best to address them. Our teams are fantastic and have kept our people safe during—

Mr. MEEKS. Well, let me tell you about it. Fortunately, no one was injured. But, on August 4th, 2018, armed men on motorcycles targeted our then-Ambassador to Bangladesh while her—attacked the vehicles.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I now recall the incident, yes.

Mr. MEEKS. OK. And so, luckily, nobody is hurt. But when I hear, as a matter of policy, that we are cutting back on security, that gives me some real concern, particularly from you, Mr. Secretary, because when you were on this side of the bench, you questioned Democrats, when we had a Democrat Administration, on their sincerity with reference to protection of our embassies. But, yet, you are silent when we are cutting the budgets for security and the State Department, but nothing said. And clearly, our Ambassadors are at a state of risk.

I think I am out of time. So, I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Chabot?

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

Mr. Secretary, as you know, last Congress I introduced the Taiwan Travel Act, and President Trump signed it into law last March. The intention of this legislation was to allow our high-level officials to go to Taipei and to allow their high-level officials to come here to the United States, including Washington. In fact, as I had mentioned when you were here last time, I would absolutely advocate President Tsai addressing a Joint Session of Congress here in Washington, DC, sometime in the not-too-distant future.

As you know, you and I were elected together back in 2010, the historic 2010 class, majority-makers. And you have moved on. It was your first time, my second time, but you moved on to, I guess, to some would argue bigger and better things. But you are now Secretary of State. As you may know, I was first elected back in 1994, and a member of my class back then, Sam Brownback, was here for a while, and then, he moved up and on to the Senate, although we do not necessarily think that is “up” on this side of the building.

[Laughter.]

Of course, then he became Governor of Kansas. And the reason I bring Sam up is not only were we classmates, but he is no Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. And he did visit Taipei recently. And I would certainly encourage more visits like that.

So, I guess my question, Mr. Secretary, would be, do you think that the full implementation of the Taiwan Travel Act would im-

prove U.S.-Taiwan relations? And can the people of Taiwan count on you to advocate for further implementation of that I think very important legislation, the Taiwan Travel Act?

Secretary POMPEO. So, I think it is important to consider all of these things in the context of the challenges from China. You have seen what we have done with respect to Taiwan. It was just in the past few days that we sailed through the Straits, that the United States Department of Defense—

[Interruption from audience.]

Chairman ENGEL. If everybody will hold—excuse me. You are out of order. We will hold for a minute.

[Interruption from audience continues.]

Chairman ENGEL. The chair reminds all members of the audience that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House and its committees. And if there are any further disruptions, the police will be called back to remove the person or persons from the hearing room.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Chairman, the Secretary was in the process of answering a question. I would ask that our time be restored.

Chairman ENGEL. Yes, absolutely.

Mr. CHABOT. I appreciate that.

I would also note that the—I guess I will use the term—“gentleman” who just interrupted this meeting was neither from Taiwan nor the PRC and had nothing to do with my question or the Secretary’s answer.

So, Mr. Secretary, if you could continue?

Secretary POMPEO. I appreciate you stopping people from disapproval, Mr. Chairman. If there is approval, you can let them go on.

[Laughter.]

So, this is a very serious matter. The Taiwan Travel Relations Act is an important piece of legislation. You have seen our Administration do a great deal to implement that. I am sure there is more to follow. I do not want to get too far out ahead of what we are doing.

But, make no mistake about it, we understand the importance of that relationship and, more importantly, we have taken a much fuller view than previous Administrations. This is not partisan. It goes back to Republicans and Democrats alike, the concerns about the risks that China presents to American wealth creation and our continued democracy.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate that.

I would like to move on at this point to Burma. A year and a half ago, the Burmese military drove the Rohingya out of the Rakhine State through a campaign of killings and rapes and burning of villages, and some of the most horrific and unspeakable crimes that we had seen on this globe in a long, long time. We all appreciated when then-Secretary Tillerson, your predecessor, dubbed these atrocities as ethnic cleansing. Now, as you know, ethnic cleansing is a powerful message, but it does not have legal weight.

And since 2017, overwhelming evidence has come out that clearly shows that the Burmese military committed crimes against humanity. Even the Department’s own investigation into these atrocities came to similar conclusions. Several entities, including the House,

have concluded that these crimes constitute genocide. The State Department has not made any legal pronouncement at this point beyond ethnic cleansing.

Given all the evidence available to you, could you comment today if you are ready to conclude or where you are in determining whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese military did constitute at least crimes against humanity?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, let me try to address that. You referenced the report that the State Department did. It was amazing work by some really talented State Department officers to go out and collect that data. I think the data speaks for itself in terms of the horrific nature of what took place there.

With respect to making this legal determination, I am not prepared to provide you an answer today. Know that we are still looking at it, frankly, that I am still looking at that more specifically. My objective here is to get a really good outcome, to change this behavior, then to hold those responsible accountable. I want to make sure that we do this in a thoughtful way. I get the messaging that takes place when a Secretary of State makes these designations. I value that and it is important. But I think we would all agree the most important thing we can do is get both accountability and behavioral change, and that is what the State Department is working to do. We are still actively considering how to approach those conclusions.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Georgia and Ukraine both face intense continued pressure from Putin. Both have territory illegally under Russian control. Despite the risks, Georgia and Ukraine, and really many Eastern European countries, actively pursue pro-Western policies. Could you describe how the President's budget enhances our support for these two critical partners?

Secretary POMPEO. So, you have seen real tangible ways we have done in Ukraine, providing defensive items to the Ukrainian people. We have provided intelligence assistance. I saw that in my previous role and before I was the Secretary of State. You have seen our efforts all across the world, Ukraine and Georgia included, to push back against Russian efforts to interfere when elections are approaching, as we are in Ukraine today.

There are many elements. And I was speaking about things mostly that the State Department and the Department of Defense were involved in. There are elements all across the U.S. Government determined to help the Georgian people, who are very pro-American and share our understanding of the way that region ought to operate.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

I have only got 30 seconds. So, I want to conclude on North Korea. I want to applaud both you and the President and his team for being willing to walk away from a bad deal in Hanoi. It reminded me a lot of a President who up to this point was my most respected President, Ronald Reagan, walking away from Gorbachev in Reykjavik. So, thank you for doing that. It is easy to enter into a bad deal and you get some press that is positive. But you were willing to walk away. God bless you for doing it. Keep the sanctions

up, and let's denuclearize that peninsula. Thank you for your efforts.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Connolly?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome back, Mr. Secretary, and thank you for being here.

Mr. Secretary, I do not want to talk at a political level today with you. I want to talk from the heart. And I want to talk about a matter of justice on behalf of one of my constituents well known to you. I want to show you a picture.

This picture took place on November 19th, 2017 in my district. I am holding a cane because I had had a bad accident at a NATO meeting in Bucharest, Romania, a few months before and I still needed a cane to hobble around, not the most flattering picture of me.

Next to me is a man named Jamal Khashoggi. He is a mild-mannered man. He and I are discussing Middle East issues. He was a Saudi citizen, family, children, had on occasion worked for the Saudi government or for members of the royal family. He was mild-mannered, soft-spoken, and a moderate critic of the Kingdom. He wanted to see modernization. He wanted to see reforms. He was a columnist sometimes for The Washington Post, our local newspaper here in Washington.

On October 2d, 2018, 11 months later, my constituent, a legal resident of the United States who lived in Tysons Corner in Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, was lured into the sovereign territory, the consulate of the Saudi government in Istanbul because he was seeking papers to get remarried. He had his fiancée outside waiting for him. He had been to the consulate before, and they had lulled him into believing he would be safe. But, of course, he was not.

What we know was that, on that day, two planes under the control of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia flew in with two teams whose objective was to either kidnap or kill Mr. Khashoggi. One presumes the objective involved killing because, not a diplomatic tool normally, they brought with them a bone saw. We know all of that because of revelations from Turkey. But those revelations, as I understand it, have been confirmed by our intelligence community; you would know better than I.

Nonetheless, what we do know is the Saudi government lied consistently. They lied about whether he safely left the consulate that day, knowing full well he did not. They lied about his murder. They lied about the conspiracy to murder him. They lied about who did it and how it was done.

And I guess I want to show you another picture, Mr. Secretary. This is a picture that took place 14 days after the murder. And that shows you and the Crown Prince, who many believe orchestrated and ordered the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, my constituent. And I guess what this picture raises is a question. At what point, as Americans, do we insist that the inalienable rights enumerated in our Declaration of Independence, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, all three of which were denied my constituent, Mr. Khashoggi, when do they trump diplomatic nicety? Is there ever a

time when we are going to, as a country, insist, you know what, we are not going to do business as normal and we are going to hold you to account?

Now, at that meeting, you said, I believe, that they would be held to account, but you were meeting with a man who was assuring you they would be held to account, when he is himself suspected strongly of having orchestrated the murder. And so, I guess I want to ask you, Mr. Secretary, were you aware of the fact at that point of the gruesome details of the murder of my constituent, Mr. Khashoggi? Did you discuss that murder with the Crown Prince? And how are we going, moving forward, to hold the Crown Prince and the Saudi government responsible for one of the most grisly episodes ever to occur in a consulate or an embassy in our diplomatic experience?

Secretary POMPEO. So, you asked three questions there, I believe. The first one was what was my knowledge base. I think at that time I knew most of what had taken place, although I do not recall the exact sequence. I certainly have learned more about that since then. I have learned additional facts since that moment in time.

The second question was did I discuss the murder. The answer is yes. I think I said it that day, that I had discussed the murder with him.

And then, the third question is how will we hold them accountable. You have seen the Trump Administration do just that with respect to 17 individuals. We are continuing all across the government, certainly with overt means and all the tools that we have in our capacity, to learn more facts about this. President Trump has made very clear that we will continue to work to identify those who are responsible for Jamal Khashoggi's murder and hold them accountable. We will. I stand by that today. I am sure President Trump will as well.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And just a real quick one. And does that mean, Mr. Secretary, no matter how high up it might go?

Secretary POMPEO. I said "anyone".

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I pray we get justice for Mr. Khashoggi and his family and friends.

Thank you.

Mr. SHERMAN [presiding]. Now I recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Secretary, it is great to see you. We are proud of your service in this body and your current efforts.

I want to begin by applauding the President and your Department for taking steps to recognize the Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. As you might recall, I wrote you a letter last year in that regard, encouraging that recognition. And I just think at this time, with Iran and their proxies, terrorist organizations, the IRGC, Hezbollah, all on the border, there is no more an important time than now to take this action. And I speak for all the people in the district that I am privileged to represent that are proud of this action, support it, and just say thank you very much. And we offer our support and assistance.

Moving on, regarding Tibet, I am just wondering, what is preventing the Administration from formally placing a diplomatic post in Lhasa?

Secretary POMPEO. It is something that previous Administrations and this Administration continue to review. We have to place it in the context of our larger policy, Indo-Pacific policy, even more broadly. We are trying to make sure that we get each of these steps right.

What President Trump has directed each of us to do is recognize facts on the ground, try to apply good common sense, and then, generate policies that actually get outcomes. I think for an awful long time, we have done things that made us feel good, but did not deliver. And so, with respect to this particular issue, and all the issues that surround it in Asia, we want to make sure that we actually deliver for the American people. And so, as we consider the appropriateness of a lot of decisions on designations, on sanctions, on how the Department of Defense is going to posture, how we work with Southeastern countries, we want to make sure that we actually deliver for the American people.

Mr. PERRY. We hope you do. It has been a long time, and I think it would be helpful for our broader relationship, so to speak.

Moving on, but somewhat within the realm of China, will the State Department consider revoking pouch status for construction materials regarding the housing complex on Connecticut Avenue that China is building in association with their diplomatic mission here until they respond to a reciprocal-type arrangement with our embassy in Beijing?

Secretary POMPEO. I am familiar with the challenges we are having with delivering diplomatic materials consistent with international treaty obligations there in Beijing. We are considering lots of different ways to convince the Chinese to permit us to do this basic diplomatic function.

Mr. PERRY. Is it not part of their agreement that they cannot be shipping their construction materials in via diplomatic pouch? I mean, did not they sign that agreement or agree to that provision?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not certain if that is the case or not.

Mr. PERRY. It is my understanding, but if there is something other than that, maybe we will followup afterwards. But it seems to me that this is a circumstance that should be easy. When our construction, our building over there, needs assistance and needs attention, that we should be able to do that, and certainly under the exact same provisions that they are. And the fact that they would not allow that, while we allow them to build on Connecticut Avenue, on the high ground, mind you, as a military officer, that concerns not only me, but many Americans greatly.

Moving on, with the advent of the Mueller report, I am wondering if your Department is starting to investigate people at the State Department that used their official position to distribute elements or discuss elements of the Steele dossier, with the intent of sparking an investigation into the President of the United States, that work in the State Department, those folks. Are there ongoing investigations or are you considering investigations at this time?

Secretary POMPEO. I am going to honor the commitment I made when I signed up for this gig. I am not going to talk about ongoing

investigations that we have. But you can rest assured that, if we see malfeasance, misbehavior, those doing things that are inappropriate, the team understands their mission set, which is to hold every officer accountable against the mission set that the Constitution and President Trump have laid out for us.

Mr. PERRY. And I appreciate not discussing ongoing investigations, but now that the Mueller investigation is complete and the report, at least the summary is issued, and we expect the full report or at least a portion of that when able, do you envision any new investigations or opening any investigations subsequent to that, based on what you know now about some of the people at the State Department who have engaged in circulating or being a part of the Steele dossier?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I am not going to speculate on investigations that we might or might not open.

Mr. PERRY. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I yield.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

The chair now recognizes himself.

I have four questions for the record that I just want to have my colleagues be aware of.

The first of these is whether we can count on you to support continued assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh Artsakh, especially for demining efforts, and expanding support to health care and rehabilitation services, especially those injured in mines.

The second is whether we can count on you to support aid to Armenia for the 25,000 Syrian refugees that they have taken in.

The third is I am chair of the Sindh Caucus. Southern Pakistan's Sindh has faced extrajudicial killings, forced conversions of Hindu girls after they have been kidnapped, and then, forcibly marriages. And Dr. Anwar Leghari, the brother of a dear friend of mine, was subject to extrajudicial killing 4 years ago. So, I hope that you can pledge to raise a gross human rights in Sindh with the Pakistani diplomats that you interact with. And I hope that you will also be able to support more outreach in the Sindhi language from our Karachi consulate, and to support \$1.5 million a year, so that the Voice of America can broadcast in the Sindhi language.

Now I want to pick up on Mr. Connolly's comments. Khashoggi was brutally murdered. So far, our sole response has been to tell 17 thugs that they cannot visit Disneyland, these 17 button men who will not get U.S. embassies. That is an inadequate response. I am going to suggest a better response.

There are a lot of things we could do to Saudi Arabia that may not be our traditional policy, may not be in our interest, but one thing that is in our interest is to prevent Saudi Arabia from getting a nuclear weapon for three reasons. If you cannot trust a regime with a bone saw, you should not trust them with nuclear weapons. Second, even if you think MBS is a tremendous leader for the future, he is not a democratically elected leader. He could be overthrown by the Wahhabi clerics at anytime. And, of course, the Middle East does not need a new nuclear weapon.

What I have seen in this Administration recently—and it has just come out—is an effort to evade Congress, and to some extent evade your Department, and provide substantial nuclear tech-

nology and aid to Saudi Arabia while Saudi Arabia refuses to abide by any of the controls we would like to see regarding reprocessing, enrichment, et cetera. And we see strong advocacy of this coming from a group called IP3 and others show seem very close to the Saudi regime.

In particular, we have seen your Assistant Secretary of State Chris Ford say the Department will conduct some nuclear cooperation through memorandums of understanding, which do not require congressional oversight or approval, rather than through a one-two-three agreement.

And we see that there were some six licenses granted by the Department of Energy which in normal course are made available to the public, but are, instead, being kept secret, all of which provide for the transfer of nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia.

So, can I count on you and the Administration to release these six—they are called Part 810 authorizations—by the middle of this month?

Secretary POMPEO. I will have to look into it.

Mr. SHERMAN. Can your staff prepare for us or you prepare for us a list of all the types of nuclear commerce the Administration believe it is entitled to engage in without a one-two-three agreement that has gone through congressional review?

Secretary POMPEO. We can certainly take a look at that. I can assure you that we will do our level best to comply with the law every day. And if you believe that we are not doing that on our obligations, please let me know.

Mr. SHERMAN. It appears to be in one case, it appears that this is an end run around the law in an effort to achieve a policy. Do we want to provide nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia before they enter into agreements for no reprocessing and no enrichment?

Secretary POMPEO. We have been working—"we" collectively, the U.S. Government, the Department of Energy, the State Department, and others—have been working to get—the Saudis have indicated they want civil nuclear power. We have been working to make sure that they do—

Mr. SHERMAN. But why would not they want controls, except for the reason that they want nuclear weapons? How do you generate an extra kilowatt by keeping the IAEA inspectors out?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, you know, I can only tell you that the Islamic Republic of Iran very much wanted to do the same, right? They did not want any of these things in, either, and we got—

Mr. SHERMAN. We treated Iran like an enemy. If Saudi Arabia is hell-bent on developing a nuclear program that is uncontrolled and designed to make them a nuclear State, or a possible nuclear State, we will treat them as an enemy?

Secretary POMPEO. We are working to ensure that the nuclear power that they get is something we understand and does not present that risk. That is the mission statement—

Mr. SHERMAN. These six secret Part 810 authorizations are inconsistent with that, and I look forward to you making them available to the public, or at least to this committee.

And with that, I recognize my fellow head of the Asia Subcommittee, the ranking member thereof, Ted Yoho.

Mr. YOH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, good to see you again, and thank you for the great job you and the Administration are doing. And it is good to see Ms. Mary Elizabeth with you.

When you came into office, what were the biggest threats to the U.S. and the world that you guys saw or inherited from the previous Administration?

Secretary POMPEO. Goodness. You know, I get asked to rank all the time. It is always a challenge. There are some that are immediate, right? The threat from terrorism is on top of us. It is real. It is a threat every day. We have done our best to make progress. We have made progress in certain parts; in other places we still have a tremendous amount of work to do.

But the threats, our renewed efforts to build that coalition is to push back against what I will call the traditional power rivalries have been very real, the threat from China, the threat from Russia, the threat from Iran. And then, of course, we have spent a lot of time on proliferation issues, Iran there, too, North Korea.

Mr. YOHO. Well, and that is what I wanted to bring up. Terrorism, ISIS, obviously, DPRK, China, Afghanistan, the situation. Has that threat of ISIS been lessened in the 2-years this Administration has been there?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I believe that it has. I think the numbers are different. It is still there.

Mr. YOHO. It is, and it will never go away, but I think the immediate threat has been the dynamics have changed drastically.

Has the DPRK threat been lessened? And that is an obvious because, if we look at the last ballistic missiles or nuclear bombs launched or detonated, it has been over 15 months. So, I think the results that you guys are doing and pursuing are doing a great job.

Has the Administration backed or signed into law legislation to counter China's BRI? I almost feel guilty asking that.

[Laughter.]

Secretary POMPEO. We have. President Trump did sign.

Mr. YOHO. He did sign the BUILD Act? And that is a way that we can stand up to what they are doing with the BRI.

Do you have sufficient resources, i.e., people or budget, to accomplish your mission to advance America's diplomacy?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. YOHO. In the staffing shortfalls, my understanding is many people have been nominated and positions have been nominated. Where is the holdup?

Secretary POMPEO. On staffing, I brought the data with me. Our staffing levels were actually in pretty good shape. The overall size of the work force, the Foreign Service Officer work force, by the end of this year, will have at or near more Foreign Service Officers than ever in the history of the United States of America.

We are challenged. I have in front of me a list of 40-plus senior leaders. I have not had a Chief Operating Officer in 2 years. I do not have a head of Near East Affairs. These are highly qualified people that have been held up.

Mr. YOHO. By the Senate?

Secretary POMPEO. They are sitting in the U.S. Senate today.

I made a commitment to get the team on the field. I have got an ambassador waiting to go the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a topic

we just talked about. I want to get these folks out there, so that we can deliver American diplomacy in every corner of the world.

Mr. YOHO. And I am going to give a shoutout to you because I had the opportunity to travel with you for a better part of a day. What I saw you and your team doing I thought was pretty phenomenal, because I have never seen this done before where you were traveling within the States to promote what the State Department does. You were talking to young students to get them involved in thinking about going into a career in the State Department. And I commend you and your team for doing that, because I look back when I grew up as a pretty sheltered life. I did not even think that was a realm of possibility. Again, I cannot tell you how much I appreciate that.

I share the same beliefs as Mr. Sires, of my colleague, in regards to Russia, Cuba, China, and Iran, that there is maybe a destabilizing, coordinated effort underway to destabilize the Western Hemisphere. And I think you and I have talked about this, that Venezuela could be but the rubicon, because if Venezuela fails, it will show that Cuba, you know, they cannot survive because they are the ones that have been propping that up.

How do you assess that? And along with that, how should we respond to Russia's interference under the guise of support to the Maduro regime in Venezuela? And do we need to reemphasize the Monroe Doctrine?

Secretary POMPEO. So, I have spoken to my Russian counterpart no less than three times on the issue of Venezuela and their interference, the fact that they are undermining Venezuelan democracy. It was met with precisely what you would expect from them.

We are doing our level best to push back against the capacity of Cuba, who has had intelligence officers and security officers on the ground there today protecting Maduro. It shocks me that the Venezuelan military will tolerate these foreigners, right, coming to run their security service. As a former U.S. Army officer, it would have been embarrassing if a third country had to come in and provide security for the leadership of our country. But that is where we are today.

We are doing our level best to put sanctions in place, to put restrictions in place, and to, more importantly, build our coalition, not just in South America and Central America with the OAS and the Lima Group, but European countries from all the around the world who understand that democratic Venezuela is the only path forward and Maduro has to go before we can get there.

Mr. YOHO. I look forward to working with you.

I am out of time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and I yield back. Chairman ENGEL [presiding]. Thank you.

Mr. Deutch?

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being with us. Thank you for your service.

March 9th marked the 12th anniversary of the disappearance of Bob Levinson from Iran's Kish Island. Bob is my constituent. He is part of our community back home in Coral Springs. He is a patriot, as you know, who devoted 30 years to serving his country, first, with the DEA, and then, a quarter century with the FBI. He

is a husband of 40 years. He is a father of seven. He is a grandfather of six, five of whom he has never met.

Iran's despicable practice of holding Americans and other foreign nationals hostage should not be tolerated by any responsible nation. Mr. Secretary, I know you are well familiar with Bob's case and the Levinson family. Bob's son, Doug, is here today. I appreciate that you have always been willing to engage with the Levinsons and with me on this matter. And I would ask that you look for every opportunity to raise Bob's case; also, to make bringing Bob home a priority. I would ask that you implore the President himself to sit down with the Levinsons and the other families of others detained in Iran. And I am willing to work with you, Mr. Secretary, others in the Administration, anyone—anyone—who can help bring Bob home.

I would like to turn to Syria. Mr. Secretary, I am troubled by your Syria policy because I, frankly, do not understand it. I do not understand how freezing assistance, pulling back U.S. troops, and ceding American leadership to Russia and Iran will help protect our national security interests. I have a series of related questions.

The first has to do with the role of Russia in Syria. There have been now several requests for information, so that we can do the job that we are supposed to do in providing oversight, requesting information about the meetings that the President has had with Vladimir Putin, particularly the summit that took place in Helsinki, that took place without anyone there. We have an obligation on behalf of the American people to know what was said. And as the chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee, it is of great interest to me and our subcommittee to understand what may or may not have been said on the topic of Syria.

And my first question is, why has the Administration refrained from providing information of those Trump-Putin meetings to Congress?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, let me begin by saying, it is not remotely unusual for senior leaders to have private conversations with their counterparts around the world. So, to suggest otherwise I find surprising. I might use a different descriptor, but I will use "surprising" in a second.

As for what is going to be shared and released on conversations between the President and his foreign partners, the White House ultimately makes those decisions. And so, the inquiries would properly be lodged there.

Mr. DEUTCH. And we have. And you are the Secretary of State before us. And as a former Member of this body, you also understand the constitutional obligation we have to provide oversight of the Administration.

The Fiscal Year foreign affairs budget eliminates all economic assistance to the Syrian people and all security assistance, known as foreign military financing. That is to Iraq. Since the re-emergence of ISIS, Iraq used FMF to fund urgent counterterrorism requirements, and the State Department claimed those funds were critical to Iraq's efforts to defeat ISIS and improve the security environment in Iraq.

Given these statements by the State Department, why the decision to cut FMF when it seems, based on those statements, that

it would undermine efforts in Iraq, our efforts in Iraq, and create the conditions that would allow ISIS to revive?

Secretary POMPEO. Look, I am proud of what this Administration has done in Iraq. I think we have been prepared to do things, take risks, act against Iran, the true malign actor inside of Iraq today, in ways the previous Administration just had no interest in whatsoever. So, I am very proud of the work we have done there.

I have traveled now to Baghdad as the Secretary. I had been there before in my previous role. I have senior officials on the ground. I would love it if I could get my Ambassadors from the region confirmed. If you could talk to your colleagues on the Senate side, that would be most helpful to us in executing American policy.

But I am convinced that we will have the resources we need to deliver all of the assistance to build out the Iraqi security forces in a way to give the Iraqi leaders—the speaker of the house will be here this week; I will get a chance to meet with him again—to deliver all the support needed, so that Iraq can become independent, free, and sovereign. I think that is your goal. It is certainly mine.

Mr. DEUTCH. It is. We will have an opportunity to talk more about those budget decisions.

Moving to a different part of the world, but continuing a discussion that we started on human rights, Mr. Secretary, there are more than a million Uyghurs who have been detained without due process in Xijiang, kept in internment camps, reeducation camps, under the guise of antiterrorism efforts. There are reports that China is now considering implementing this same approach in Tibet. Can you tell us what the State Department has done to raise these human rights abuses with the Chinese government and to elevate these issues which are so critical to us as we try to advance our values around the world?

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Kinzinger?

Mr. DEUTCH. Could the Secretary answer?

Chairman ENGEL. Yes, certainly.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary POMPEO. Let me just try to do it briefly. The human rights violations that you identified, we have spoken about strongly. If you watch our Human Rights Report, what I said and what the head of DRL said that morning when the Human Rights Report came out, we have elevated this. We have raised this. We have done that publicly. You have seen that.

I met with a group of Uyghurs just yesterday in my office. Ambassador Brownback has been relentless, if nothing else, with respect to this issue. And you should know that we have done that not only publicly in the way that you can see, but each time we interact with our Chinese counterparts this issue is raised as well.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENGEL. Mr. Kinzinger?

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

We talk a lot about politics ending at the water's edge. I believe it does and should. Even under the prior Administration, I very

much religiously held that. But what kind of an effect does it do for our politics when we do not have Ambassadors in place? Just briefly, I mean, how does that hurt you?

Secretary POMPEO. So, I do not want to criticize any of the charges who are running, doing their level best to manage the chief-of-mission responsibilities in theater in the countries that they are in. But other countries know that it is different when you have a Senate-approved nominee who has gone through it and is now the dedicated Ambassador. It reduces your capacity to speak on behalf of America.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you.

And would you trust Iran with a bone saw? In other words, earlier the question was, would you trust Saudi Arabia with a bone saw; therefore, we cannot give them nuclear weapons or engage with them at all. I think an important point to note is I would not trust Iran with a bone saw. They have quite a few bodies, frankly, on their conscience from Syria, from a lot of places.

And so, I just want to commend you and the Administration for your decision to get out of the Iran nuclear deal. I think that was a smart move. I think it sent a very strong message that it is not just about the development of nuclear weapons over a period of 10 years; it is also about behavior in the region and development of ballistic missiles. So, I just want to commend you on that.

Closer to home—actually, I want to hit Yemen real quick. The very first thing this committee did—and I hate to obsess about it and channelize on it, but it has really stuck with me—the very first thing this committee did, Mr. Secretary, in the new Congress was, basically, to take away the authority of the Administration to be involved in any way with Yemen. And I think most of the members of this committee have never had a classified briefing on what is occurring in Yemen. They have never had a briefing on the SCIF. And I think there is a perception out there that it is the United States and Saudi Arabia that are creating a humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Mr. Secretary, can you briefly talk about maybe the Houthis' role in a humanitarian crisis in Yemen, many actions of Iran, and maybe some of the role that we do not hear about in terms of who is really driving that crisis?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not sure I can do it briefly, but let me try. It is complicated space.

Mr. KINZINGER. Take whatever time you need.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. So, let me start with something that often gets neglected in this debate, too. There is still active al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula there. The United States is engaged in trying to crush it there, in Yemen as well. Remember that Yemen sits on the southern border of Saudi Arabia and has launched hundreds of missiles into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia out of Yemen. They were launched by the Houthis and they were Iranian missiles in nearly every case, missiles that had been brought across the borders, in through ports, in pieces and parts. And now, the Iranians are attempting to establish the capacity to actually build out missiles inside of Yemen.

The United States has a responsibility to do all that it can to prevent the humanitarian crisis, which is ravaging that nation. We

have done that. I think the number is now close to a billion dollars that the United States has provided. The Saudis and Emirates each have provided billions of dollars as well. The one country that has not provided a single dollar to aid the humanitarian crisis is the Islamic Republic of Iran. Instead, they have chosen to use their money to get Houthis and Yemenis killed and spur the continuation of the civil war, and frankly, put Americans at risk.

We all fly. Members of Congress fly into King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. They are launching missiles that can range to Riyadh. This is a very real risk, and the Saudis have a right to defend their nation, just in the same we would if we had missiles at airports in Denver or LA or New York. And at its root, Iran is driving this behavior.

Mr. KINZINGER. You obviously represent one instrument of power, which is diplomacy. Actually, you have a few others in your toolkit. But when you think about diplomacy and you think about the message that this Congress sent on the Yemen issue, and considering there are hundreds of defense cooperation agreements that, frankly, for the first time ever now could be brought up and brought under privileged resolution, including our agreement with Israel, what does that do to your ability, for instance, to try to solve diplomatically the crisis in the Middle East when Congress is sending kind of contrary messages?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, look, the good news is I am hopeful that Martin Griffiths, the U.N. Special Envoy in Yemen, in the next handful of days will make progress. He may not. We have a great agreement in Stockholm. We have not been able to enforce it. The Houthis have refused to withdraw from the Port of Hodeidah. I hope that they will in the coming days. Frankly, if I were betting, I would probably bet against, but one lives in hope.

Congress obviously has its own independent right to act as it so chooses. It has its constitutional authorities. I can say this: I hope everyone who cares about the people of Yemen understand that the legislation that passed did not remotely benefit them. Indeed, it will work to their detriment.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you for your service, sir. I appreciate it. And I will yield back to the chairman.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Keating?

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I do want to go back to the instance where a bone saw was used and just had a couple of questions. I know that you would agree that every single person who is responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi needs to be held accountable. You said that in January in Saudi Arabia. And thank you for saying that.

I do want to ask, however, along those lines: 17 people were sanctioned out on that. So, there seems to be—is there a discrepancy between the people that were arrested and the ones that were sanctioned under that? Is there a difference in that number?

Secretary POMPEO. Congressman, can I get back to you? There is a large overlap. I could not tell you that they are completely coincident, that those were—

Mr. KEATING. OK, but did you or anyone from our country have discussions with the Saudis about who was going to be sanctioned or how that list was determined?

Secretary POMPEO. No, we did not. Indeed, the sanctions decisions were based on information that we had in our possession. It was information that the American Department of Treasury was able to validate.

Mr. KEATING. Well, I know that, it is my understanding that the intel chairs had a briefing.

Now you mentioned that you had some information when you met with the Crown Prince. Did you hear the tapes? And what was the nature of that? Did you hear the tapes at that point that Turkey sent us or tapes that we had ourselves, either one?

Secretary POMPEO. I have not to date heard the tapes.

Mr. KEATING. Did you think it would have been a good idea, before you sat down with the Crown Prince, to get as much intelligence as you can to deal with that?

Secretary POMPEO. I did.

Mr. KEATING. But you did not do that? Or you did not have access to the tapes at that point? Is that it?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not recall the precise timing. I do not recall the precise timing of when the information transited. I am very confident I have a deep understanding of all the intelligence the U.S. Government has in its possession, and I would have had every bit of it that was in its possession at that time.

Mr. KEATING. Oh, OK, because you had just said a few minutes ago that you got some more later on.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. No, we continue to learn things. I am confident we will learn something this afternoon and tomorrow as well.

Mr. KEATING. Well, thank you for that.

Another question. I believe that the Senate has requested that their Members have a classified briefing on the intelligence surrounding the Khashoggi murder. Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. It would not have come to the State Department. I assume it would have gone to the intelligence—

Mr. KEATING. Well, I thought you might know since you knew everything about what was going on. So, let me ask you this: would you join us if we requested, as a committee, that classified briefing, so we could be informed? Indeed, we are the committee that will be involved in arms sales to Saudi Arabia. It would be important for us to have that access. Can you see, in your current capacity or your former capacity as CIA Director, why this committee should not have that information?

Secretary POMPEO. I will say this: I know this often gets caught up on your side, in the legislative branch. There are jurisdictional debates about which Member sees certain pieces of classified information. I am not about to wade into that briar patch.

Mr. KEATING. I see. Well, I think we should, and I think, Mr. Chairman, we should make that request formal in terms of our committee, if not for the whole membership of the House.

Yesterday, I had a hearing here in our Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia. And as part of that hearing, we dealt with the historic 70-year alliance that we had with Europe, one of the most

successful alliances in modern history, if not the history of Europe itself.

And one of the things that came across to me in a recent trip there about three and a half weeks ago was the concern with the officials there. Let me give you one example that really was difficult for me to address when I was asked. The EU officials that we met with, they used words like “painful” and “hurtful,” and they meant it sincerely, when they were talking about how they felt from actions of the United States.

And one thing they said, in particular, was that the emergency security powers that we used to assess the tariffs that were there struck them, because they asked the question, “You are using emergency security powers to create tariffs on our closest allies.” And they were asking us—and maybe you could help us with this—when did they become a security risk to the United States?

Secretary POMPEO. I will tell you, I do not know with whom you were speaking. If you want to share with me who you spoke to and exactly what they said, I would be happy to—

Mr. KEATING. It was repeated through all. I will tell you, you could go right to the leadership of the EU—

Secretary POMPEO. Because my conversations have been very different.

Mr. KEATING. I was in the room. So, trust me, it was a high-ranking EU leader.

Secretary POMPEO. I believe you.

Mr. KEATING. As a matter of fact, I would like to know the answer to that. It does not matter who asks. I am asking.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, so I am happy, if it is from you, I am happy to answer.

Mr. KEATING. Well, it is for me, but, you know what, it is important that our allies know this, too.

Secretary POMPEO. This Administration has worked with European countries in ways the previous Administrations simply refused. I get it. Sometimes when we ask them to do more, when we ask hard things, when we ask the American taxpayers for money in America for our Department of Defense, I know many Americans would prefer we spend those resources someplace else.

When I encounter European officials and they say, “Boy, it is hard for us to get to our own promise for 2 percent. It is just really hard to convince our people,” I—

Mr. KEATING. Well, can I, because my time is out, I just want to say this: that the President said—again, the NATO officials we met with, they are great allies, they remain great allies, but there were some comments that were made, Article 5 concerns. And that came up at yesterday’s hearing, too. And the President said “Montenegro is a tiny country with very strong people. . . . They are very aggressive people. They may get aggressive, and congratulations, you are in World War III.” Is that the way we should approach our Article 5 agreement with our NATO countries?

Secretary POMPEO. Next week, I will host here in Washington, DC, the 70th anniversary of the NATO alliance. I will be with Secretary General Stoltenberg. America will once again, this Administration will once again reaffirm our commitment to our NATO allies, and we will again ask them, because it is important, to do

their share to make sure that NATO is around for the next 70 years.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, and I look forward to the information, the personnel information, that the chair requested. And hopefully, you can provide that to the committee in 7 days.

I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

And I want to remind everyone that Mr. Stoltenberg is going to speak before a Joint Session of Congress, I believe it is next week.

Mr. Zeldin?

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. I have great respect for your service to our country, first in your class at West Point, a great colleague of ours, did an exceptional job as our CIA Director, and I am really a big admirer of your work so far as Secretary of State.

I do have some concerns I want to bring up. I have been working with Chairman Engel and other colleagues with regards to the Bytyqi brothers, who were constituents of the First congressional District of New York. They were murdered 20 years ago in Serbia. And the chairman and I recently met in Munich with President Vucic and asked him about this. There really needs to be justice delivered. And anything that you and your team can do, and any opportunities that present itself, we would really like to see justice in that case.

I am concerned about Turkey's acquisition of the S-400's and what that means, especially with our upcoming transfer, potential transfer, of F-35s.

I am greatly concerned with the human rights violations that we see around the world, but I also want to touch on a number of other topics that I think are just going really well.

And one of the words that has been mentioned at this hearing was the term "disengagement". Over the course of these last few years, ISIS has been nearly wiped off the map in Iraq and Syria. The caliphate is gone.

Thank you for the recognition of Golan Heights and Israel's sovereignty over the Golan; the embassy move in Israel to Jerusalem, and encouraging other countries to follow suit, as we are seeing now; helping the Taylor Force Act get passed and signed into law, so that the Palestinian Authority does not financially reward, as they continue to do, terrorists who murder innocent Americans and Israelis. We should be cutting off our U.S. tax dollars when that happens. It is a better policy for us to go forward with the Taylor Force Act and the principles behind it.

The use of the MOA when President Trump first came into office. I was in Afghanistan shortly thereafter, and a direct, positive response with morale and effects, but our troops know that their President and this Administration has their backs.

Standing with Guaido and recognizing him as the constitutional Interim President of Venezuela; and all your efforts to combat anti-semitism, recently appointing a Special Envoy, I thank you for doing that. That was a position that was long vacant, and it is great to see it filled with Elan Carr.

In Syria, it should be noted that we followed through with air strikes after Assad's use of chemical weapons against his own people. In the past, there have been threats that use of chemical weapons would result in consequences from the U.S., and the United States now follows through. And I believe that the Assad regime and their allies know what the consequence is of use of chemical weapons.

In Russia, the imposition of sanctions in response to the use of biological or chemical weapons in the U.K.

As far as engagement with regards to North Korea, when President Trump first came into office, putting the military option back on the table, but understanding that the military option should always be the last possible option of anyone on the entire globe between any nations.

The USMCA, which Congress should pass. I met with President Trump yesterday on it. I believe this should be a bipartisan effort, Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate, to get speedy passage.

In China, confronting the currency manipulation and the IP infringement and trade deficits; the imposition of tariffs if China does not positively change their behavior.

I know Congressman Cicilline is following me, something that he is deeply passionate about. I am working with him with concern about the LGBT community in other parts of the world where they have been criminalized. They are being murdered simply because they are LGBT. Over the course of recent weeks, I have seen that the State Department has taken an important leadership role in confronting that.

But, in our brief time, I just hope you could talk about your upcoming efforts as it relates to religious freedom. I know it is a personal topic. There is a lot of religious minorities who are being persecuted across the world. And with our remaining time, I am hoping you could touch on that. Thank you.

Secretary POMPEO. On religious freedom, protecting religious minorities, not simply—we have talked about the Uyghurs, Muslim minorities in China, but Christian minorities in Iraq that we spoke about earlier this morning of every religion. We will host the second ever ministerial for religious freedom at the State Department this summer. We had—I have forgotten the number—dozens and dozens of foreign ministers to talk about religious freedom, not all of whom were in the place we want them to be, but each of those who was present that day was making real progress in places one might not expect. It is important. It is America's first freedom. All our other freedoms build from that, and I hope that we can expand that around the world.

Mr. ZELDIN. Our Secretary contacted me at 1:58 a.m. on your time to talk business on Monday morning. The last person that Secretary Pompeo and his team—the last thing they should be accused of is disengagement. I appreciate your continued service.

[Laughter.]

And I yield back.

Secretary POMPEO. It was a different time in my time zone.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Zeldin.

We are going to just go out of order quickly because one of our members has to be on the floor. I am going to call on Ms. Wild.
Ms. WILD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Pompeo, I am deeply concerned about the unprecedented lack of transparency and potential conflicts of interest in this Administration. Members of Congress and the American people do not always know what foreign policy decisions are being made or whose interest they are intended to serve.

Earlier this month, on March 18th, you held a telephone press briefing focused on, quote, "international religious freedom," end quote, that was only open to faith-based media outlets. This briefing was closed to the State Department's press corps and closed to major independent news organizations. The State Department has said it will not release a transcript of the briefing to the public, which is highly unusual for this type of high-level briefing.

To me, this instance raises concerns about First Amendment violations. The Administration should not be granting some media outlets access to briefings while selectively excluding others based on the Administration's preferences. As a public official, what you say, especially during a press briefing, is inherently of interest to the public and the media. And I am concerned, also, that the Department during your tenure has greatly reduced the frequency with which it holds regular open press briefings on foreign policy matters of the day.

So, my question to you is, why did you want to limit the type of participants who could join this press briefing call on March 18th, and why are you not releasing the transcript of that briefing and the call participants who participated?

Secretary POMPEO. Congresswoman, I talk to the press all the time. I talk to different groups of the press all the time. Indeed, sometimes I talk to single members of the press. I do that with great frequency. And when I do, I do not release transcripts of those conversations. Those are interviews that I grant individual reporters. They write certain pieces and certain other pieces they do not. This was no different from that in any material respect. I am confident I will do so again.

Ms. WILD. Excuse me. Secretary, my question was very specific about the March 18th press briefing—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. WILD [continuing]. Which was specifically focused on international religious freedom and was made open only to faith-based media outlets. So, my question to you is not about individual press discussions that you may have on a daily basis, but about a very specific briefing.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I was answering that question.

Ms. WILD. And so, will you release a transcript of that briefing?

Secretary POMPEO. No.

Ms. WILD. Will you identify who the participants were in that briefing?

Secretary POMPEO. No.

Ms. WILD. And your rationale for that is simply that it is something that you like to do?

Secretary POMPEO. It is something that every Secretary of State that I am aware of has done consistently on a consistent basis.

Ms. WILD. So, that will continue to be your practice?

Secretary POMPEO. It will continue. It was Secretary Powell's practice. It was Secretary Rice's practice. It was Secretary Kerry's practice. And Secretary Pompeo intends to continue that practice, yes, ma'am.

Ms. WILD. OK. So, that was a decision made on your own, not with influence by anybody else from the Administration?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. Yes, it was my decision.

Ms. WILD. All right. Secretary, my colleague, Mr. Yoho, commended you on your travels through the United States sharing the message of the State Department. I noticed that you visited Iowa, an interesting choice, along with Texas and Kansas this month on 1-to-2-day visits. Can you reassure this committee that you are not using your travels and engagement as Secretary of State to advance your own personal brand or political ambitions?

Secretary POMPEO. Of course I can.

Ms. WILD. And the purpose, again, for these travels throughout the United States?

Secretary POMPEO. Look, it is true, I did not go to Martha's Vineyard.

Ms. WILD. That is not my question.

Secretary POMPEO. No, but may I—

Ms. WILD. Secretary—

Secretary POMPEO. It's that Secretaries travel—

Ms. WILD. May I—

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. Domestically all the time, ma'am. And the fact that I went to places outside the Acela corridor somehow seems to have alarmed people here in the Beltway. I went there, I will tell you what—

Ms. WILD. I am not alarmed by travel throughout the United States.

Secretary POMPEO. I went there—let me tell you what, let me tell you what my mission set was, what I said when I was on the trip. There were multiple missions. When I went to Houston, I was talking about American energy and its importance to diplomacy. When I went to Kansas, it was a long-planned Global Entrepreneur Summit that we will repeat in the Netherlands in June. When I went to Iowa, I was talking to Iowa farmers about President Trump's trade policy and how it fits into American diplomacy.

And then, second, I had a very selfish mission. I want the most talented people from all across the country to apply and become Foreign Service Officers working as America's finest diplomats.

Those were my mission sets. I spoke publicly at each of these events, in some cases numerous times. I think it would track with what I just told you.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Sensenbrenner?

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

Mr. Secretary, welcome back to this sea of tranquility compared to what your current job is now.

I have a couple of questions. We have seen a rising level of anti-semitism across our country and even in our own government institutions. Several high-profile individuals have spouted off anti-Israel rhetoric that has had to be countered with condemnation resolu-

tions by the House. The Administration is currently attempting to craft a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. The two questions, Mr. Secretary, are: will these statements damage our standing with Israel and make it a weaker ally? And second, do these types of antisemitic acts and rhetoric damage the United States' credibility in the Middle East nations that will be involved in the final agreement?

Secretary POMPEO. I think the answer to both questions is yes, and antisemitic language is abhorrent regardless of the U.S. diplomatic outcome. But, yes, it makes more difficult, undoubtedly.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. So, what we say here, particularly when it is way off base, does make the job of our diplomats more difficult when they are attempting to reach a peace agreement in a part of the world where real peace has not come for centuries?

Secretary POMPEO. Language used by Members of Congress matters. These countries all around the world are listening to you all. They are watching. They are watching to see if this is a whole-of-government United States process, and they are watching voices, even if sometimes those voices are outliers. They do not always know what to make of it.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. My second issue is, as you know, the opioid and fentanyl epidemic has been plaguing our Nation for almost a decade now. Congress has taken aggressive steps to better fund treatment programs and curb the implementation of these deadly substances. Recently, my good friend, Mr. Connolly, and I introduced the Blocking Deadly Fentanyl Imports Act. This would add illicit fentanyl to the list of substances under Section 481 of the Foreign Assistance Act, which makes any exporting nation ineligible for U.S. taxpayers' subsidized foreign aid or Export-Import Bank loans if it fails to cooperate with American narcotics control efforts.

Now, Mr. Secretary, do you believe that this section of the Foreign Assistance Act is an effective tool of combating illegal drug imports into the United States? And do you believe that Mr. Connolly's legislation and mine, bipartisan, would be an effective additional tool in combating illicit fentanyl in our country?

Secretary POMPEO. With respect to your first question, is that section important and effective, the answer is yes. With respect to the particular language you are proposing, my gut tells me it is right. I would love the chance to actually review it and make sure that I understand it in its full context.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. OK. We will talk to you later about that. And I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Cicilline?

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

You and other Administration officials have repeatedly claimed that military action is an option in Venezuela or all options are on the table. As a former Member of Congress, I assume you are familiar with the War Powers Act?

Secretary POMPEO. I am.

Mr. CICILLINE. And as your Special Representative for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, confirmed for me before this committee

there is no current statutory authorization for a military intervention in Venezuela. So, is the Administration currently planning any military action against Venezuela?

Secretary POMPEO. I am certainly not going to speak to that today. I will leave the Department of Defense to speak about their planning. I can say this: any action that we take with respect to Venezuela, whether it is military action or action otherwise, will be in full compliance with U.S. law.

Mr. CICILLINE. And so, I take that that is an agreement that you will honor the Constitution and, as a member of this Administration, seek congressional authorization before any military engagement in Venezuela?

Secretary POMPEO. We will fully comply with the Constitution.

Mr. CICILLINE. I will take that as a yes.

In August, the Administration announced it would cutoff funding to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine, UNRWA, claiming that the U.N. body provides a lifeline and truly vital assistance, but needs reform. Your spokeswoman pledged, then, that the United States will intensify dialogue with the United Nations, host governments, and international stakeholders about new models and new approaches, which may include direct bilateral assistance from the U.S. and other partners that can provide today's Palestinian children with a more durable and dependable path toward a brighter future.

Can you please tell me about this intensified dialogue?

Secretary POMPEO. Sure.

Mr. CICILLINE. What concrete steps has the United States taken and what specific reforms are you working on? And how many suggested reforms has the Administration submitted to the U.N. or to UNRWA as of today?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I could not tell you numbers. I can tell you that we have absolutely lived up to the commitment that you just described there. Indeed, I spoke about it with the Egyptian Foreign Minister just yesterday. I spoke to the Jordan—

Mr. CICILLINE. No, my question, Mr. Secretary, is—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, well, I understand—

Mr. CICILLINE [continuing]. What steps have you taken, concrete steps has the United States taken with respect to these reforms?

Secretary POMPEO. This is how you do reforms, right? This is how you work on them. You go build out coalitions that are designed to resolve the very problems that we identified with UNRWA. And so, we are working—may I answer?

Mr. CICILLINE. Yes, of course. I am anxious for you. I am waiting.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, well—

Mr. CICILLINE. Are there concrete actions that the U.S. has taken or reforms that you have proposed?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, we are trying—

Mr. CICILLINE. What are those?

Secretary POMPEO. We are trying to make sure that the resources that the American taxpayers provide go to the right places and achieve American outcomes. We have made a number of suggestions. We do not have any—we have not had any takers yet.

Mr. CICILLINE. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. But I am confident that we will continue to work on this—

Mr. CICILLINE. Will you be willing to provide a summary of those reforms and suggestions that you have made to the committee?

Secretary POMPEO. I would have to take a look at it. If they were private conversations, I likely will not be able to do that.

Mr. CICILLINE. OK. Next, Mr. Secretary, around the globe, as you know, LGBTI people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured, and even killed just for being who they are. We have seen this in Chechnya, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and other places. The United States recently refused to join a statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council calling for the perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. Why did the U.S. not join over 30 other nations in signing the recent joint statement to the U.N. Human Rights Council calling for a thorough investigation into the anti-LGBTI crimes being perpetuated in Chechnya?

Secretary POMPEO. I will have to get back to you on the reasons for that particular decision. But I will defend staunchly the work that we have done. I hope you have seen that. I hope when you talk to our diplomats as you travel around the world you see our commitment.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Secretary, it makes the refusal to sign this very important document particularly concerning. So, I would like an answer back on that. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, you had made reference to NATO just a moment ago. Are you familiar with the report “NATO at 70,” prepare by Ambassador Burns and Ambassador Lute?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not. I know who—

Mr. CICILLINE. Well, I urge you, encourage you to read this report. They identify the single greatest challenge to NATO today is the President of the United States. And they detail conversations with NATO officials who explained, for the very first time in the history of NATO, there is an American President who does not seem to support or understand its significance, who has said that he has considered withdrawing from NATO, that NATO is obsolete. And so, it is a really alarming report. And I wonder what steps you, as the Secretary of State, are taking to reassure our allies that the U.S. remains committed to NATO and that we understand its critical role in our shared values of advancing democracy, human rights, and the very important alliance that has provided such peace and stability around the world.

Secretary POMPEO. No, I have not read the report. I have known Doug Lute since I was a young lieutenant when he was the S3 of my squadron in Bindlach, West Germany—he was a major—a long time ago. I have great respect for him. He is just simply wrong. If the conclusion he drew is that President Trump is the biggest impediment to NATO, he is just simply wrong. We have worked diligently to make NATO stronger. I am convinced that we have done so.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

And my final question, Mr. Secretary, is, just to go back to the question about your March 18th briefing, it has been the practice of every other Secretary of State, not on individual meetings, but

when there are press briefings or press roundtables, that transcripts are prepared and the State Department press corps are present. You have changed that practice. So, when you say it has been the practice of every Secretary, with respect to one-on-ones you may be right. With respect to press briefings, the State Department press corps is there, and there is a transcript provided.

I am asking you today whether you will reconsider your position and go back to that past practice and bring greater transparency, because we are all concerned about a significant reduction in press access and a significant reduction in access to transcripts of these proceedings, which goes against a very basic principle of freedom of the press and is very dangerous for our democracy.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to take a long at it again.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

Chairman ENGEL. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Mast?

Mr. CICILLINE. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

Mr. MAST. Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENGEL. Yes, Mr. Mast, if you will just hold for a second, please?

Go ahead.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Chairman, I request unanimous consent to put into the record remarks delivered by Senator Menendez on the floor today directly refuting both the President and the Secretary's claim that Senate appointees are being held up by the U.S. Senate. And I would ask that be placed in the record.

Chairman ENGEL. Without objection, so moved.

[The information referred to follows:]

Menendez Corrects the Record on Trump Administration's Failure to Fill Key State Department Vacancies

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spoke on the Senate Floor today to outline the Trump Administration's failure to nominate qualified individuals for a number of ambassador posts and senior State Department positions. The Senator's speech comes in response to the latest statements the President reportedly made yesterday afternoon when he met with Senate Republicans, where he tried to shift the blame away from himself for his Administration's failure to adequately staff our foreign policy agencies.

4/2/2019

Press Release | Press Releases | News & Events | U.S. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey

"When the Trump Administration repeatedly fails to appropriately vet political nominees, Congress must exercise appropriate oversight," **said Menendez**. "The President has nominated and re-nominated individuals with restraining orders for threats of violence; people who made material omissions, sometimes on a repeated basis, in their nomination materials; people who tweeted and retweeted vile things about Senators and their families; and who have engaged in incidents that should, frankly, mean they never should have been nominated. One nominee attacked my late colleague and good friend, Senator John McCain, claiming that John McCain, an American hero, was rolling 'out the welcome mat for ISIS on America's Southern Border.' But unfortunately, we know that attacking McCain does not cross any redlines for this President. Another nominee has claimed, with no evidence, that the wife of Senator Cruz is part of a sinister cabal seeking to combine the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States. This nominee called Hillary Clinton a 'terrorist with amnesia,' and retweeted someone calling Senator Romney a 'dumbass.' You can't make this stuff up."

"When the White House, either through negligence or incompetence, sends us un-vetted, unqualified nominees, incapable and often times offensive, my staff and I must exercise due diligence on behalf of the American people. So, to make this crystal clear, the President can speed up this process. All he has to do is start nominating Americans with appropriate credentials and honorable conduct in their careers," **concluded the Senator**.

In Floor Speech, Menendez Corrects Trump's Statements o...



Below are Senator Menendez's remarks as delivered.

"I come to the floor to correct the record concerning statements the President reportedly made yesterday afternoon when he met with Senate Republicans.

4/2/2019

Press Release | Press Releases | News & Events | U.S. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey

Apparently, in-between his efforts to stiff hurricane victims in Puerto Rico and tear affordable health care away from millions of Americans, President Trump claimed that Democrats were holding up ambassadorial nominations in the Senate.

Just weeks ago we heard similar comments from the Senate Majority Leader, who claimed that General John Abizaid's nomination to be Ambassador to Saudi Arabia was "being held up."

So let me be clear: no one wants to see the State Department vested with all the resources it needs to be effectively conduct American foreign policy, including qualified and capable staff, more than I do.

We cannot promote our foreign policy, protect American citizens, advocate for American businesses or advance American values without a robust diplomatic corps.

So I want all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to know that each time the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has received nominations, I have dedicated my time and staff resources to efficiently and diligently vet and advance those nominations.

In the last Congress, the Committee reported 169 nominations. I reject any assertion that we have not done our part to ensure that the State Department is appropriately staffed.

Now let me speak to General Abizaid, because no one can honestly claim that the Foreign Relations Committee has been anything but extremely diligent and expeditious with his nomination.

With my full support, General Abizaid appeared on the very first Committee nominations hearing of this Congress.

And I very much look forward to voting in favor of his nomination -- as soon as our Chairman - our Republican Chairman -- exercises his prerogative and puts him before the Committee for a vote.

As with all nominees, the timing of his consideration by the full Senate is under the control of the Majority Leader.

It's clear that President Trump has an inaccurate -- or dishonest- view of the nominations situation in the Senate, and particularly on the Foreign Relations Committee.

We cannot confirm diplomats that we do not have. All too often, the Committee has received nominations late or not at all.

4/2/2019

Press Release | Press Releases | News & Events | U.S. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey

The Trump Administration took nearly two years before it even bothered to nominate General Abizaid, leaving a gaping hole in our diplomatic posture to Saudi Arabia and the region.

To go nearly two years without putting forward a nominee is a failure of leadership pure and simple.

Saudi Arabia's actions over these past two years highlight the fact that we need an adult on the ground, which is why I wholeheartedly support General Abizaid and look forward to what I hope is his speedy confirmation.

Sadly, Saudi Arabia is not an isolated example.

It took even longer, more than two years, for the Trump Administration to nominate a candidate to be U.S. Ambassador to Turkey.

Astonishingly enough, it was only this week that the President sent up an ambassadorial nominee for Mexico.

We are now 26 months into the Trump Administration, and we still lack ambassadorial nominees to critical countries like Egypt, Pakistan, and our close ally, Jordan.

So let's be clear -- this is the President's reckless abdication of a constitutional responsibility essential to projecting American power abroad. When you don't nominate someone, President Trump has only himself to blame.

Furthermore, Mr. President, there is unfortunately another severe problem that we cannot ignore with regard to this Administration's nominees.

When the Trump Administration repeatedly fails to appropriately vet political nominees, Congress must exercise appropriate oversight.

The President has nominated and re-nominated individuals with restraining orders for threats of violence; people who made material omissions, sometimes on a repeated basis, in their nomination materials; people who tweeted and retweeted vile things about Senators and their families; and who have engaged in incidents that should, frankly, mean they never should have been nominated.

One nominee attacked my late colleague and good friend, Senator John McCain, claiming that John McCain, an American hero, was rolling 'out the welcome mat for ISIS on America's Southern Border.' But unfortunately we know that attacking McCain does not cross any redlines for this President.

4/2/2019

Press Release | Press Releases | News & Events | U.S. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey

Another nominee has claimed, with no evidence, that the wife of Senator Cruz is part of a sinister cabal seeking to combine the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States. This nominee called Hillary Clinton a 'terrorist with amnesia,' and retweeted someone calling Senator Romney a 'dumbass.'

You can't make this stuff up.

Senator Sasse's office said that nominee should 'put on his tinfoil hat and visit our office with evidence for his salacious conspiracy theories and cuckoo allegations,' and went on to observe that, 'people who want to serve Americans as our diplomats and spokespeople abroad should know that words and truth matter, even during campaigns. Cynics and nuts are probably going to have a hard time securing Senate confirmation.'

I couldn't agree more. Yet the President thought highly enough of this individual, and lowly enough of the U.S. Senate, that he nominated him for an ambassadorship in two successive congresses.

Another ambassadorial nominee was the subject of a temporary restraining order after she left a bullet-riddled target practice sheet on her doctor's chair. Again, you cannot make this up.

As for being unresponsive to Committee requirements for all nominees, I can understand that nominees may accidentally leave off a few businesses that they were involved in. But we had one nominee who failed to inform the Committee of dozens of businesses, and another nominee who, even more egregiously, failed to mention multiple lawsuits that he was involved in, including one in which he was alleged to have fired a female employee who complained of sexual harassment. Given the nature and frequency of these omissions, it's hard to believe they are unintentional.

So when the White House, either through negligence or incompetence, sends us un-vetted, unqualified nominees, incapable and often times offensive, my staff and I must exercise due diligence on behalf of the American people.

So, to make this crystal clear, the President can speed up this process. All he has to do is start nominating Americans with appropriate credentials and honorable conduct in their careers. This is not rocket science!

Mr. President, the United States and our allies continue to face tremendous challenges around the world.

4/2/2019

Press Release | Press Releases | News & Events | U.S. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey

We must continue to lead on the international stage and work in collaboration with international partners to achieve our shared security goals.

But to have our diplomats in place, they must be nominated in a timely fashion and vetted properly.

That is the real hold-up here, not Senate Democrats. And I refuse to let this President point the finger at us when he should be pointing at himself."

Press Contact

Juan Pachon (202) 224-4651

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As Russian Troops Land in Caracas, Menendez Pushes Review of Potential Russia Sanctions Violations in Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua

Chairman ENGEL. Mr. Mast?

Mr. MAST. Thank you again for recognizing me, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to say thank you to you and to the State Department for the truths that you have gone out there and made it a point to address that have been ignored year over year. And there is an extensive list that many of my colleagues have brought up.

You have addressed the truth that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. If folks have a problem with that, they should probably take it up with God.

You have addressed the truth that, if your enemy wants to shoot you, you do not go take them out to buy a gun. And we do not allow nations like Iran, who threaten to kill us, who would be more than happy to slit the throat of every person in this room, we do not give them access to weapons of mass destruction. That is a truth that your State Department went out there and addressed.

You addressed the truth that we should seek peace with nations like North Korea. We should attempt to reach denuclearization agreements, but that we should also walk away from bad deals that do not benefit the citizens of the United States of America.

You addressed the truth that China has been ripping us off year after year, penalizing our goods, stealing our ideas, stealing our intellectual property, and said that that is not going to happen any further.

You addressed the truth that many in Europe want us to go out there and defend them from Russia while at the same time they are doing business with Russia and not picking up their piece of the check in terms of defense.

You have addressed the truth that we have exhausted tremendous treasure and lost far too many sons and daughters of the United States of America in our 18 years of war.

You have addressed the truth about the people crossing our border illegally on our southern border. Whether it be for the purpose of bringing drugs, for trafficking humans, or for seeking a better life, they are crossing our border illegally, and you have addressed those truths.

And my question for you today, as we are supposed to be having a hearing on strategy of the State Department going forward, is, what truths do you want to see us go out there and confront moving forward for the United States and for the State Department for the betterment of our citizens?

Secretary POMPEO. One of the things I have focused on is ensuring that our team had what it needed to go out and make sure that America was leading, and it was leading in a way that was not, frankly, from behind, but was, rather, building coalitions. And we have been pretty successful at that. I think the world needs to see that.

When we supported Venezuelan democracy, we built out an enormous coalition. I sent folks to every corner of the earth explaining what was taking place in Venezuela and why the recognition of Juan Guaido made sense and was the right thing to do.

When we wanted to take on North Korea, we got the largest coalitions and the biggest sanctions, voted on by every member of the United Nations Security Council uniformly to achieve the objective

there, the denuclearization, the risk that we take of proliferation takedown from the world.

The counter ISIS campaign that has now taken down the last piece of real estate in Syria and in Iraq from ISIS. We know work continues, but we built out an enormous coalition to do that. That was the great work, largely, of the team that I have the privilege to lead.

And I want everyone in the world to know that we are prepared to do that. Where problems and challenges confront us, the United States Department of State will lead and build out organizations, so that we can confront these challenges that present risks to America and to the world.

Mr. MAST. I thank you for that leadership, Mr. Secretary.

And I yield my time back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Mast.

Mr. Bera?

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for appearing here.

I was pleased to hear in your opening comments that you recognize the important role that Congress has and the important role that Congress has with regards to oversight and investigations.

As the new chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I want to thank the chairman of the full committee for giving us broad jurisdiction really to take a look and a deep dive into the State of America's diplomacy and development. It is a big task, and I am sure I share your commitment that we want to have the best State Department; we want to have the best development agencies; we want to have the best people out there serving the interests of the United States of America in our soft power.

I cannot do this by myself, and I am going to need your help and your commitment to allow your staff to work with us as we take this deep dive. Do I have your commitment that you will make your staff available to us?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir, you do.

Mr. BERA. Thank you.

Also, in your opening I was glad to hear you talk about the important work that the men and women around our country who serve and represent us abroad every day, the work that they do is incredibly valuable. They are patriotic Americans often working in difficult environments and difficult situations.

I do have one concern. A March 2019 GAO report found that 13 percent of the overseas Foreign Service's positions were vacant as of March 2018. Now that is not your doing because these are similar vacancy levels as such positions in 2008 and 2012.

But, also, in interviews GAO found that the staff at overseas posts told us that the vacancies really are increasing their workloads, contributing to low morale, and high stress levels. And this seems to be borne out in other reporting.

In the latest annual rankings of Best Places to Work in the Federal Government, produced by the Partnership for Public Services and the Boston Consulting Group, the State Department dropped from eighth place to 14th place amongst the 17 large Federal agencies.

Meanwhile, I think as you have already mentioned, the registration for Foreign Service Officer tests saw a 22 percent decline from October 2017 and October 2018, according to an NBC News report.

I am glad you are out there recruiting. I am glad you are out there trying to get the next generation of America's diplomats to think about service to country through the Foreign Service. But we realize that morale is taking a beating.

What I would like to do is, again, obviously, it is important for us to fill those positions. In our oversight role, I would be curious, who is the person responsible for implementing your plan to help fill these positions, help with recruitment, and so forth? You cannot do it by yourself. So, who should we be working with?

Secretary POMPEO. So, the person you would work with would be my Under Secretary for Management, but I do not have one.

Mr. BERA. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. So, it would be great if I did. We have now gone 2 years without a confirmed Under Secretary for Management, essentially, the chief operating officer. We did get, although it took too long, we did get Carol Perez, who is a talented career Foreign Service Officer, whose title is Director General for Human Resources.

Mr. BERA. Do you have a nominee that—

Secretary POMPEO. Well, we do, yes, absolutely.

Mr. BERA. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. That is the second one we have put forward.

Mr. BERA. Well, let's try to get that position filled.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. Highly qualified, I believe every Member of the U.S. Senate so believes. And yet, we have not been able to get him across the floor. But we have someone you can work with.

Mr. BERA. Great.

Secretary POMPEO. Her name is Carol Perez. She is a career Foreign Service Officer. She runs what is called the Director General of Human Resources.

Mr. BERA. Right.

Secretary POMPEO. She is a great lady and is driving—

Mr. BERA. And I got your commitment that we could work with that to get these positions filled.

And last, I have a concern. And I want to thank you for being here. Over the years in both Democratic and Republican Administrations we had had an interagency process that has served us well, where the various agencies are working together to make sure the President has the best advice before the President makes a decision. I have got a couple of yes-no questions, because I do have some concerns about the decisionmaking process currently.

On the decision to withdraw troops from Syria, General Votel, the Central Command commander, said, quote, "I was not consulted before this decision was made."

Our Special Envoy to defeat ISIS, Brett McGurk, said he spoke with you after the President has made up his mind, and he wrote in a public op-ed, "During the December call, Pompeo informed us that there had been a sudden change in plans. President Trump, after a phone conversation with his Turkish counterpart, planned to declare victory over the Islamic State and direct our forces to withdraw from Syria."

A yes-no question. Did the President consult you before deciding to withdraw troops?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. BERA. Five days ago, the President tweeted that, "It was announced today by the U.S. Treasury that additional large-scale sanctions would be added to those already-existing sanctions on North Korea. I have today ordered the withdrawal of those additional sanctions."

Bloomberg News reported yesterday that the President was referring to sanctions that the Treasury Department had announced the day prior against two Chinese shipping companies that were helping North Korea avoid U.S. sanctions. A yes-no question. Did the President discuss removing those sanctions with you prior to the tweet?

Secretary POMPEO. They were Treasury sanctions, as I recall.

Mr. BERA. But, again, in an interagency manner, was the State Department consulted for that?

Secretary POMPEO. We have had lots of discussions. The reason I cannot answer that yes or no is because we have had discussions on sanctions issues with respect to Iran, with respect to Venezuela, with respect to China.

Mr. BERA. Right. I know—

Secretary POMPEO. We have these discussions consistently and over time, and then, there does come a point where Presidents make decisions. And at that point in time, we inform our team, and we go execute and implement with all of the energy and vigor that we have.

I must say, too, if I may, you made a statement about some of the things that Mr. McGurk said. I cannot answer them because what Mr. McGurk said in that was classified, and it should not have been uttered publicly. And I regret that very much.

Mr. BERA. OK.

Chairman ENGEL. Mr. Bera, I am going to let you get one more quick question. We have to move on.

Mr. BERA. Just very quickly, a final—I think it is very concerning that there may be a lack of an interagency dialogue where our leaders at State, Defense, et cetera, are being consulted prior to these decisions being made. Does that sound like sound foreign policy? And you do not have to answer that question because we are out of time.

Chairman ENGEL. All right. Thank you.

Ms. Wagner?

Mrs. WAGNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, over here.

Secretary POMPEO. I have got you.

Mrs. WAGNER. Thank you for your time today and for your service.

I have to say that it is appalling the number of nominees that this Administration still has in State and other agencies that have not been confirmed by the Senate. We hope that they can move much more swiftly and waive the 30-hour rule.

Sir, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, a bill that I introduced, that was signed into law by President Trump in January, affirms the critical importance of interagency coordination

to prevent genocide and mass atrocities. Secretary Pompeo, how is State supporting atrocity prevention and response activities?

Secretary POMPEO. There are multiple mechanisms inside the Department of State. We have teams that have responsibility for the implementation. The State Department's element of implementing that particular statute and law, we have a broader group of folks who work on human rights issues. And then, yet, we have another group that have regional responsibility. Each of them has tasks to ensure that we do all that we can to reduce the risk that there would be genocide, atrocities, crimes against humanity all of these horrific activities that we find too many governments taking.

Mrs. WAGNER. And are they reaching posts actually?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Are they trained up—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I think so. I am sure we could do better. Just I am sure we could get this information out more broadly and execute this, and I am happy to look at how effective we are at getting this out into the missions.

Mrs. WAGNER. I have some ideas about that, as a former U.S. Ambassador and on this piece of legislation. So, I would love to share them with your team, Mr. Secretary.

China has been working to isolate Taiwan through diplomatic channels. We have heard a little bit about this earlier with Mr. Chabot. In the past year, China convinced three countries to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan and, instead, recognize Beijing. How is State working to prevent China from further eroding Taiwan's international support?

Secretary POMPEO. We are using every tool that we have in the toolkit. You have seen that we have used our economic toolkit to try to convince countries that this was not the right thing to do. We have used our, I will call it our diplomacy/political toolkit to convince them that this was something that mattered to America. As a former Ambassador, we have issued demarches to countries.

Mrs. WAGNER. Right.

Secretary POMPEO. We have a commitment with respect to Taiwan and how we will deal with that, a longstanding set of policies that goes back now decades.

Mrs. WAGNER. Right.

Secretary POMPEO. The United States is firmly committed to enforcing that set of understandings, and inside of that, doing our level best to make sure that we honor the commitments to Taiwan as well.

Mrs. WAGNER. I was glad to see us in the Taiwan Strait recently.

Secretary POMPEO. Yesterday.

Mrs. WAGNER. Yesterday, yes.

Speaking of recently, on Sunday, Mr. Secretary, Thailand held its first elections since the military junta seized power in 2014. Although voting was expected to be free and fair, worrisome reports have emerged that cast doubt on the election's legitimacy. How will State work with civil society and government officials in Thailand to facilitate a return to genuine democracy? Thailand has the chair of the ASEAN Caucus, of which I am a co-chair and care deeply about this region, especially vis-a-vis a counterbalance to China.

Secretary POMPEO. So, I have been to Bangkok. We have re-engaged in ways that the American leadership has not engaged since 2014. I have also seen the reports from the election yesterday, albeit only what I would call first reports. So, I want to see more about what actually transpired. Our team on the ground there worked diligently to ensure that we would be able to make determinations about the election and, in fact, to ensure that we provided whatever support we could to make sure that there was a free and fair election.

Thailand is an important place, a place where I believe America can find an important counterbalance to the risk that China presents to the United States.

Mrs. WAGNER. I could not agree more. I care deeply about the entire ASEAN region from a security standpoint, from a trade standpoint, from a humanitarian standpoint, and, most of all, as a counterbalance to China.

Given the Burmese government has cutoff Rakhine State to humanitarian and AID workers and international observers, how is State working with local actors to direct aid to those who need it most, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary POMPEO. So, State Department proper is doing it. USAID is on the ground as well.

Mrs. WAGNER. Right.

Secretary POMPEO. There are other commercial partners, non-governmental partners as well. It is tough. It is heavy slogging. Our capacity to deliver that is, unfortunately, limited, but we are working. We are working to reopen some of the ways we were able to do that previously as well, but we have not had much success.

Mrs. WAGNER. These atrocities, whether it is in Burma with Rohingya, the Kachin, Shan, and the Rakhine, are just horrific.

We thank you for all of your service and your support in this area.

I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Castro?

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary, for your testimony today.

I have a question about what seems in some parts of the world to be the growing cooperation between Russia and China to pursue mutual interests. In Venezuela, for example, it seems as though both have been involved to some extent. And I came across, not too long ago, a quote by an African leader that said that, "China is the money and Russia is the muscle." Do you find that to be true, and what do you see in terms of their cooperation?

Secretary POMPEO. That is a very important question. We have seen Russia and China begin to work together in ways that they had not done 15–20 years ago. That is a trend that has probably gone on for a handful of years now. They have just found themselves in places where they have overlapping interests. They have strategic challenges between the two countries, long-term strategic challenges in places that I do not believe will ever truly overlap. But certainly, tactically and operationally, we see that today.

Venezuela is a very, very good example, but we have seen it in other places as well. We see it at the United Nations, where, as

members of the U.N. Security Council, they work together as well, almost always against freedom, democracy, liberty, the things that the United States and democracies hold dear.

Mr. CASTRO. Also, let me ask you about recent news that Italy is joining the effort on China's One Belt One Road Initiative. And obviously, a major European country, friendly to the West, historically, what that means for the United States and for China and its effort at expanding its might, economic might and military might, around the world.

Secretary POMPEO. It is disappointing anytime any country begins to engage in behavior and commercial interactions with China that are not straight-up. China has every right to move around the world and compete transparently, private companies engaging. They will win a handful of times. I am convinced that we will do great if there are rule-of-law transactions that are open and transparent.

That is not the case with many of the initiatives under One Belt One Road. And so, your point, whether it is Italy or other countries that have gone down this path, we are saddened because we think those countries, we think the people of those countries will ultimately lose. We have seen that in some smaller, less wealthy countries. That is, the debt trap diplomacy, this predatory lending that takes place comes home to roost more quickly than it does in nations that can survive that, that are wealthier.

But when you engage in these non-economic transactions with essentially State-owned or State-directed enterprises, nothing good happens for your people. It may feel good in the moment. You think you got a cheap product or a low-cost bridge or road built. In the end, there will be a political cost attached to that which will greatly exceed the economic value of what you were provided.

Mr. CASTRO. We certainly support your efforts to obviously allow China to compete, but not to cheat around the world.

And let me ask you one last question with respect to North Korea. I want to get your perspective on whether you think, think or know whether North Korea's nuclear capacity and capabilities have increased or decreased since the first Trump summit.

Secretary POMPEO. So, the fact that they have not conducted missile tests or nuclear testing is a good thing. It reduces their capability. Their systems become less reliant. But we have not yet seen them make the big move that we were hoping, frankly, that they would do in Hanoi. We have not yet seen them take the big step that I spoke about the very first time I met Chairman Kim, goodness, almost exactly a year ago, where we talked about the fact that there would be a brighter future for the North Korean people, but it had to be this complete denuclearization. We have not seen them take a step in that direction yet.

I am still hopeful that we can engage and negotiate with them and get to the right outcome. Chairman Kim, even in this last visit between the Presidents, the conversations between my team and his team, they still tell us they are committed to it. It is time that we begin to see real actions in that regard.

Mr. CASTRO. And where does it all go from here with North Korea?

Secretary POMPEO. My team is engaging at every level, not only with the North Koreans. Steve Biegun, the Special Representative, has been in China these past couple of days. I think he may be on his way back here now. He has been working with our allies in the region, South Korea and Japan, to ensure that we keep the pressure campaign, that we continue to enforce the U.N. Security Council resolutions, and then, continue our diplomatic efforts to achieve this outcome.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Secretary.

I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Curtis?

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Secretary, greetings from Utah. It is a delight to be here with you today.

I am not sure all of us can appreciate that one of your skill sets is sitting there hour after hour and answering our questions, but thank you.

We have paid homage, rightly so, to C-SPAN for their 40-year anniversary over the last day or two, but, interestingly, I think we have missed one of the most significant 40-year anniversaries. Forty years ago yesterday, President Carter, Sadat, and Begin signed the historic peace treaty. I happened to be 19 years old and living in Jerusalem at the signing of that treaty, and I grabbed a newspaper and, for years and years, I kept it in a file in my office.

And when I came to Congress, I took that newspaper and I had it framed. And this now hangs in my office as a reminder of the many lessons that came out of that, among other things, that we can do what seems near impossible; that we can bring these groups together that seem so far apart; that we can be bipartisan in the way that we approach these. And I worry that our relationship with Israel is becoming a partisan issue, and I hope that it is not. I think our success depends on this being a bipartisan issue.

Could you touch just a minute on what the Administration is doing that might take us back to a point like this in our relationships with Israel and their Arab neighbors?

Secretary POMPEO. Sure. So, your point is well-taken. I am also reminded, if I have the history right of that day, that if you looked at the outsiders the day before, at least a week before, months before, it seemed almost imaginable—

Mr. CURTIS. It would not happen, yes.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. That that would have happened. So, I am mindful.

We were talking about North Korea a little bit ago. As difficult as these problems look, if you continue to work at them, if you continue to engage in good-faith negotiations, and try and grind away and resolve these resolutions, that sometimes things happen quickly and big. And I am hopeful that the Trump Administration will be able to achieve some of those.

With respect to the efforts in the Middle East, there has been a lot of groundwork laid, working with each of the countries in the region, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Emirates. I am going to miss a few along the way. We have worked with the

Iraqis. I was just in Lebanon. I was in Israel. In my previous role, I met a number of times with the Palestinian leadership.

Working to try and understand the conflict as it sits today, not as we might have imagined it 5 years ago or 10 years ago or 30 years ago, and to try to identify those places where we can find congruence, overlap, places where we can acknowledge the history, but move past it. And we will lay out our vision for that in the not-too-distant future, and I hope that every one of those countries will take a good look at it. There will be something in there, I am sure, that they do not find too wimpy, but I hope they will at least take a serious look at it and take it as a good-faith effort to resolve this.

Mr. CURTIS. And to your point about the naysayers, I actually was in Galilee the night that it was signed, and Syria had said they would invade over the Golan Heights. And I remember, as a 19-year-old, looking up and seeing the Golan Heights, wondering if they were coming. But I think it is a great testament that we can do these hard things.

Unfortunately, this week we have also seen rockets launched at Israel from Hamas, from Gaza. There is some belief that Iran had a hand in this. Can you address that and, also, does that show us one of the flaws in the Iran nuclear deal with the long-range ballistic missiles not being addressed? And is this an example of why that is a problem?

Secretary POMPEO. With respect to the recent rocket attacks, when I came this morning, I think both sides had agreed that they had gotten to a pretty good place. Whether that will hold, I do not know. It was pretty fragile when I had the last conversation, but I am hopeful that it will.

Second, I could not tell you if the Iranians were directly involved in this particular attack. I can tell you that they underwrite Hamas, the entity, the terrorist entity, that is responsible for those missile launches.

And then, finally, your third question was about the JCPOA. Look, most of the behavior that has led to Iran being the world's largest State sponsor of terrorism increased during the JCPOA. It was because the JCPOA prevented the Administration from taking any action against Iran. They said that it did not, but, in fact, you just need to look at the activities that they engaged in. They permitted Iran to expand. They gave Iran resources. They opened up economic wealth for Hezbollah and for Shia militias all across Iraq.

Those were the kind of things that our policies are trying to cabin, to reduce the capacity for the Islamic Republic of Iran to engage in terror behavior, whether that is in the Gaza Strip or the assassination campaigns that are taking place in Europe, or the missile launches that are coming out of Yemen.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I yield my time.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. Titus?

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

It has been reported that Jared Kushner offered Prince Mohammad of Saudi Arabia, and I quote, "advice about how to weather

the storm” in the aftermath of the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Do you know if that is true or not?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not.

Ms. TITUS. Well do not you think it would be important for the Secretary of State to know what the senior White House officials are telling world leaders, including the leader of Saudi Arabia?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I believe I know everything that he told him, but you suggested some report that I have not seen. And so, I am happy to——

Ms. TITUS. Well, do you know if he gave him PR advice?

Secretary POMPEO. To the best of knowledge, he did not.

Ms. TITUS. Do you think it would be——

Secretary POMPEO. I talk with Mr. Kushner all the time. I think we are fully in sync with respect to how we are handling each of the issues around the world. We know what his files are. We know the ones that I am engaged in. We know where we have overlap, and we are working toward the same end State.

Ms. TITUS. Well, I want to ask another question about some of our relations, whether it is through you or through Mr. Kushner. And that is the setting up of an Air Marshals-type program with Saudi Arabia. I know this was begun under a previous Administration, but I wonder if you have any reservations about continuing the program now, since it comes in the wake of the murder of The Washington Post journalist, in the wake of arrests and detentions and abuses of women’s rights activists, in the wake of air strikes that have hit schools and hospitals, even a bus carrying 40 children. Thousands of people in Yemen have died as a result of it. Both Houses have voted in opposition to it. Do you think that we might want to reassess a program that we have set up with Saudi Arabia to create this special Air Marshals-type program?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not familiar with the program. I am happy to take a look at it.

Ms. TITUS. You are not familiar with the program? Because it is supposed to go into place fairly soon, and we have sent TSA officials——

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to look——

Ms. TITUS [continuing]. Over to set it up.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I vaguely recall. I do not have responsibility for TSA.

Ms. TITUS. Yes, I know you do not, but it is through the State Department.

Secretary POMPEO. That might be why I am not as familiar with it as I might otherwise be. But I am happy to take a look at it.

Ms. TITUS. Well, great. Maybe you will take a look at the other countries in the Middle East where we already have these programs. Are you familiar with those at all?

Secretary POMPEO. I know of the existence of the program, yes.

Ms. TITUS. Well, can I ask you what you might think, if we set up a program with Saudi Arabia, what we can do to put some safeguards in place to be sure that it will not be used against our interests or fall into the wrong hands that, then, might be used against us?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I think, most appropriately, DHS would be the best place to lodge those questions. But I am happy to take

a look at them and see if they have important State Department equities or foreign policy elements to them.

Ms. TITUS. Well, thank you. I would appreciate it if you would get back to us on that. And I am a little disappointed that you are unaware of a major program that is taking place with collaboration of the State Department.

Let me ask you about another program that maybe you do have more information about. It has been reported that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services—I know that is not directly under you—but they are closing 23 international field offices. These are offices that work on refugee applications, family reunification, visas, and foreign adoptions. And they plan to transfer those over to the workload of the State Department. That would be what you are in charge of.

Secretary POMPEO. It would, yes, ma'am.

Ms. TITUS. I wonder, did you sign off on that decision?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am, I am very familiar with this. I am very familiar with how our Consular Affairs team interacts with the USCIS, and I am very comfortable with the path that we are taking.

Ms. TITUS. Well, there is nothing that is reflected in your budget to show how you are going to take up this work. Can you explain how you are going to be able to cover these new assignments?

Secretary POMPEO. I am very comfortable that we can deliver on that mission set, and my team has told me the same.

Ms. TITUS. And are you going to continue to make this a priority or will this be put on the back burner? And what is going to be the impact on refugee applications as a result of your just kind of absorbing this process?

Secretary POMPEO. When you say "this," I am not certain what you are—

Ms. TITUS. This was family reunification, visas, the refugee applications, those activities that used to be done by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that are being transferred to you, that you are so comfortable about taking up.

Secretary POMPEO. I am very confident that we can deliver these services.

Ms. TITUS. Well, we will be watching that to be sure that that is the case. But it seems to me it would be a little more responsible if you had made some mention of it in your budget, that this will be a new task that you are undertaking, as opposed to DHS. You do not have any problem with that?

Secretary POMPEO. Do you have a question, ma'am?

Ms. TITUS. My question was, why did not you put it in your budget?

Secretary POMPEO. Ma'am, I would have to go take a look at that line item and see what we did and where it is that line item fits. But I have talked with the team on the budget. The Consular Affairs team was very involved in delivering the budget and they are comfortable that they can deliver on all of the missions that we have provided to them.

Ms. TITUS. Well, I am glad you are comfortable because I am not very comfortable. I am not very comfortable with the answers, that you do not seem to know what is going on. But I would be more

comfortable if you would get back to us and tell us about this TSA Air Marshal program that you are setting up with Saudi Arabia.

Secretary POMPEO. I will ensure that DHS gets back to you, ma'am.

Ms. TITUS. And I appreciate that. Thank you, sir.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. BUCK?

Mr. BUCK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome back, Secretary Pompeo.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you.

Mr. BUCK. During your time at the CIA and at the State Department, did you receive training on how classified information should be handled?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir, I did.

Mr. BUCK. Does everyone handling classified information at the State Department receive a briefing or training course on how to handle classified information?

Secretary POMPEO. I believe that is correct.

Mr. BUCK. Did this training cover the different designations indicating a document's level of classification?

Secretary POMPEO. Anyone who receives a clearance and has access to classified information would receive training on the various levels and how those various levels are required to be handled.

Mr. BUCK. And does a classification marker of "TS" indicate that it is top secret information contained in that document?

Secretary POMPEO. That is what those two letters would normally indicate, yes.

Mr. BUCK. And if it is an "S," would it indicate that it is a secret classification?

Secretary POMPEO. Also correct.

Mr. BUCK. And if it is a "C," would it indicate that it is a classified document?

Secretary POMPEO. "C" typically means confidential.

Mr. BUCK. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. That is the level of classification, but I suppose it could—yes, I think—

Mr. BUCK. OK. So, confidential?

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. Typically, it means confidential, yes, sir.

Mr. BUCK. OK. And you were taught these designations at the training that you received as Secretary of State?

Secretary POMPEO. You know, I know I went through that training as Director of CIA. I do not know that I went through the course again when I became Secretary of State. I may have.

Mr. BUCK. I do not want to suggest something about your age, but were you grandfathered into that as a result?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not know. Here is what I am confident of: if I was required to go through the process, I did.

Mr. BUCK. OK. Have you ever gone home for the night and left classified documents on your kitchen table?

Secretary POMPEO. Not to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. BUCK. OK. Have you ever left them in your car?

Secretary POMPEO. Not to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. BUCK. Have you ever taken classified documents home with you and had them outside of your possession?

Secretary POMPEO. I have, only because I have a location that I can store classified information in my home.

Mr. BUCK. OK. So, it has—

Secretary POMPEO. So, they would have been stored in an appropriate location inside the secure facility that is inside of the house in which I live.

Mr. BUCK. And a security official has approved that as a secure location?

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct, yes, sir.

Mr. BUCK. OK. Do you have a private server in your home?

Secretary POMPEO. No, I do not.

Mr. BUCK. And if you had left classified information in your car or if you had left it in your home outside of the private area, would that be a violation of the training that you had received about how to handle classified information?

Secretary POMPEO. Anytime that classified information is not stored in an appropriately approved facility or is outside of the control of to whom that information has been provided, whether that is written or even if one speaks about it, lets it out orally, yes, that is inconsistent with the requirements.

Mr. BUCK. OK. Could you be prosecuted for receiving information outside of a secure or sending information outside of a secure location or email serving—a non-classified email server?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. BUCK. OK. Mr. Secretary, you are also a lawyer, is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not certified to practice anywhere today, but, yes, at one point I went to law school and I used to have a bar registration.

Mr. BUCK. And as a lawyer, you have heard of the term “circumstantial evidence”?

Secretary POMPEO. I have.

Mr. BUCK. And would it be considered circumstantial evidence of guilt for someone to take evidence of a crime and destroy that evidence?

Secretary POMPEO. It might well be.

Mr. BUCK. OK. I have no further questions, and I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Espaillat?

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary, I believe the last time I spoke, I was the Mariano Rivera of this. Now I am sort of like a middle reliever, or still find myself asking questions that may have been addressed already.

But I want to start by expressing my serious concerns with plans to close USCIS. The international field offices was previously mentioned. This may seem a little bit out of scope with this hearing, but I guarantee that it is not.

Two weeks ago, the USCIS Director Cissna put forward a plan to close its 12 dozen overseas offices and said that many other responsibilities would be shifted onto the State's Consular's Office. It is my understanding that the very reason that these offices exist is to take some of the workload off the Consular officials.

Let me make myself clear. I oppose this plan. I know that a number of my colleagues also oppose it. I will be leading a letter in opposition to it.

I just want to find out how are you going to address the overload of work for these Consular Offices. Are you going to increase staff? There is currently a backlog to begin with. And now, you are shifting these services to another unit that may, in fact, be overburdened to begin with. Do you have a plan to increase staffing and do you project—what kind of workload do you project these Consular Offices are going to have?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not have that in front of me, but I know our team is very well apprised of this transition that is taking place, and our Consular team is confident that they can achieve their mission set.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. One of the issues that often comes forward is the lengthy times that folks have to wait for these services. With regards to family reunification, some families, some mothers have to wait as long as 7 years. By the time they are done, those kids that they want to reunite with are now adults. And this brings about a great degree of issues to the families. So, I urge you to please come back to us and give us what your plan is for this change.

Secretary POMPEO. I will make sure that we collectively do that, that we help you. This is a longstanding issue, as I understand the history of it—it is not the last couple of years; it predates that—and one that we need to seriously make sure that we understand fully.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I want to shift now to the Caribbean. I find that the Caribbean is often overlooked for its strategic importance to the U.S. The Caribbean is, in fact, our third border, and we ought to direct necessary focus to the region. We must work to curb the flow of illicit drugs, combat corruption, promote good governance, and build upon trade partnerships for our relationship with these nations to prosper.

One important aspect of our relationship with the Caribbean is the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, to which the U.S. contributes roughly \$58 million annually to combat drug trade, promote social justice, and increase public security. I believe that the CBSI is critical to the U.S. national interest and that we ought to continue to grow the program. I will be asking for a substantial increase to the CBSI.

I just want to know from you, Mr. Secretary, how do you plan to ensure that we continue to work with the Caribbean, the CBSI program to fight drugs in that region?

Secretary POMPEO. The CBSI is, in fact, an important program. I concede that. We have to make hard choices from time to time. You will have to make hard decisions about how many dollars to allocate to particular programs. You will have to make tradeoffs, ones that you are not always happy with as well.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Will you be supportive of a substantial increase to that program?

Secretary POMPEO. I will have to take a look at it in the context of all the other demands on resources for the State Department.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Finally, Mr. Secretary, I consistently hear of our allies in the region that they feel, in that region and Latin Amer-

ica, that they feel ignored by the U.S. because we have stepped away from the region. We do not invest in our allies. And instead, they turn to China because we have left sort of like a vacuum.

I know that you, the Administration has sort of like given a green light or winked at some of those nations saying, you can trade, but there are certain projects that we would oppose. For example, ports, access to data, other important—could you enumerate which are the kinds of projects that the Administration will oppose some of the countries in Latin America engaging with China?

Secretary POMPEO. Sure. I am agree with the predicate of your question with respect to a couple of decades where America did not engage and invest in that region in the way that it should have. We are trying to correct that.

And China has shown up and made proffers that we think are not in the best interest of those nations. I do not know that I can segregate them out as categories other than to say free, open, private companies competing transparently, Chinese companies, all good.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. But do you think—

Secretary POMPEO. When it presents a security risk to the United States, no good.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Do you think, for example—real quickly, Mr. Chairman—do you think that allowing Chinese to run ports, given the crisis of fentanyl in the region and in the hemisphere, is a good idea?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Wright?

Mr. WRIGHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. I want to compliment you on what I believe is outstanding leadership of your Department.

I recently introduced the Digital Global Access Policy Act, which would expand internet access to developing countries and promote U.S. export of technology. We have heard a lot about China.

So, my question relates specifically to internet access. And, yes, we work with private companies and all of that, but is there anything the State Department is doing with regard to that? We talked about this yesterday in the African Subcommittee hearing. And could you tell us what the State Department is doing just in that regard?

Secretary POMPEO. With respect to internet access?

Mr. WRIGHT. Yes.

Secretary POMPEO. And globally? Speaking around the world?

Mr. WRIGHT. Right.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. So, there are places that is our responsibility. We try to make sure that there is freedom of speech, freedom of expression. The internet is, obviously, part of that, the capacity for citizens to communicate. We talk about that in every place we go where there is substantial risk of that. We also do our best, when malign actors are attempting to close down, create closed systems which prevent citizens from speaking, from getting

this information that comes through the internet, the State Department has a role in trying to prevent that as well.

Mr. WRIGHT. Great.

Now I want to shift to the border. You know what the national numbers are. I can tell you that in Texas 11,000 per week are coming across into Texas, 9,000 into three Texas counties, the three most southern counties. I toured that area last week by plane, by helicopter, by gunboat on the Rio Grande. I saw firsthand where the drug cartels are operating, where human traffickers are bringing people across on rafts.

And I have a lot of questions for one of your counterparts. Nobody is going to mistake you for the Secretary of Homeland Security.

But, as it relates to Mexico and our policy toward Mexico, what can we do to get Mexico to do more on their side of the border?

Secretary POMPEO. I have personally been very involved in this. Frankly, I think I have been to Mexico more than any previous Secretary of State in our first—what now?—10 or 11 months as Secretary of State, and met with my Mexican counterpart and spoken with him more. I have a great relationship with Foreign Minister.

We have asked them to do a number of things. We have asked them to strengthen border security at their southern border, a very important component—

Mr. WRIGHT. Right.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. Of what is taking place today at America's southern border.

We have asked them not to create incentives for people to travel this dangerous path through Mexico. And then, we have come to an understanding with respect to how those coming to the United States to seek asylum can remain in Mexico during the time of the pendency of their claim.

We are working with the Mexican government on each of these. We need them to do more. We need them to set up more checkpoints. We need them to do the things that prevent what you describe is happening in your State.

Mr. WRIGHT. With regard, though, to the drug cartels and the human trafficking—and the human trafficking aspect of this is something that we do not hear a lot about, but it is absolutely horrible, what is happening to young women that are being brought across the border. I do not see Mexico stepping up to the plate when it comes to that.

Secretary POMPEO. I have talked with them a great deal. I know my counterparts at DHS, at DEA, all the elements that work on these transnational criminal organizations, the narcotics and human trafficking that flow through those networks, we are there to help. The United States taxpayers actually provide significant resources to assist them. We are prepared to continue to do that, but we certainly need the Mexican government to do more.

Mr. WRIGHT. Well, I can tell you that what U.S. Border Control, the Texas Department of Public Safety working in tandem with them, and the county sheriffs, they are doing outstanding work. I can also tell you they are overwhelmed.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. WRIGHT. And they need help down there.

My last question, it is a little more personal. I have some constituents in my district, a family who has a family member, Majd Kamalmaz, who is being held in Syria, has been for almost 2 years. You have been very responsive. Your office has been very responsive to my office as well as to the family. I would just ask that you continue to work with the Czech Republic—they are the ones that are actually helping us with this—and not let this man fall through the cracks.

Secretary POMPEO. You have my commitment. Next week, we will hold an event at the State Department talking about this specific set of issues, about Americans that are detained wrongly abroad. I will have some of the families in.

The Trump Administration has had some success we are very proud of in getting people back. I personally got to bring back three Americans who were being held in North Korea. We focus on this every single day.

Mr. WRIGHT. Great. Thank you. Thank you again. Thank you for your service.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Phillips?

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Secretary, as a Gold Star son, I am particularly grateful for your service to our country.

My question is about Afghanistan. It goes without saying that a secure and peaceful Afghanistan is not in our country's best interest, but, of course, the world's. I know that will be difficult to achieve. But it also goes without saying that Members of Congress are concerned about the lack of communication between the State Department and Congress relative to both our strategy and an update relative to the negotiations with the Taliban.

I think since November 2018, this committee staff has been asking for a briefing. I believe Chairman Engel and Ranking Member McCaul have sent a letter as recently as February asking for that briefing. And all have been ignored.

So, my question is, can you confirm that within 2 weeks that Ambassador Khalilzad would appear for a briefing in front of this committee?

Secretary POMPEO. No, I am not prepared to do that, to confirm that he will do that. I am happy to share with you our strategy, what it is the State Department has been tasked to do, and frankly, all the U.S. Government has been asked to do in Afghanistan by President Trump.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Before you continue—

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to share with you—you describe, by the way, our negotiations. Our negotiations are with every element inside of Afghanistan aimed at there to be Afghan-led conversations. That is the mission set that Ambassador Khalilzad is engaged in.

Mr. PHILLIPS. OK. Specifically—

Secretary POMPEO. So, it is just important to characterize it correctly.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I respect that.

But, going back to the Ambassador, what is a reasonable time-frame for him to appear in front of this——

Secretary POMPEO. You know, when you are engaged in complex negotiations, one needs to be really careful to make sure that the contents of those negotiations remain in a very small circle. And I am happy to share with you. I know precisely what he is doing. I do not speak with him every day, but almost every day.

Mr. PHILLIPS. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. It is either I are Under Secretary Hale that is working closely with Ambassador Khalilzad.

I am happy to come share with you what we can, but you have to know the success of these negotiations depends on every one of those partners having confidence that what they say in those negotiations will not end up in The Washington Post.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I respect that. But, in his absence, and with about 3 minutes here, if you could brief us on both strategy——

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. PHILLIPS [continuing]. And any update that you can share, it is most important.

Secretary POMPEO. You bet. Let me walk you through President Trump's strategy. He has talked very publicly about ending endless wars and about taking down America's substantial commitment in Afghanistan as quickly as we can, consistent with American national security interest. That is the aim that he has set out for us.

So, I, working closely with, first, Secretary Mattis, now Acting Secretary Shanahan, have laid out our effort for reconciliation to see if we can take down the violence levels, and then, begin to have real negotiations about what a political resolution would look like in Afghanistan, always being mindful of the risk. There is continued ISIS-Khorasan inside of Afghanistan. Although America has done enormously good work under multiple Presidents to take down the threat from al-Qaeda, it remains there as well. So, all the while being mindful that we have important counterterrorism equities that we need to make sure that we address appropriately.

And that is what Ambassador Khalilzad and the Department of Defense who is working alongside him on these reconciliation discussions are trying to convince all the parties, the government of national unity, including President Ghani, other Afghan actors, and the Taliban to come together to see if we cannot find a way to reduce the violence. When we do that, we will be able to reduce not only American forces there, but, importantly, the NATO forces that are located inside and working together alongside us inside of Afghanistan.

Mr. PHILLIPS. And in your estimation, can the Taliban and other extremist groups be trusted?

Secretary POMPEO. I am a believer that whoever it is we are negotiating with, we have to have deliverable, measurable outcomes that can be verified. That goes for everyone I negotiate with. When I was in the private sector negotiating with customers and suppliers, I did not want to have to resort to enforcement mechanisms, but, rather, I wanted to be able to have the capacity to understand that we could measure, work together, and see deliverable outcomes on the ground. That is what we will expect from all of the parties in the region.

Mr. PHILLIPS. OK. All right. My understanding is the Ambassador is now going back to the region, will be there through April 10th.

And I will just ask one more time. Your encouragement would be appreciated on behalf of this entire committee to extend that invitation for a briefing. I think it is important, and you having been a former Member of this body, I think you probably recognize that.

Secretary POMPEO. I understand. And I remember when negotiations were taking place with the previous Administration, they were very careful about information ending up in places that harmed the very effort that we would agree we are engaged in trying to achieve.

But I am happy to consider if there is a way we can execute what it is I know you want. You do have an obligation on oversight.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Yes, we do.

Secretary POMPEO. I understand that deeply. And I will do my best to make sure that we keep you apprised, as we move along, of the success and absence thereof with respect to our reconciliation efforts.

Mr. PHILLIPS. OK. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Fitzpatrick?

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here today. Thank you for your service.

I wanted to touch on Ukraine. I am the co-chair of the Ukraine Caucus. Also, before being in Congress, as an FBI agent, my last international assignment was in Ukraine, and spent a lot of time and put a lot of effort into working with their anti-corruption efforts to start the NABU, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, and also working a lot of counterintelligence.

And my question, sir, is, the Administration, their broader policy with regards to Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, the ongoing battle occurring in the Donbas region. Do you feel that we are supplying them with enough of what they need? What has the followup been with regards to the commitments we have made? Do you think it is sufficient? That pertains to eastern Ukraine. And with respect to Crimea, are we satisfied just accepting the status quo there with the annexation? I know we have made statements of not recognizing it. But recognizing that what Mr. Putin did was a violation of international law, what is next in that regard?

Secretary POMPEO. Let me, if I may, take the second question first. We have issued statements. We have issued a Crimea declaration. We have worked with our partners along the Black Sea in the region. When the Russians captured soldiers in the Sea of Azov, sailors in the Sea of Azov, we have done a great deal of work to try to push back against that. We need to do more.

Next week, I am hopeful when our NATO colleagues are in town for the 70th anniversary of NATO we will be able to announce another series of actions that we will jointly take together to push back against what Russia is doing there in Crimea and in the Sea of Azov and in the region.

So, the answer is, I do not know that we have done all that we can yet. We are continuing to work to make sure that we are building out the right policies, so that we can ultimately restore what we have said with respect to Crimea. It belongs to Ukraine, and we want to see that fixed.

Second, we are constantly evaluating whether we are not only providing enough resources to Ukraine in the southeast, in the Donbas, along the line of contact, not only whether it is enough, but whether if it is the right tools, not only the tools that you see, munitions and arms, but intelligence sharing, situational awareness, all the things that we have the capacity that you were engaged in, building out infrastructures and institutions inside of Ukraine. We are constantly reviewing whether or not we are doing enough there.

We are hopeful that there will be a successful election and a successful government formation that follows that. And then, we hope, too, that we can continue the very efforts you described, the anti-corruption efforts. They are incredibly important. Those reforms will be central to restoring the full democracy that the Ukraine and people so richly deserve.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, sir. I can tell you, the younger generation, particularly in Ukraine, provides a very, very bright future for that country. They want, more than anything, closer ties with the West.

I think the greatest thing we can do in that region is to keep our word to the Ukrainians, provide them with as much military assistance as they need, because that is a big, big constraint for them right now. And I just wanted to share that thought with you, sir. If you could keep that in mind when you are enacting policies pertaining to that region, that we maintain close contact and ongoing communications with Ukrainian leaders, particularly in the area of the military. The more military folks we can have joint exercises and training with—I know predominantly now it is the National Guard in California that does most of the work in Ukraine—but it would certainly help to have some of their military leaders in Ukraine train here at some of our academies. I think that would really go a long way.

Thank you, sir.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Levin?

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Secretary.

I have several questions for you on the Administration's implementation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Let me be clear. There is bipartisan support for ending human trafficking, but we must follow the letter of the law and ensure vulnerable populations are not punished for their government's conduct.

In November, a Presidential memorandum restricted aid to countries that are not meeting or trying to meet standards set out by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, meaning governments that are not doing things like seriously investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases. This memorandum said the United States "will not provide nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related assistance" to the

governments until they make progress, but it is not totally clear, at least to me, what that means. Does assistance to governments include aid administered through NGO's directly to populations where the government does not provide any financial or in-kind support?

Secretary POMPEO. We look at each of those on a case-by-case basis to determine whether it is appropriate. I think you noted that in the memorandum there was an exclusion for humanitarian assistance. Many of the NGO's, indeed, are providing just exactly that.

Look, there is a good reason for that memorandum. I think it makes enormous sense. I am fully supportive of the decision the President made there. It is the right thing to do to encourage these governments, ultimately, for it to be successful at taking down this threat from trafficking. It is going to be those governments that do that. So, our work, the State Department's work——

Mr. LEVIN. Right.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. Is to make sure that those governments do it and build that infrastructure.

Mr. LEVIN. We are all for that, sir, but what I am trying to get at is the boundary, and, in particular, we do not want to restrict direct NGO aid to victims and vulnerable populations.

Several Senators and Representatives sent you a letter on this very matter on December 17th, and the Department did not respond at all until March 5th. And even then, in the response, it did not answer the question at all. We are talking about things like nutrition assistance and health care without which people suffer. So, it has been more than 3 months since we first asked the Department this question. Why isn't there an answer?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, you just said we sent you a letter. I think we have provided an answer. If you think the letter is insufficient, we are happy to review it and see if we cannot provide you additional context, additional color, some more detail. But it sounds like that——

Mr. LEVIN. So, when can we expect a followup?

Secretary POMPEO. If you would, please, send us a letter indicating what it is you think——

Mr. LEVIN. So, another letter? We will just go back and forth——

Secretary POMPEO. Well, I mean, we clearly think we responded. We believe we responded to you.

Mr. LEVIN. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. If there are particular places where you have concerns or you think we did not adequately respond, it does not have to be a letter, but if you would share with us what it is you are——

Mr. LEVIN. Yes, time is short. Let me ask you another question about waivers to aid restrictions and how they are being applied. I understand that PEPFAR funds are being granted waivers, so that assistance can continue, even though PEPFAR programs require coordination and some integration with governments. Yet, I have also heard that education and other programs that are not working through governments are being impacted. I do not think there is any question that cutting off education assistance will hurt local populations. So, I would like to understand the decision-

making process. What criteria is the Department using to determine which forms of assistance can continue and which cannot?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I cannot give you a blanket answer. Do you have a particular country? I mean, I can talk to you about our understanding about how it is we deliver that. We are trying to get the very outcomes that are described in the program. So, we are trying to make sure that U.S. American taxpayer dollars are used for programs that actually have positive outcomes, that actually deliver the results. Where we—

Mr. LEVIN. Well, for sure. I do not mean to interrupt you, but, you know—

Secretary POMPEO. Well, you did.

Mr. LEVIN. This is also—yes, I did—this is also a matter we asked in the December 17th letter. And the reason I am asking you these questions is because the assistance we are talking about is absolutely critical to some of the world's most vulnerable people, and because this is hardly the first time requests for key information from this committee have been ignored. I am extremely concerned that, despite the Secretary's own experience with congressional oversight, that this State Department has no qualms stonewalling Congress and keeping us from carrying out our constitutionally mandated oversight responsibilities.

Let me just ask you one other quick question about Paul Whelan, a Michigander. He is an American citizen. He was arrested, as you know, on December 28th in Russia by the FSB, purportedly for espionage. He remains in prison, and a Russian court recently extended his pretrial detention until May. Given that we have little time left here, can you just give me some sense? We are very concerned about him, that he remains in prison. And we would like to know what you are doing to secure his rights under international law and, ultimately, his release.

Secretary POMPEO. I cannot say much about what we have taken, only to reassure you that our Ambassador Huntsman there, our team on the ground, our team that travels and has communications with the Russian government raises this issue consistently and is doing all that it can to make sure that we treat this issue with the highest priority.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you, and I would yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENGEL. Mr. Burchett?

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here, brother. You have incredible control. I have had to leave three times for restroom breaks; you stay right there. So, I am not sure what was in your criteria for hiring, but a large bladder must have been. So, I am appreciative of that, brother.

I am going to ask you some questions about Israel and the Golan Heights. And I was wondering if you could elaborate some further on the strategic implications that will have for the region, and will it be helpful for the peace process?

Secretary POMPEO. So, first of all, the decision the President made was one that we had been working on for some time. And ultimately, it was done because it was the right thing to do, in the sense that it recognized the reality on the ground. So, in the first

instance, the decision was made because it was simply the right thing to do to recognize Israel's claim for the sovereignty of the Golan Heights.

Second, we also believe—and we took a look at this—we believe this increases the likelihood that we get resolution of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. We think it speaks with the clarity that takes this away from any uncertainty about how we will proceed. And so, we think that, when one is involved in a complex negotiation, that more certainty is better. And so, we do think this will benefit both Israel and the Palestinians, so that we can get resolution.

Secretary POMPEO. Cool. Thank you.

And also, I noticed the United Nations, to me, it is pretty apparent they have a clear anti-Israel voting pattern, I would call it. Will the U.S. be leveraging American foreign aid to encourage countries to stand with us at the United Nations, as has been suggested. You know, we talk about the carrot or the stick. It seems like we are always giving the carrot, and maybe the stick might be in order at some point.

Secretary POMPEO. So, we have certainly done that in terms of using all the tools at our disposal to make the case that we needed partners certainly on the U.N. Security Council, not only the permanent members, but those that are there for a shorter time, as well as folks in the broader U.N. General Assembly, that they would support us and vote with us.

One of the reasons we have ended the U.N. Human Rights Council was because it had clearly lost its mission; it had lost its focus. It was behaving in ways that were deeply inconsistent with the very charter of that commission.

Mr. BURCHETT. Clearly, I guess some of the countries that were on it were some of the worst actors that we have seen.

What steps is the State Department currently taking to stop the flow of resources to the Hezbollah, and are we doing to stop Iranian resources from going to them?

Secretary POMPEO. So, the major global campaign is the sanctions regime that we have put in place. We have taken them from 2.7 barrels of oil per day down to something around a million barrels of oil per day. We will make another set of decisions in May about that. That has denied them hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.

We have active campaigns with countries around the world to deny Iran the capacity to move weapons and money around the world. So, Treasury is obviously in the lead, but the State Department is doing work for financial sanctions to deny those countries the capacity to trade with Iran.

There are other tools the U.S. Government uses as well. It is a full-on campaign.

With respect to Hezbollah, I was in Beirut just this past week to talk with them about how we can work to ensure that Lebanon gets the democracy they want without a third-party armed force inside of their country. It presents real risks to them. It is not to the people of Lebanon's best interest. And we are around the world working to make sure that wherever the Islamic Republic of Iran

is fomenting terrorism or trying to undermine democracy or behaving in a malign way, we are pushing back.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. It seemed like I asked something about the Chinese and the Huawei—I am not sure; I think that is how you pronounce it—with the Chinese using them. And Secretary Albright was here, I believe last week or the week before, and she concurred; she agreed that they were a national security threat, especially if they were allowed to be a part of the 5G internet infrastructure.

And with the recent news that Germany will most likely allow them to bid on the 5G networks, will that threaten our NATO intelligence-sharing and transatlantic security?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not want to talk specifics about what the Germans are telling us, but I can say this: we have made clear publicly to every country the risks of putting technology from a Chinese State on the enterprise, or one that is closely affiliated with Chinese State-owned enterprises inside your network, and then, the subsequent risk about decisions that we will have to take, that America will have to take with respect to where we can put our information. Not only our government information, but the private information of our citizens is at risk as well.

And we are out talking about this, making sure that everybody understands America's view of the risk. Then, countries will make their own sovereign choices, and we will be forced to then make ours as well.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, I yield no time back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. So, do with it what you will.

Chairman ENGEL. I appreciate it. I appreciate it anyway. Thank you.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, sir.

Chairman ENGEL. Ms. Spanberger?

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you, Secretary, for being here today.

Secretary Pompeo, as a former intelligence professional, I am extremely troubled by the apparent lack of respect for the intelligence community's objective, nonpartisan intelligence assessments and their critical importance in the formulation of sound, well-reasoned, and balanced foreign policy which is your responsibility as Secretary of State. I would like to ask you a few questions regarding some of the most pressing foreign policy issues facing our Nation today. As time is short, please answer with a simple yes or no, sir.

Do you believe the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will covertly retain his nuclear weapons program despite negotiations?

Secretary POMPEO. So, I cannot answer that yes or no, and I would challenge, by the way, the predicate of your question. I think it is important to let—

Ms. SPANBERGER. So, sir, I am a former intelligence officer.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. SPANBERGER. So, I understand that nuance is deep, but these are actually—

Secretary POMPEO. I worked there for a little while, too.

Ms. SPANBERGER [continuing]. In-public, open source. They are answered in a very straightforward yes or no.

So, shall I take your response as a no or a yes, sir?

Secretary POMPEO. You may take my response however you please. But I am happy to answer your questions substantively——

Ms. SPANBERGER. Do you believe Russia interfered with the 2016 U.S. general election, sir?

Secretary POMPEO. If you will permit me to answer your question, I would be happy to do so. But——

Ms. SPANBERGER. Please go ahead, sir.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. It is not fair to ask a question that cannot be answered yes or no and demand that I do so. As you said, you know nuance. There is nuance in responding——

Ms. SPANBERGER. Well, sir, I would argue that point because in the 2019 Threat Assessment where we had leaders from the intelligence community here before us, they did answer with a, yes, that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will covertly retain, their assessment is will covertly retain——

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, but I am happy to give you my answer to that.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Well, moving on to the next one——

Secretary POMPEO. You never get a deal until you get a deal. And I understand how intelligence works. They look at history. They stare at the past.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Sir, let's move on to the next one.

Secretary POMPEO. But I am looking at forward and I am very hopeful that we——

Ms. SPANBERGER. Do you believe Russia interfered with the 2016 U.S. general election? This is looking toward the past.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. SPANBERGER. So, that one should be one that you can answer.

Secretary POMPEO. Oh, yes, they did, and the 2012 and the 2008 and the 2004——

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you.

Do you believe Iran is following the provisions of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to reduce or eliminate its enriched uranium stockpile and enrichment facilities?

Secretary POMPEO. That is a very complicated answer, not all of which I can give in public.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Also answered in the January 2019 threat testimony. The answer that the intelligence leaders of our intelligence community gave was yes.

Do you believe that global climate change is real and represents a threat to U.S. national security?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, the climate is changing.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you.

And is it a threat to our national security, sir?

Secretary POMPEO. It is not at the top of my list.

Ms. SPANBERGER. I am not asking about your list. I am asking about the intelligence community's list and their assessments, which should be driving the policy you are pushing.

Secretary POMPEO. But policymakers have an obligation to form their own independent judgment on priorities, and that is what this Administration is doing. It is what I, frankly, wish the past Administration——

Ms. SPANBERGER. And for the record, I would like to put into the record that the 2019 Annual Worldwide Threat Assessment did say that global climate change does present a threat to U.S. national security.

So, thank you. I am glad that, ultimately, overall it seems like we are in agreement that, when we are looking at threat assessments, you are listening to the career intelligence professionals, and differing, and learning from, and listening to their years of training and expertise. However, unfortunately, sir, this has not matched some of the previous comments that you have made over the past years, certainly not those of the White House.

So, my question is, why is there such a disconnect between your positions and that of the President, the assessment of the intelligence community and those of the President?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, there is not.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Is there not, sir?

Secretary POMPEO. No.

Ms. SPANBERGER. So, OK. Well, thank you very much for your answers on this.

I do want to close because, as a former intelligence officer and as someone who has been deeply disturbed by the lack of the credence given to some of the work or most of the work of the intelligence community, I would like to close with a note to my sisters and brothers in the intelligence community. And as one former DNI has said, "The IC will continue to speak truth to power, even when the power ignores that truth."

I want to commend the men and women of the intelligence community for risking their lives across the world, and too often their livelihoods as well, every day to collect the information that should be directing and informing the policy that the U.S. Government is pursuing throughout the world.

Thank you to you, sir, for being here today. And thank you to the intelligence community serving around the world.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, and—

Ms. SPANBERGER. I yield back.

Secretary POMPEO. And I would just add that you should know that it is; the very work that they are doing is important and used by this Administration to inform its policy decisions all across the spectrum.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you, sir. Then, I would urge you, in your conversations with the President, for him to potentially speak more respectfully of the life-risking work that so many of our intelligence community members pursue, so that you may have well-informed, well-sourced information in your day-to-day work.

Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Watkins?

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you, sir.

Secretary Pompeo, thank you for your selfless service. It brings honor upon our great State of Kansas, our country, and the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Last time you were home, we were at the GES Heartland Institute, and we talked about the role of the State Department when linking up our growers, our farmers, and producers in Kansas to

the global market. Can you talk me through the State Department's role in that?

Secretary POMPEO. Certainly. So, both the State Department team that works here in the United States and the team that works across missions across the world, we have a responsibility to ensure that we have open access to markets. So, that is a policy decision inside of those countries that we work diligently to make sure they understand that America is going to demand reciprocal trade. You see the President raised this to new levels of importance. We want to make sure that, if they are selling their goods here, we can sell our goods inside of their country as well. It is only fair and right.

And with respect to agriculture, in particular, we have got a whole big team. We have 1500 economic officers stationed around the world whose singular mission is to make sure American companies understand rules, understand customs, understand tax laws, have the capacity to build out their businesses and create wealth and jobs here in the United States by selling all across the world.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you, Secretary Pompeo.

Chairman, I yield my time.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. Houlahan?

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for your time today.

My name is Chrissy Houlahan, and I am here representing the people of Pennsylvania's Sixth congressional District. And so, I take great responsibility of making sure that my people in my community understand the importance of the State Department, frankly.

I am a third-generation military service member myself. I have active-duty cousins, many of them in harm's way right now. But I firmly believe that the work that you do prevents the work that my family needs to do.

Secretary POMPEO. Amen.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And so, my questions are along a couple of lines, the first one regarding women and peace and security. I am member of this committee, but I am also a member of the Armed Services Committee. And I am actually quite concerned about the Administration's delay in submitting to Congress its strategy on bolstering women's inclusion, peace, and security efforts globally. It was required by the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017.

And so, my first question is to you, which is, when will you plan to deliver this strategy, which was due October 2018?

Secretary POMPEO. I cannot answer that question, but I will get you an answer in the next day or two, of when we will have delivered it.

Ms. HOULAHAN. I would very much like to have a very specific answer to that question because I am also a former teacher, and deadlines matter. And I would love to have an actual, concrete deadline.

Secretary POMPEO. As a former businessperson, I understand how important deadlines are. And I now run a 75,000-person organization. I am with you.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Yes, sir.

And the question is, if you have not yet submitted that, how can you possibly, therefore, have an implementation strategy for that, and how does that possibly, or can it even possibly be folded into this proposed budget that you have put forward with regard to women's issues and women's issues of safety?

Secretary POMPEO. I am proud of the work we have done on women's issues in this Administration, both in my time as CIA Director—you might not think of that as a place where this rises to the forefront, but it certainly did for me. Indeed, my deputy was a very talented CIA officer who is now the Director of the CIA. But, even more broadly than that, it is certainly part of what I do at the State Department, what I demand of my team on the ground all over the world.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Well, and I appreciate that, sir, and I definitely would love to get with you in the next day or two to get a very firm date on when that particular report will be due.

And my next question also has to do with women's issues and the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. I also am a former businessperson, and I was really pleased to see that you included \$100 million in the women's economic empowerment through the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. But I understand in your testimony this morning, in the appropriations hearings, that you spent a lot of time discussing the long-term viability of this program, given the proposed cuts to other programs that assist and empower women worldwide, like the Global Health Program and basic education.

And I really appreciated in your testimony that you expressed flexibility and a willingness to evaluate the effectiveness of that program. But my question to you is, how do you reconcile the decreased commitments in some programs and this increased commitment in this particular initiative? How do you reconcile the critical programs that have been decreased with this program that you have increased?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, as a former businessperson, you know you have to make tough decisions all the time and you have to make priorities and allocate resources. We certainly did that in the budget that we presented to Congress. We are confident that we can deliver on the objectives that I think you have outlined in the predicate to your question, and we believe we can—

Ms. HOULAHAN. Can you give me a couple of specifics of why, what—

Secretary POMPEO. Tell me what you are most interested in? I would be happy to—

Ms. HOULAHAN. Well, just in general, when you are talking about making specific decisions and weighing kind of pros and cons of different decisions, what was it that made you decide to do a new program versus some old programs?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, it is our observation that we were not as effective with those resources as we believe we can be in the new programs in delivering the real outcomes that matter, matter to these nations, matter to women in those nations. That was the analysis that was undertaken.

Ms. HOULAHAN. If it is all right, I would love to ask for you to put to the record what were those analyses, what were those deci-

sionmaking processes, that it made you evaluate those particular things. Because I am a businessperson, a metrics-driven human being, just like you are, and I know, in particular, with things like this that are “social sciencey” and that are very squishy—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Ms. HOULAHAN [continuing]. You know, that it is really important to have those quantifiable ideas behind them of what it is that you were weighing pros and cons on.

Secretary POMPEO. I appreciate that, and you are right, sometimes things that you cannot put a number to, you can still measure qualitatively. I will concede it is softer. And that is what we undertook in this allocation decision as well.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And thank you. I do actually have a couple of other questions, but I only have half a minute remaining. So, if it is all right, what I will do is I will submit the remainder—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. HOULAHAN [continuing]. Of my questions to the record.

And I appreciate your time, sir.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to get back to you on them.

[The information referred to appears in the Appendix]

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Guest?

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, in your written statement that was provided to us prior to your testimony, on page 2 of that testimony, you say, “President Trump has made it clear that U.S. foreign assistance should serve America’s interest and should support countries that have helped us advance our foreign policy goals. This budget, therefore, maintains critical support for key allies.” And the first ally you list there is the Nation of Israel.

First of all, I want to thank you, in a time of rising opposition and the increase of antisemitism, both domestically and internationally, I want to thank you and I want to thank the Administration for supporting our longstanding alliance between the United States and Israel. Recently, the Administration has shown support by relocating our embassy to Jerusalem and has recognized Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Mr. Secretary, even with our recent support, we continue to see attacks on Israel, including just this week where we saw rocket attacks that injured seven, including two young children. And so, my question is, can you please address the Administration’s approach to working with the international community to support Israel’s right to, one, defend itself and, two, to prevent future attacks on the Nation of Israel?

Secretary POMPEO. So, I am not sure exactly where to begin in responding to that question. I have addressed some of this. Look, we have tried to find places where these countries had overlapping interest with Israel. There is a long history in the Middle East where these countries could not find any place to overlap.

We managed to put together a meeting in Warsaw where you had senior-level leaders from Gulf States, from Arab States, sitting in the same room having discussions about Middle East stability and security with Prime Minister Netanyahu. Those kinds of

things are incredibly important. They reduce risk to Israel. They reduce risk to the United States of America.

And then, I could go through a series of other places we have done, perhaps no place more important with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran, right, a country that has sworn to wipe Israel off the map. We have taken an approach that is 180 degrees from the previous Administration, recognizing the threat that Iran is not only to Israel, but to Europe, where they are conducting assassination campaigns, to the capacity for Iraq to stand up an independent, sovereign government. We are working on each of these things, and each of those—our effort to build that MESA, the Middle East Strategic Alliance—each of these projects, each of these coalition-building exercises, it is aimed at reducing risk to Israel.

Mr. GUEST. What additional support can Congress provide the Administration, again, to show our support? I know we have talked a little bit about the international community. What can we, as a legislative body, do to show our support for Israel and work toward peace in the Middle East?

Secretary POMPEO. I think Congress over the past decade has done a lot. It is important that every Member of Congress speak out about this issue. And the more Members of Congress, the more that the world sees that this is bipartisan, this commitment, that this commitment to Israel will not change from Administration to Administration, the more successful we can be.

Mr. GUEST. And if the Congress and the Administration were to speak in a bipartisan voice, do you believe that that would help advance the peace process in the Middle East?

Secretary POMPEO. Undoubtedly.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield my time back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Guest.

Mr. Malinowski?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Secretary, you have been eloquent in denouncing the harm that socialism has done to Venezuela, and I agree with you. I applaud you for it. But I am confused about one thing. If we are going to be so forceful in denouncing socialism, why is the Administration so high on communism?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I mean, the very statement there is pretty outrageous.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, I am talking about North Korea, sir, the most perfectly realized communist State in history, a country where the State owns everything and everyone. And yet, the Administration is repeatedly referring to how it has, quote, “awesome economic potential,” how it can become an “economic powerhouse,” quote/unquote, without changing a system, simply by giving up nuclear weapons.

And so, my question is, why are you so confident in the capacity of a communist State to provide for its people?

Secretary POMPEO. Let me just back up for just a moment. We have both the toughest sanctions on North Korea in the history—this Administration built out this coalition against this Nation. The previous Administration did not do it, did not take it seriously. This Administration has done that. I am very proud of what President Trump has been able to do there. We have the toughest sanc-

tions while still engaged in some of the most serious negotiations and diplomatic efforts.

And our mission set is, in fact, to get the proliferation risk reduced, to get North Korea denuclearized, and then, our commitment is to say, at that point, we want a brighter future for the North Korean people. The form of government that will take place there will evolve over time. We have seen countries in the region who have not fully transformed in the way we like, countries like Vietnam, be able to grow their economy, provide better for their people. We think that opportunity exists in North Korea as well.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I am asking because there is a whole lot of rhetoric about liking Kim Jong-un, falling in love with Kim Jong-un, Kim Jong-un being our friend. And so, let me ask you, why is liking Kim Jong-un a sufficient reason to cancel or not to pursue sanctions against companies helping his nuclear program, as the White house said last week? I am quoting the White House there.

Secretary POMPEO. There have been more sanctions put in place by this Administration with a global coalition than at any time in the world's history, sir.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. And yet, liking him is cited as a reason not to do more. And, sir—

Secretary POMPEO. Let me answer. We will continue, we will continue—

Mr. MALINOWSKI. It is a simple yes-or-no question.

Secretary POMPEO. Well, if I may, we will continue to enforce the U.N. Security Council resolutions and do our best to encourage every nation in the world to do so. I only wish the previous Administration had undertaken this same effort.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, actually, it did. Now let me ask a yes-or-no question.

Secretary POMPEO. These sanctions were not in place, sir. That is factually inaccurate.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Is Kim Jong-un responsible for maintaining North Korea's system of labor camps?

Secretary POMPEO. He is the leader of the country.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Is he responsible for ordering the execution of his uncle, the assassination by chemical agent of his half-brother?

Secretary POMPEO. He is the leader of the country.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Was he responsible for the decision not to allow Otto Warmbier to come home until he was on death's door?

Secretary POMPEO. I will leave the President's statement to stand. He made that statement. We all know that the North Korean regime was responsible for the tragedy that occurred to Otto Warmbier. I have met that family. I know those people. I love them dearly. They suffered mightily, sir.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So, what is to like?

Secretary POMPEO. They suffered mightily, sir.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So, what is to like about Kim Jong-un?

Secretary POMPEO. So, do not make this a political football. It is inappropriate. It is inappropriate to do.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, when the White House says that sanctions decisions are based on liking Kim Jong-un—has the President ever used that kind of language with respect to Angela Merkel? Has he ever publicly called her a friend?

Secretary POMPEO. I have heard him talk about her that way, yes. I do not recall if it was in a public setting or not.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. OK. Let me go back to the questions—there have been a number of questions about Saudi Arabia and the Khashoggi killing. Do you believe that the Saudi authorities, the most senior Saudi authorities are capable of investigating themselves for a murder that has been attributed to them?

Secretary POMPEO. I think the most important commitment that the United States made is the one that I spoke about earlier—it would have been earlier this afternoon—which is the commitment for the United States to conduct its work and hold every person responsible. That is what the United States—

Mr. MALINOWSKI. We will base our judgment on our own assessment?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir, that is what we have done to date, and it is what we will continue to do.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you very much.

And if Saudi Arabia's cover story here, if their story is that this was a rogue operation, do we not risk reinforcing that cover story if all we do is sanction the rogues, the henchmen, the people who have been accused by the—

Secretary POMPEO. I have made very clear, as has President Trump, we are continuing to develop the fact set using all the tools that we have at our disposal. And as we identify individuals who we can hold accountable for the heinous murder of Jamal Khashoggi, we will do so.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Pence?

Mr. PENCE. Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, thank you for convening this hearing.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here and thank you for your fantastic service to this country.

I noted with great interest that you were recently in Houston at CERAWeek. During your address, you stated, and I quote, "Our plentiful oil supplies allow us to help our friends secure diversity in their energy resources. We do not want our European allies hooked on Russian gas through the Nord Stream 2 project any more than we, ourselves, want to depend on Venezuela for our oil supplies."

You went on to note that there is a desperate need for diversification, while pointing out the fact that last year the United States exported more crude oil to places like India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. These are great achievements, but you also outlined challenges. You specifically singled out China, Russia, Syria, and described how these countries are attempting to leverage their energy resources for political purposes. You stated that we are "not just exporting energy; we are exporting our commercial value." I could not agree more.

Mr. Secretary, can you elaborate on what you and Assistant Secretary Fannon's priorities are in the energy security space, and how can we best address these challenges?

Secretary POMPEO. As America's senior diplomat, I am an enormous beneficiary of the capacity for American innovation and creativity, whether that is through fracking, the capacity to deliver energy around the world. When America shows up, when I talked about exporting our commercial values, when we show up, we do straight-up deals. We demonstrate value. We have contracts. We honor contracts. We engage in deals that are commercial and honor the rule of law, independent from government directions, with no political gain to the United States.

Having American companies do business in those ways provides an enormous opportunity for us because these countries no longer have to be dependent on those countries that are trying to undermine Western democracy and Western values. They have the capacity to create electricity for their countries, to have natural gas, to fuel all of the energy needs of their nation without having to turn to bad actors around the world. When I was talking about those exports having value, that is what I was referring to.

Mr. PENCE. Again, thank you for your service. Thanks for being here today and keeping us all informed.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Trone?

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Secretary, the Trump Administration Muslim ban, that is an appalling policy. It has affected my friends. It has affected my neighbors. They have been unable to see their families. They feel discriminated in their own country.

In 2017, a thousand visas were denied. In 2018, that number was 37,000. There is a waiver there to Proclamation 9645 for undue hardship, when it is not a national security threat, but the waiver is rarely used. As a matter of fact, it is used less than 2 percent of the time. Your own consular officers have described the waiver process as a fraud, window dressing.

Would you talk about what discretion the consular officers have in utilizing this waiver?

Secretary POMPEO. I would be happy if you tell me which consular officer thinks it is a fraud because I would be happy to speak with him or her about the fact that it is not, in fact, a fraud.

Mr. TRONE. His name is in the press.

Secretary POMPEO. Great. I will—

Mr. TRONE. We can have that sent to you.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to take a look at it. I am happy to make sure he understands the Trump Administration's policy there.

We are determined to make sure that we understand who is coming in and out of our country and that we are vetting people properly. I am proud of the work that we are doing there. I am confident that we have reduced risks to the United States of a terror attack here.

Mr. TRONE. The same officers allege that the discretion issue waivers is consistently countermanded by Washington. Your answer is the same?

Secretary POMPEO. What is the question, sir?

Mr. TRONE. It is they do not have that discretion that they should have, and that is why we have 2 percent.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I actually think we have the authority, sir, precisely right.

Mr. TRONE. OK. Is it the policy of the State Department to implement a ban on visas for predominantly Muslim countries? Do you believe it is due to nationality or religious affiliation that makes them a unique threat?

Secretary POMPEO. We evaluate each individual based on the characteristics of the threat that they pose.

Mr. TRONE. These are great people, great Americans, and their lives are being disrupted.

Let's talk about the Kingdom for a second. Thousands of people in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have disappeared or been murdered. The Crown Prince has stolen over \$100 billion from his own countrymen. He has moved against Qatar, our ally. He has kidnapped the Prime Minister of Lebanon, and Yemen is a nightmare with tens of thousands dead, millions threatened by starvation. He is 33. He will probably be the king, if he moves up, for 50 years.

I always like to think about my kids and your kids and their kids and future generations. Is this the type of individual that would use a bone saw as part of his foreign policy that you would invite home for Thanksgiving dinner?

Secretary POMPEO. Are you suggesting a regime change in Saudi Arabia?

Mr. TRONE. Would you invite him home to cut the turkey?

Secretary POMPEO. I have met with the Crown Prince. I have worked with him. The challenges that you have cited there, the death that you just cite in Yemen is not because of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. You have the wrong end of the stick on that—

Mr. TRONE. I am not talking about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I am talking about the Crown Prince—

Secretary POMPEO. You are talking about—

Mr. TRONE [continuing]. With a bone saw and the whole litany of items we just discussed that all emanate from one individual.

Secretary POMPEO. That predatory question is unfounded. I am happy to talk about our strategy with respect to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I am happy to talk to you about the conversations I have had with the Crown Prince, to the extent that I can.

We have acknowledged the incident with respect to Mr. Khashoggi was a murder and it is outrageous. And we are working to do everything we can to hold everyone who is responsible accountable, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. TRONE. Well, I am disappointed in my own country, and I know many, many others are, too. It was not that long ago that, short-term convenience, an individual that was in a position of power was not tolerated, but, instead, now we just tolerate that individual because it is convenient to the Trump Administration's national policy. But at some point in time we have to draw a line. Where do you draw that line? How many more Khashoggis do we have to have?

Secretary POMPEO. Sir, we are effectuating policies that will keep America safe. We are determined to do that. The Trump Administration has put human rights at the top of its list in every single conversation we have had. It is a tough, nasty world out there, if you had not noticed, and we are a force for good everywhere we go.

Mr. TRONE. But long term are we really safer in a tough, nasty world when we tolerate that type of behavior? That is my concern?

Secretary POMPEO. We simply disagree. I believe the policy we have makes America infinitely safer today, next week, and for our children and grandchildren.

Chairman ENGEL. The time has expired. I am going to go on.

Votes have just been called. We have only about three or four more people. I am going to see if we can do this. The Secretary of State has been very generous with his time, and I would like to try to see if we can get this in before the votes are finished. So, if people would understand that and maybe give back a minute or so, that would be appreciated. If not, we will do the best we can.

Mr. Costa?

Secretary POMPEO. Congressman Costa, I will do my best to answer briefly, too.

Mr. COSTA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sure the Secretary will appreciate brevity. I will do my best.

First of all, on behalf of the chairman, I wanted to follow up on his line of questioning regarding the committee's request for documents. On March 14th, 2019, this committee sent you a letter reiterating two specific set of document requests, and we wanted to know, the chair wanted to know, yes or no, can you commit to providing the committee with the requested documents within the next seven business days?

Secretary POMPEO. Making sure I have got the right set of documents, these are documents that had to do with—which request was this?

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman?

Secretary POMPEO. There are dozens and dozens.

Mr. COSTA. I am trying to be helpful here.

Secretary POMPEO. No, no problem. I am happy to take a look at it. I just do not want to answer a question when I am not thinking about the right set of documents.

Chairman ENGEL. The bottom line—and I will say this fast—the bottom line is it is very frustrating when we send something and we do not get a response or get stonewalled, or maybe it got caught in the bureaucracy. I do not know what it is, but we will get those things back to you again and we will highlight them as second requests. And hopefully, we can get through it then.

And I thank my colleague for mentioning it—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Chairman ENGEL [continuing]. For reiterating it.

Mr. COSTA. OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That has been about a minute of my time.

Mr. Secretary, since we have last chatted, I have become the chairman of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialog. And for the purpose of the focus of the State Department's strategy for this Congress and your budget, I want to focus most of my questions, if I can, with regards to Europe and NATO.

In the most recent meeting, we Members of Congress and the members of the European Parliament, we asserted our joint statement on the bond between the United States and the European Union. It is the most fundamental economic and security strategic partnership. Do you agree with that?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, our European partners are——

Mr. COSTA. OK. Let me just continue to go on.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. COSTA. The bond is also based upon the strong foundation of our common history and values, including the principles of democracy, rule of law, human rights, free and open societies, and markets. Do you agree with that concept?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. Yes, sir.

Mr. COSTA. And obviously, this partnership has had a long history. We have talked a lot about this this afternoon. And certainly, there have been concerns, I can tell you, and I know you know it because you hear them, too, by our European friends about where this relationship is today. And words do matter.

And whether it is the issues where we disagree or the Administration disagrees with Iran, tariffs, climate change, or defense, many of our European colleagues are scratching their head and they say, “Jim, what has happened? Where is our relationship?”

What have you tried to do to reinforce it, because I know you have been asked the same questions?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. COSTA. Words matter.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, they do, and the words that I have shared with them is that they have a continued deep, important relationship. You identified three and a half places where we have disagreements. On Iran, frankly, we are working together on large pieces of pushing back against the Islamic Republic of Iran. And there are hundreds of other issues on which we work closely with the Europeans.

You are talking about Europe, France and the U.K. Please know this is much broader than that. We have deep relationships all across with the Balkans——

Mr. COSTA. I know that.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. And Eastern Europe. These are all important places.

Mr. COSTA. And there were previous Administrations that talked about “Old Europe”. And so, I mean, this is not new ground.

Secretary POMPEO. I try not to use that language. I talk about our friends.

Mr. COSTA. No, and our most important allies, I believe.

Let me move on. What kind of message does it send to our European allies when the State Department downgraded last fall the status of the European Union’s Ambassador, and then, recently reinstated it to the rightful status a few months later, because that is where it should have been? I do not know what happened.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, we messed up and we fixed it.

Mr. COSTA. OK. Well, that is good.

Let me move over to NATO quickly. You know, this partnership post-World War II that we helped create has resulted—and I suspect most Americans, probably most Europeans do not realize—in the longest peacetime dividend post-World War II, 70 years that we will celebrate next month, as you noted, in over a thousand years in Europe. I mean, that is significant by any way you examine it.

Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan said in his testimony before the Senate that the cost of 50 percent-plus present for our

military commitments, that we are not an outfit of U.S. mercenaries, that we are not going to run a business, our common defense. And, yes, you are right, Europe is a wealthy continent. Germany should pay more, all these countries. And by the way, I applaud you for that effort, but that has been continuing now for three Administrations, to do their part, in fairness.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Mr. COSTA. So, I would like to hear your thoughts on whether or not we should have a cost-benefit basis analysis in terms of how our European partners do their part, as they should.

Secretary POMPEO. So, it is certainly more complicated than that. But it is the case that we are constantly—we have shared values with these European partners.

Mr. COSTA. Of course. Let me put it this way to make it simple.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. COSTA. Do you think that the kind of cost-plus-50-percent proposal would be a bad idea?

Secretary POMPEO. I saw precisely what Assistant Secretary Shanahan says. He got it exactly right.

Mr. COSTA. Good, good.

Let me move over quickly. I have a little bit of time left.

Secretary POMPEO. I said “Assistant Secretary”. I meant Acting Secretary. He would be offended if I did not correct that.

Mr. COSTA. Acting Secretary. You are duly corrected, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you.

Mr. COSTA. Anyway, finally, I do agree—I will commend you when I think we agree—that your efforts to bring a coalition together in Venezuela is the proper thing to do. I am wondering why—and maybe it is under the radar screen—you have not convened the Organization of American States together to formalize this strategy and this commitment to do the right thing with Venezuela, to make the changes that are necessary.

Secretary POMPEO. I have attended, on this issue, I have attended two OAS meetings on this very issue. You should know we are actively working alongside them. They have been great partners. There is not total unanimity inside the OAS——

Mr. COSTA. No, there never is with the OAS.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. But they are an important force that we have worked through with this great——

Mr. COSTA. I think we need to continue to utilize that.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I completely agree.

Mr. COSTA. Along with our partners in Mexico.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you.

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

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Allred?

Mr. ALLRED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your patience. I know it has been a long afternoon.

I want to talk about Afghanistan. My colleague earlier was questioning you and asking about Special Envoy Khalilzad coming to speak to our committee. And you said that, during ongoing negotiations, that this would be something that would be very hard to do

that has not been done in the past. We have had two Special Envoys come speak to our committee without leaks to The Washington Post.

Secretary POMPEO. That is actually not true.

Mr. ALLRED. Well, I have been in classified briefings from some of your Special Envoys. We have a constitutional duty to make sure that we are overseeing what you are doing in the State Department. And so, I do not accept the excuse that ongoing negotiations mean that we cannot have the information this committee deserves.

Secretary POMPEO. I am trying to make sure you get the best information that you can that is consistent with your oversight duties. I am determined to do that. I am also determined to make sure we protect this information in a way that prevents us from undermining U.S.—

Mr. ALLRED. I hope you understand that, with a 17-year war heading into the 18th year, that the Congress deserves to have a role in how we are going to proceed here.

Secretary POMPEO. A hundred percent.

Mr. ALLRED. OK. Well, thank you. I think this committee deserves to have—we can have a classified briefing. We can do it in a way that I think is secure. I think if you were in our seat during the Obama Administration era and we were having the discussions around the JCPOA, and they refused to give you any information until the very end—

Secretary POMPEO. I actually was, and they did.

Mr. ALLRED. Oh, they did not. They gave you briefings. I know that that is—

Secretary POMPEO. Meaningless and unimportant.

Mr. ALLRED. Meaningless briefings?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. ALLRED. OK. Well, I would like to have some kind of a briefing because we have not had that at all.

Secretary POMPEO. You want more than a meaningless briefing, and I would not be doing it right if we gave you a meaningless briefing.

Mr. ALLRED. Well, this is an important issue, and I think this committee, in particular, deserves to have some information on it.

And I want to also talk about the conditions for our withdrawal, because previous U.S. policy has required the Taliban to accept the current Afghan constitution, including its provisions and protections for women and minorities. Why have we dropped that condition?

Secretary POMPEO. You should not be certain that we have dropped any conditions based on what you may have read in some newspaper.

Mr. ALLRED. Well, I have not had a briefing. So, I do not know what our conditions are.

Secretary POMPEO. You should know we are very, very focused on making sure that the gains that have been achieved are not lost as part of this. The security gains that have been achieved, the gains, albeit intermittent, with respect to corruption, we hope we can actually do better. But, as you well know, this is still a very difficult place. It is the reason we still have thousands of soldiers

on the ground. And we are focused on taking down the level of violence, so that we can do precisely what it is I think you just—

Mr. ALLRED. Well, I share the recognition that we are not going to have a military solution to Afghanistan. My concern is, if we have a precipitous withdrawal, and then, we pull out without the correct conditions in place, that the progress that has been made, particularly for Afghan women, will be lost. And I think that this is something that is in the interest of our country. It is in our national interest. We need to make sure that does not happen. So, I am hopeful that, as part of those negotiations, as you said, that is going to be part of it.

Secretary POMPEO. To describe a departure after 18 years as precipitous is—

Mr. ALLRED. No, the withdrawal would be precipitous if we just take whatever conditions the Taliban will offer us so that we can get out.

Secretary POMPEO. I promise you we are going to maintain American security.

Mr. ALLRED. Well, my concern is that it seems that there might be just trying to fulfill a political promise going on here, instead of a rational and reasoned withdrawal, and doing it in the right way. And that is what I think this committee's jurisdiction directly falls upon, and that is why we need to have a briefing and talk to the folks who are involved in that negotiation.

Secretary POMPEO. Just so you know, I am running the negotiation. So, you are talking to the guy who is in charge of it.

Mr. ALLRED. Well, yes, but I would like to know, have some more information. And maybe we should have you back to talk about that specifically then. I think we should consider that.

Secretary POMPEO. I am happy to do it in the right setting, yes, sir.

Mr. ALLRED. So, are we also caving to the Taliban's stance that the Afghan government is an illegitimate puppet of the U.S.? Because that is what they have said previously. Our conditions previously have been that they should be part of the Afghan government. Is this funny, sir?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, the fact that you are relying on third-hand reporting for something that the Taliban might or might not have actually said in some print report, yes, I think we should all have better information.

Mr. ALLRED. Is the Afghan government actively part of this negotiation that we are having?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, we speak, Ambassador Bass talks to President Ghani multiple times every week, multiple times every day on some days.

Mr. ALLRED. So, your testimony is that, right now, the Afghan government is part of our negotiations with the Taliban?

Secretary POMPEO. Right now, the Afghan government is fully apprised—

Mr. ALLRED. Apprised?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, exactly, and we are diligently trying to get these parties to work together.

Mr. ALLRED. And is that—

Secretary POMPEO. The previous Administration went at that for 8 years. We have had, I have had 10 months. We are diligently trying to——

Mr. ALLRED. Well, my concern is that you are undercutting——

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. Enter Afghan conversations, so that we can resolve this——

Mr. ALLRED. Undercutting the Afghani government by not having them as part of the negotiations is a direct——

Secretary POMPEO. But that is just untrue.

Mr. ALLRED [continuing]. A direct role, not to be apprised of it, sir——

Secretary POMPEO. They are just untrue.

Mr. ALLRED [continuing]. But a direct role, risks, when we do pull out——

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. ALLRED [continuing]. Undercutting the legitimacy of that government.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Mr. ALLRED. Leading to the Taliban retaking power.

Secretary POMPEO. It is just I disagree with the facts as you have stated them.

Mr. ALLRED. Do you agree that al-Qaeda and ISIS are still in Afghanistan right now?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Chairman ENGEL. OK. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Bass?

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here, I know, all day.

Secretary POMPEO. It is good to see you.

Ms. BASS. Good to see you as well. We came in together.

So, I want to ask you about two countries and one general question. The one general question is about U.S. aid to Africa and the Administration's pledge to review all U.S. aid to Africa in order to target assistance toward key countries and particular strategic objectives. And I am wondering if that review has happened.

The second question is about Zimbabwe. They have had elections, and they are attempting to address the economic issues of the country. I wanted to know if we are reviewing or have plans to review U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe.

And then, the third question is about Sudan and the current crackdown and our efforts toward normalizing relations. And I wanted to know how the Administration was weighing these actions as it addresses Sudan's progress on phase 2.

Secretary POMPEO. Let me take each of them as best I can recall them in sequence.

Ms. BASS. Sure.

Secretary POMPEO. First, with respect to the assistance in Africa, we are reviewing it. There will be all the factors that you could imagine. I think we will give it every thought across every element of the U.S. Government to make sure that we get the levels right. I am sure there are places our assistance will increase; there may well be those where our assistance decreases. And I am very confident there will be assistance that moots. That is, we put it in in

different ways and try to make sure we get better outcomes, that have better outcomes from those resources that we are expending.

That review is not complete. It is an interagency process, and probably——

Ms. BASS. Do you have a timeframe possibly?

Secretary POMPEO. It is going to be a while still.

Ms. BASS. Well, months?

Secretary POMPEO. I have watched these interagency processes move. It will be too slow.

Ms. BASS. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. And it will take time.

Ms. BASS. While it is under review, then you maintain the same levels?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, that is largely the case, although it is also the case that from time to time we will see things that we just say they are disconnected from what has happened and transpired, that we feel compelled to make a decision on the spot. That is usually——

Ms. BASS. Like the cyclone?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, exactly. That is usually a State Department-USAID decision where we do that, a cyclone, a tragedy, a particular terrorist incident where we are trying to react in a very, very timely fashion, but not laying down a longer-term, thoughtful strategy about the region, and a country in particular.

Does that answer that first part of the question.

Ms. BASS. Yes, it does.

And in Zimbabwe and Sudan?

Secretary POMPEO. You know, the same thing. I am happy to give you a readout on what we are doing in each of those places.

Ms. BASS. OK.

Secretary POMPEO. There have been great changes in Sudan. And this Administration has tried to find places where we can find a more comfortable place to work alongside them and continue to develop them. We saw what happened in Zimbabwe. I am hopeful we can deliver that too.

But I am happy to have my team come give you particular briefings on the details of what we are doing real time in each of those two spaces with respect to our assistance, the State Department's role there.

Ms. BASS. I would appreciate that, especially with Zimbabwe. I mean both countries, but Zimbabwe also, trying to move forward. I just recently met with the Ambassador from Zimbabwe, and they are very concerned about basically their economy, where they want to move to privatize certain sectors, but their hands are tied because of our previous policies. And as they move forward and try to comply and try to bring their constitution in line with some past policies——

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. BASS [continuing]. How do we make sure we do not hold them back?

Secretary POMPEO. These are very real concerns. Sudan is also the case.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Secretary POMPEO. I was with yesterday, or perhaps it was the day before, with the Prime Minister from Mali, a similar set of concerns and an incredibly difficult environment in Mali——

Ms. BASS. Right.

Secretary POMPEO [continuing]. Terror and trying to figure out how to get not only U.S. assistance there, but U.S. economic private sector industry to grow and help them, so they can build out and take care of the terror threats that are there in Mali.

There is a country-by-country effort and a regional effort that we are undertaking.

Ms. BASS. OK. Thank you very much.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. BASS. I yield back my time, Mr. Chair.

Chairman ENGEL. Thank you, Ms. Bass.

We have two members, I am told, that want to come back after the vote to ask you questions. I do not know what the timing is on this. But, right now, we—let me put it this way. Let me call on the ranking member for——

Mr. MCCAUL. Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I would like to submit for the record a statement, an op-ed by Chairman Risch of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the importance of getting the President's nominees confirmed.

Chairman ENGEL. OK.

[The information referred to follows:]



Contacts:
 SFRC: Suzanne Wrasse, 202-224-1439
 Risch: Kaylin Minton, 202-224-2752

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2019

Chairman Risch Statement on Nominations

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, today made the following statement regarding nominations:

"There are a number of vital positions that are waiting to be filled at the State Department. Today our committee had the opportunity to hear from three very qualified nominees who will bring a wealth of expertise to the positions for which they are nominated, and we badly need their leadership at this time.

"To correct the record, we have engaged in lengthy and ongoing conversations this Congress regarding how we can make progress with the current backlog of 61 nominations that are awaiting action in our committee. It's past time to move these nominees forward to be confirmed by the full Senate.

"I look forward to working in a cooperative way with the ranking member and the members of our committee to move the nominations in our committee expeditiously. It is my intention that a number of these nominations be voted out of our committee at a business meeting in the coming days, and after the remarks made earlier today, I expect the ranking member will support that effort."

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423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510-6225
 (202) 224-4651 p

USA Today - OPINION

Global tensions rise while too many U.S. diplomats are MIA. Trump and Congress, get on it.

Liz Schroyer, Opinion contributor

March 20, 2019

We need more State Department nominations from the Trump administration and more confirmations from Congress. National security is at stake.

In the past month alone, Brazil has called for a regime change in Venezuela. Iraq is inching forward in discussions with the Kurds. Mexico has threatened to not ratify the new NAFTA. Turkey threatened to nullify local election results. Thailand has passed a troubling cybersecurity law that alarms human rights activists.

Guess what? At a time of growing global tensions, the United States does not have a single appointed ambassador on the ground in one of these countries. In fact, close to 80 senior leadership posts at the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and other U.S. international affairs agencies are vacant. More than 40 of those posts have nominees pending before the Senate, while at least 35 critical leadership positions await a nominee from the White House.

Two years into this administration and at the start of a new Congress, this crisis is both an unforced error and a unilateral disarmament of our civilian forces, with significant risks to our national security. It is time to stop blaming either end of Pennsylvania Avenue and swiftly move forward on diplomatic nominations and confirmations, especially given the backdrop of China trade talks and nuclear tensions with North Korea.

Unfortunately, a quick tour of the world underscores the gaps in America leadership:

As we seek to challenge China's rising global influence, America is missing essential leadership in Asia and the Pacific, with no one confirmed for the State Department's top Asia post along with ambassadors to Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, and the ASEAN. Yet, countering China is certainly not limited to Asia. In Africa, for example, experts tell me that Chinese diplomats working on economic and commercial issues outnumber American diplomats by as much as five to one — and yet we're still missing ambassadors to nine African countries.

With gaps on nearly every continent, more than 40 ambassador posts remain unfilled — including in critical hot spots. The State Department leadership posts for the Middle East and South Asia remain unconfirmed, and we currently lack ambassadors to some of our most critical allies in the region — including Turkey and Jordan — both on the front lines of the refugee emergency from Syria.

In our own hemisphere, no ambassador has been nominated to Brazil to help confront the growing crisis in Venezuela. Even closer to home, we are missing ambassadors in El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico, where violence and poverty are driving vulnerable populations to flee their homes.

Here in Washington at the State Department, we're missing four out of six under secretaries and one-third of the assistant secretary positions — responsible for everything from management and finance to refugees and human rights. At USAID, three senior level nominees still await Senate confirmation and four high level positions lack a nominee altogether. Other agencies, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, haven't had confirmed political leadership at the top since the start of the administration.

There is no question that vetting nominees and the confirmation process takes time, and both need to be done right. I am thankful for the seasoned career Foreign and Civil Service professionals who have stepped up to fill these gaps temporarily. Yet trying to exercise leadership with the title "Acting" can handcuff authority and hinder decision-making.

In recent days, an impressive array of regional U.S. combatant commanders — from SOUTHCOM to AFRICOM to CENTCOM — have testified before Congress, arguing their work is harder without civilian counterparts alongside them on the field. Last week, more than a dozen elite former combatant commanders echoed the same call, stating, "diplomacy and development are essential to combating threats before they reach our shores."

We will and we must continue to tackle the crises of the day. But sadly, there are no shortages of brewing threats — many of which could become the crisis of tomorrow. The world is not waiting for us to nominate and confirm America's team around the globe. It's long overdue for some peacemaking between Congress and the administration, at least on this issue, so that Team USA can get fully back in the game.

Liz Schrayer is president and CEO of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. Follow her on Twitter: @LizSchrayer

Chairman ENGEL. We have been here a long time, Mr. Secretary. I think what we will do is we will call the hearing.

I want to thank you for your patience. I hope you will come back and visit us——

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you. I promise I will.

Chairman ENGEL [continuing]. Many, many times.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. And thank you for running a very professional hearing today. I appreciate that.

Chairman ENGEL. Well, thank you. Thank you for coming.

The hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:52 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

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

Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), Chairman

March 27, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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

DATE: Wednesday, March 27, 2019

TIME: 12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: The State Department's Foreign Policy Strategy and FY20 Budget Request

WITNESS: The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary
United States Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 03/27/19 Room 2172 RHOB

Starting Time 12:35 p.m. Ending Time 4:52 p.m.

Recesses I (1:16 to 1:44) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Eliot L. Engel, Rep. Brad Sherman

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

The State Department's Foreign Policy Strategy and FY20 Budget Request

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

N/A

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

SFR - Engel (I), Engel (II), McCaul, Cicilline

IFR - McCaul

QFR - Engel, McCaul, Sherman, Perry, Sires, Burchett, Keating, Cicilline, Bera, Lieu, Allred, Houlahan

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or
TIME ADJOURNED 4:52 p.m.


Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
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X	Colin Allred, TX
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<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
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	Joe Wilson, SC
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X	Lee Zeldin, NY
X	James Sensenbrenner, Jr., WI
X	Ann Wagner, MO
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X	Francis Rooney, FL
X	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
X	John Curtis, UT
X	Ken Buck, CO
X	Ron Wright, TX
X	Guy Reschenthaler, PA
X	Tim Burchett, TN
X	Greg Pence, IN
X	Steve Watkins, KS
X	Michael Guest, MS



**House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Hearing on the
The State Department's Foreign Policy Strategy and
FY20 Budget Request
Statement Submitted by David J. Berteau
President & CEO, Professional Services Council**

The Professional Services Council (PSC) appreciates the opportunity to provide to the Committee our views on the President's Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Budget Request. PSC is the voice of the government technology and professional services industry, representing 400 member companies and their hundreds of thousands of employees across the nation and around the world supporting every agency of the federal government. Many PSC members focus their work almost exclusively on the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). These companies form PSC's Council of International Development Companies (CIDC).¹ Every day, CIDC members assist in bringing about a better future through their work overseas on improving the education, health, nutrition, and governance sectors in locales that are often desperate and dangerous.

Because this work is so important to America, PSC urges you to counter the Administration's FY20 budget submission² for the Department of State and Other International Programs (the 150 Account) by providing full funding for 150 Account needs in FY20. PSC also urges the Committee to exercise rigorous congressional oversight to ensure that funds already appropriated by Congress in FY17-19 are being fully obligated and do not expire. In addition, to improve public accountability, PSC requests the Committee's assistance in making information on funding obligations available to the public as soon as possible.

To pave the way for full FY20 funding, both houses of Congress must first agree on increasing the existing budget caps for FY20 and FY21 above the existing non-defense cap levels. For civilian agencies in the aggregate, if not increased, the caps would cut \$55 *billion* from FY19 levels, and this would unavoidably and devastatingly impact the Department of State and USAID, along with many other cabinet departments and federal agencies. In turn, critical global missions would be disrupted or discontinued.

These budget cap levels were set eight years ago and are now obsolete. They simply cannot and do not reflect today's mission needs nor cover today's priorities in areas ranging from Syria and Venezuela, to Chinese and Russian cyber-attacks, to Ebola outbreaks.

PSC and our CIDC members were grateful for the recent Congressional appropriations to the 150 Account as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019³, enacted in February 2019.

¹ CIDC companies are reflective of the overall American economy, ranging from large firms employing thousands in the U.S. and overseas to one and two-person small businesses. Their efforts have been well-documented by PSC. [See our From the Field accounts of their foreign assistance program implementation.](#)

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>

³ <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116th-congress/house-joint-resolution/31/text>

Congressional support was also manifest in 2018 - not once, but twice - by preventing attempts to rescind upwards of nearly \$3 billion in prior-year appropriations from that account.⁴

PSC is concerned that the absence of available information regarding obligations of prior-year appropriations may reflect an intention by the administration to under-spend funds appropriated by Congress. If valid, this concern raises issues of adherence to the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. PSC urges this Committee and the Congress to monitor vigilantly those agencies covered by the 150 Account to ensure that funds are obligated in accordance with the 1974 Act and current appropriations laws.

Federal budget deficits need to be addressed. However, trying to solve current budget deficit problems by making draconian cuts to the 150 Account simply will not work. Committee members know that the *entire* 150 Account (funding all of the State Department and USAID) is just over 1% of the *annual* federal budget. Cuts there will do far more harm to America's interests than they will contribute to deficit reduction.

Additionally, it is useful to remember that U.S. foreign assistance programs provide many direct and indirect benefits for America. For example, programs that help eradicate dangerous diseases before they reach our shores, create stable governments that fight terrorism, and help countries become ready and able to buy American goods and services. Results like these protect Americans and our homeland and strengthen our economy.

Contractors form an integral part of the U.S. foreign policy arena, working alongside their government counterparts. Their employees risk their lives every day. PSC members who work with the Department of State and USAID are private-sector international development companies who optimize efficiency and effectiveness in order to realize a modest return on their work, which in turn permits them to fund the ongoing internal business investments that sustain them as reliable, capable, and innovative partners. Competition among contractors on the basis of best value is a hallmark of U.S. programs throughout the federal government and should remain so, including in the field of international development.

Adequately funded contracts, incorporating clear achievement benchmarks and federal government guidance, enables contractors to provide the kind of significant value for money that American taxpayers demand. The proposed FY20 150 Account budget cuts do not support those characteristics of success. Therefore, PSC urges Congress to appropriate full funding of the 150 Account, and by doing so, optimize the use of private sector contractors to deliver real results and the best value for development spending. On behalf of our member companies, thank you for the opportunity to present these important points, and we are happy to provide additional information or respond to any questions at any time.

##

⁴ See https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-administration-is-considering-pulling-back-3-billion-in-foreign-aid/2018/08/16/05adc086-8e36-4265-b887-b481124a64b4_story.html?utm_term=.0d5ad1f0d87e and https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/administration-decides-not-to-roll-back-foreign-aid-funds/2018/08/28/d7ca2d20-aaf3-11e8-b1da-ff7faa680710_story.html?utm_term=.22a2e8acb0d0



CWS Statement to the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, pertaining to its hearing, "The State Department's Foreign Policy Strategy and FY20 Budget Request," on Wednesday, March 27, 2019

As a 73-year old humanitarian organization representing 37 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox communions and 23 refugee resettlement offices across 17 states in the United States, Church World Service urges the Committee to hold the administration accountable to administering the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) in good faith and returning refugee resettlement numbers to historic norms, at least meeting this year's record-low refugee admissions goal of 30,000, and committing to resettling at least 75,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

Refugee resettlement is an important tool in advancing U.S. foreign policy interests, leveraging durable solutions, and encouraging other countries to support displaced persons. Since 1975, the USRAP, the world's most thorough resettlement vetting program, has safely and successfully resettled over three million refugees. As one of 37 resettlement countries, the United States utilizes the resettlement program to play a critical role in promoting stability around the world and elevating our moral leadership on the global stage. Over the past two years, the administration has made drastic changes designed to grind the refugee program to a halt, resulting in human tragedy and long-term damage to our nation's capacity to respond to humanitarian crises.

CWS urges Congress to hold the administration accountable to meeting this year's refugee admissions goal of 30,000, and to setting a goal of resettling at least 75,000 refugees in FY 2020. Last year, the administration resettled only 22,491 refugees, not even meeting half of its own, then-record-low goal of 45,000. The FY 2019 refugee admissions goal of 30,000 is a new historic low, and yet, the administration is only on track to resettle around 22,000 refugees. These figures are a drastic departure from our nation's annual historic average resettlement goal of 95,000. The United States implements a public-private partnership model of refugee resettlement, with congregations, schools, employers, and local communities intrinsically involved in welcoming refugees and helping them integrate and thrive. The U.S. refugee resettlement program emphasizes early self-sufficiency, and most refugees are employed within their first six months of arriving to the United States. Numerous studies have found that refugees contribute positively to the U.S. economy.

CWS calls on Congress to ensure that overseas assistance and protection programs for refugees and displaced persons are funded robustly. Forcibly displaced people often lack access to the basic necessities of life, including food and nutrition, clean water, safe shelter, healthcare, education, livelihood, and protection from persecution, conflict, war, and violence. Beyond these grave humanitarian concerns, the presence of large populations of forcibly displaced persons is an urgent concern for the countries and regions in which they live. By helping to meet the basic needs of displaced persons and assisting the countries hosting them, U.S. funding strengthens regional stability, thus preventing further destabilization in fragile regions and relieving pressure on host countries.

CWS urges the Committee to safeguard the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)'s leadership role in refugee protection and resettlement. CWS is deeply opposed to the proposal in the President's Budget request that would reduce PRM's budget by 90% and remove from PRM the important tool of overseas assistance, combining that funding with the International Disaster Assistance account and Food for Peace into a new International Humanitarian Assistance account and drastically cutting funding overall. This would eliminate PRM's ability to leverage resettlement and overseas assistance for the benefit of regional stability and other U.S. foreign policy interests. The proposal also contravenes Congressional intent to maintain PRM within the Department of State, which has been stated in report language in the past two State Department and Foreign Operations appropriations bills in response to similar proposals.

CWS is also opposed to the Trump administration's plan to close all U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) international field offices, which would place additional burdens on the diplomatic infrastructure, drastically reduce services for US military personnel stationed abroad and other American citizens, place additional barriers to family reunification, and further dismantle the refugee admissions program.

CWS calls on Congress to robustly fund refugee protection and affirm the importance of refugee resettlement as a life-saving program during this global refugee crisis, with over 68.5 million people displaced worldwide, 25.8 million of whom are refugees.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019

Question:

The Administration's FY 2020 budget request would provide \$4.9 billion in State Department- and USAID-administered bilateral assistance specifically for Africa, an 11% reduction from the FY 2019 request and 31% decrease compared to actual allocations in FY 2018 (excluding Food for Peace aid, which the Administration proposes to end entirely). **How do these proposals reflect the Administration's stated priorities for the region, such as countering strategic competition from China and Russia, advancing U.S. trade and economic ties, and countering Islamist terrorism and other armed conflicts?**

Answer:

The request advances commercial ties with nations across the region to benefit both the United States and Africa. It invests in the new Prosper Africa initiative, which aims to double two-way U.S.-Africa trade and investment by facilitating transactions and fostering fair and accessible business climates. The request counters terrorism in the Sahel and East Africa and reduces violent conflict, particularly in Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia. Our focus is on enabling African countries to move from relying on grant-based foreign assistance or predatory lending to developing sustainable financial independence. Our engagement ensures better-targeted assistance with the most impact in the era of great power competition.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The Administration's FY 2020 budget request would provide \$4.9 billion in State Department- and USAID-administered bilateral assistance specifically for Africa, an 11% reduction from the FY 2019 request and 31% decrease compared to actual allocations in FY 2018 (excluding Food for Peace aid, which the Administration proposes to end entirely). The Administration has pledged to review all U.S. aid to Africa in order to target assistance toward "key countries and particular strategic objectives" and states with democratic, accountable governments. **What is the current status of this aid review?**

Answer:

As a part of the new Africa Strategy, the Administration is focused on enabling African countries to move from relying on grant-based foreign assistance or predatory lending to developing sustainable financial independence. The State Department and USAID are constantly reviewing our assistance to ensure it is effective and aligned with U.S. foreign policy objectives. This budget addresses foreign policy Administration priorities and reflects a continued effort to ensure U.S. foreign assistance is an efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible investment on behalf of the American people.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The Administration's FY 2020 budget request would provide \$4.9 billion in State Department- and USAID-administered bilateral assistance specifically for Africa, an 11% reduction from the FY 2019 request and 31% decrease compared to actual allocations in FY 2018 (excluding Food for Peace aid, which the Administration proposes to end entirely). **How is the Administration's commitment to focus aid resources on African countries that "encourage accountable and transparent governance" reflected in the proposal to significantly cut aid to Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa?**

Answer:

Africa remains a priority for the Administration. The FY 2020 request includes funding to promote peace and security on the continent, create an enabling environment for U.S. businesses, advance food security and economic growth, bolster governance programs, and address HIV/AIDS and other communicable illnesses. Active partnerships with the countries and people of Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa continue, and focus on supporting their aspirations for inclusive democracy, peace, and prosperity. The request seeks to foster stability throughout sub-Saharan Africa and translate it into enhanced national security and prosperity for Africans and for the American people.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What are the implications of this recent crackdown for efforts to normalize relations? How is the Administration weighing these actions as it assesses Sudan's progress on "Phase II" of the bilateral reengagement framework?

Answer:

The Government of Sudan's heavy-handed response to the ongoing protests has disrupted progress on this track. The deteriorating human rights situation, which includes a state of emergency declared in late February, threatens to undermine our entire Phase II engagement. We have urged the Government of Sudan to exercise restraint and respect the protesters' fundamental freedoms. We remain seriously concerned about, and will continue to monitor, Sudan's progress in a range of areas, including improving its human rights record and respecting freedoms of expression such as freedom of the press, religion or belief, peaceful assembly, and association.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Are there any actions that the Administration would consider to be “red lines” for Sudan re-engagement, removal from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list, and/or debt relief?

Answer:

The United States made clear that any progress in the U.S.-Sudan bilateral relationship is dependent on Sudan first making progress in a range of areas, including improving its human rights record and respecting freedoms of expression such as freedom of the press, religion or belief, peaceful assembly, and association.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#6)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

And how far does the Administration expect normalization to proceed when Bashir, who has been indicted by the ICC for genocide and crimes against humanity, appears set to remain in office beyond the constitutional limit of his time in office?

Answer:

In our public and private messages, we underscored that all constitutional amendments or other actions that would enable President Bashir to extend his time in office in contravention of the Sudanese constitution would be problematic. We made clear to the Sudanese that progress in the U.S.-Sudan bilateral relationship is dependent on Sudan making progress in a range of areas, including improving its human rights record and respecting freedoms of expression such as freedom of the press, religion or belief, peaceful assembly, and association. The United States is concerned about the political crisis in Sudan and has condemned the Bashir government's repressive actions against peaceful protestors.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#7)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

With Ethiopia scheduled to hold critical elections in 2020 and significant opportunities to support the country's new democratic opening to ensure credible polls, **why does the Administration's FY 2020 budget request propose a sizable cut to the accounts that would support democracy and governance programs?**

Answer:

We strongly support the important reforms underway in Ethiopia and that has not changed. Our broader budget request considers factors beyond individual country support, including the burden on U.S. taxpayers and whether partner countries are stepping up to use their own resources to their best effect. Our obligation is to produce exceptional results on behalf of the American people, and as we take a fresh look at matching resources to outcomes, I remain confident the State Department will have the resources to pursue our policy objectives in Ethiopia.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#8)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

While the security situation in Somalia remains concerning, the political and economic spheres look relatively more promising, despite continued tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States. **What is the United States doing to promote greater political stability and improve relations between federal and state authorities ahead of planned elections next year?**

Answer:

Somalia's long-term stability depends heavily on the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States reaching agreement on an appropriate delineation of authorities at the national and regional levels. The United States engages regularly with all political leadership to encourage Somali-led political, security, and economic reform efforts to support the country's stability, to include: a one-person-one-vote national electoral process in 2020; completion of the constitutional review process; implementation of the agreed national security architecture and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) transition plan; and fiscal reforms that will enable debt relief and resumption of international financial institution lending.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#9)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What more can the United States do to stabilize the Sahel region and promote development and economic opportunity for its people?

Answer:

We support the countries in the Sahel through broad-based programs that run the gamut from security and economic growth to human rights and countering violent extremism. Our embassies engage in a whole-of-government approach to ensure that U.S. assistance programs, diplomatic outreach, and security sector activities reinforce one another. Gains across these areas, and greater efficiencies in our programming, will help communities be less vulnerable, promote development and economic opportunity, and help strengthen stability and security in the Sahel.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#10)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Six years after France's military intervention and the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, the security situation in Mali continues to deteriorate, while Burkina Faso has been subsumed by a growing Islamist insurgency. The Administration has pledged to help build the military capacity of the G5 Sahel countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad) to counter cross-border threats, but a promised G5 Sahel "joint force" remains notional (at best) and these countries are not likely to be able to make significant headway in the near future. Meanwhile we have seen repeated credible allegations of serious human rights abuses on the part of military forces in Mali and Burkina Faso and by the ethnic militias they have backed as proxy forces. The Administration's budget proposal would cut bilateral development and health aid for Mali, and although it would add a small amount of bilateral development aid for Burkina Faso, health assistance for that country would decrease. **What is the Administration doing to impress upon our partners in the Sahel that progress against insurgent and terrorist groups is unlikely in the absence of governance improvements and respect for human rights?**

Answer:

I am committed to supporting African-led efforts to defeat terrorism and improve security. Senior Department officials have emphasized to African counterparts that military, intelligence, and law enforcement tools must reinforce – not replace – efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights and accountability, and stimulate broad-based economic opportunity. The United States emphasizes security force professionalism and accountability from the beginning of assistance programs and continues to urge the Government of Mali to conduct transparent investigations into accusations of human rights violations against Malian armed forces and to prosecute those found responsible for any such violations.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#11)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What can be done to support Burkina Faso's fragile democratic transition, which will cease to be a beacon of hope for the continent if it continues to be associated with a massive surge in insecurity?

Answer:

Our key objectives are to assist Burkinabes in strengthening their stability and governance, working with Burkinabes to counter regional threats, assisting Burkinabes with identifying and broadening economic development opportunities, and encouraging community participation in civic life. The U.S. is already encouraging Burkina Faso to pave the way for a credible, transparent, and democratic process to take place in the 2020 elections, even in the face of significant security challenges. Respect for human rights, the rule of law, the law of armed conflict, a strong criminal justice sector, and civilian authority are cornerstones of U.S. military and law enforcement training programs in Burkina Faso.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#12)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Six years after France's military intervention and the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, the security situation in Mali continues to deteriorate, while Burkina Faso has been subsumed by a growing Islamist insurgency. The Administration has pledged to help build the military capacity of the G5 Sahel countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad) to counter cross-border threats, but a promised G5 Sahel "joint force" remains notional (at best) and these countries are not likely to be able to make significant headway in the near future. Meanwhile we have seen repeated credible allegations of serious human rights abuses on the part of military forces in Mali and Burkina Faso, and by the ethnic militias they have backed as proxy forces. The Administration's budget proposal would cut bilateral development and health aid for Mali, and although it would add a small amount of bilateral development aid for Burkina Faso, health assistance for that country would decrease. **What safeguards are in place to ensure that U.S.-origin equipment provided to the G5 Sahel countries does not end up in the hands of abusive militia groups?**

Answer:

Defense articles and services provided by the Department on a grant basis are subject to statutorily required end-use monitoring and restrictions on retransfer, end-use, and security. These requirements are set out in binding international agreements with all G5 Sahel countries, consistent with section 505 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA). We also proactively monitor our assistance, emphasize the importance of our agreements, and address any concerns regarding reports of misuse of U.S.-origin equipment. Moreover, recipient units are vetted to ensure that assistance is provided only to units where there is no credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights (pursuant to section 620M of the FAA).

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#13)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Several U.S. counterterrorism partner states in Africa, such as Uganda, Mauritania, and Chad, have questionable democratic credentials, and the security forces of these countries have periodically been implicated in human rights violations. **Beyond security assistance, what is the United States doing to promote political stability in Chad, which ranks among the world's most fragile states and has one of Africa's longest ruling leaders?**

Answer:

Through the Africa Regional Democracy Fund (ARDF), the Bureau of African Affairs provides foreign assistance resources to support programming that strengthens democratic institutions. ARDF programming in Chad includes the promotion of good governance, anti-corruption, and improvement of gender equality within the National Assembly. These programs will contribute to systems that promote and protect women's rights in Chad. Other ARDF program activities focus on promoting participation and accountability for elections by increasing civic awareness.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#14)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How would the FY2020 budget request support greater stability and security in CAR? In what ways would it respond to or counter growing Russian influence in the country?

Answer:

The UN peacekeeping mission in CAR (MINUSCA), supported by the United States, remains indispensable in advancing peace. U.S. assistance will continue to focus on improving the security environment and helping the government of CAR project state presence by providing training, equipment, and capacity building support to the CAR military. The Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement continues efforts to rebuild and professionalize CAR's judiciary and internal security forces as an important step to bring stability and end impunity. U.S. assistance to CAR security services helps serve as a counterweight to the transactional, less transparent security assistance from Russia.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#15)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How is the Administration working to address impunity for past abuses, which has impeded the return of conflict-displaced populations and has been a driving factor in ongoing violence?

Answer:

The U.S. continues to use every opportunity to press the government of CAR to hold human rights violators accountable. President Touadera plans to travel to Washington on April 7-12, and I intend to stress that the United States will remain a partner to the CAR government as it advocates against impunity. We will continue to impose domestic and international sanctions against war criminals and those responsible for human rights violations in CAR. Further, the United States continues to provide assistance to professionalize and expand the capabilities of the CAR Special Criminal Court as it works to ensure that victims of this conflict receive the justice they deserve.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#16)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What support can or should the United States provide to the next election process in CAR, due in 2020?

Answer:

In 2016, the Central African Republic saw an unprecedented peaceful transition of power with the election of President Faustin Touadera. Although the Touadera administration has faced significant challenges, the United States has remained a stalwart supporter and partner of the democratically-elected CAR government. During the 2016 election, MINUSCA played a key role in facilitating the elections. This directive was added to the MINUSCA mandate in advance of the elections, and we expect it will again be discussed during the next mandate renewal in November 2019. The United States will work with our partners in the UN Security Council to ensure that MINUSCA can again play a positive role in the 2020 elections.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#17)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Ahead of elections in 2020, Burundi has yet to resolve the political crisis that has prompted hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes since 2015 due to ongoing politically targeted violence and humanitarian hardship. Regionally mediated political talks have stalled amid growing tensions within the East African Community (including between Burundi and Rwanda, and between Rwanda and Uganda). The Administration's budget proposal would decrease bilateral health and development aid for Burundi, which is also designated as Tier III under the TVPA. **In what ways is the Administration working with regional actors to restart the EAC-convened political talks for Burundi, and to encourage greater political space ahead of elections?**

Answer:

The Department has urged the Government of Burundi at senior levels to expand political space, including ending restrictions on media outlets, and to respect the rights of freedom of assembly and association of opposition political actors. The United States has also urged the Government of Burundi and the EAC to renew their commitments to the EAC-led inter-Burundi Dialogue, including in February 19 remarks at the UN Security Council. We will continue to encourage the EAC and its member states to restart the Dialogue.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#18)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Ahead of elections in 2020, Burundi has yet to resolve the political crisis that has prompted hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes since 2015 due to ongoing politically targeted violence and humanitarian hardship. Regionally mediated political talks have stalled amid growing tensions within the East African Community (including between Burundi and Rwanda, and between Rwanda and Uganda). The Administration's budget proposal would decrease bilateral health and development aid for Burundi, which is also designated as Tier III under the TVPA. **What is the likely impact of the withdrawal in early 2019 of 1,000 Burundian soldiers from AMISOM (at the African Union's behest) on conditions within Burundi, if any? What has been the impact of Burundi's Tier III TVPA designation on U.S. support for Burundi's remaining ~4,000 soldiers serving in AMISOM?**

Answer:

The withdrawal of the 1,000 Burundian AMISOM soldiers is ongoing as of March 27. It is too early for the Department to assess what the impact will be on conditions within Burundi, though we continue to monitor the situation. The foreign assistance restriction under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act has affected U.S. support for Burundi's remaining soldiers in AMISOM, such as support for logistical flights from Burundi to Somalia and a mentoring program in Somalia. The Department has urged the Government of Burundi to take greater efforts to combat trafficking in persons so that we may better support Burundi's participation in AMISOM.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#19)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

For Djibouti, the FY 2020 request includes more funding for security assistance – including \$5 million, the only country-specific request for sub-Saharan Africa, in Foreign Military Financing – than for health, economic, and development assistance combined. That security assistance would be in addition to much larger security cooperation investments made by DOD. **Does Djibouti have the ability to absorb such sizable investments in its forces, and do both the State Department and USAID view investing more in security than in people and development to be the most effective way to promote US interests and foreign policy priorities in the country?**

Answer:

Djibouti is an important security partner for the United States, hosting our only enduring military presence in Africa since 2004. Cooperation with the Djiboutian armed forces is an important component of our partnership, and I believe Djibouti has the capacity to absorb the Foreign Military Financing in a way that will further our shared security interests in the region.

We remain committed to a holistic approach to our partnership with the people and Government of Djibouti. The United States has significant investments in the people of Djibouti beyond security matters, including ongoing workforce development programming preparing Djiboutian youth for key occupations in a skills-based service economy.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#20)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

You said at the hearing that you are not prepared to provide an answer on whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya community constitute at least crimes against humanity, but you are looking at it more specifically. You also said that your objective is to change behavior as well as hold those responsible accountable. On November 15, 2017, then-Secretary of State Tillerson said in a joint press availability with Aung San Suu Kyi that these crimes had many of the “characteristics of crimes against humanity.” **Does the Department still stand by this statement today?**

Answer:

The United States has been the largest single donor to address the humanitarian crisis stemming from northern Rakhine State; our humanitarian assistance has exceeded \$494 million. The State Department supported a large-scale documentation project in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, to establish a comprehensive understanding of the human rights abuses committed in Rakhine State, Burma. The report made clear the extent and severity of the abuses that were committed, and the underlying information and findings assist in informing the decisions that my team and I make as the U.S. government continues to seek to advance accountability in Burma.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#21)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

You said at the hearing that you are not prepared to provide an answer on whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya community constitute at least crimes against humanity, but you are looking at it more specifically. You also said that your objective is to change behavior as well as hold those responsible accountable. **Given the abundant evidence documented by the United Nations and State Department staff, and the Holocaust Museum's remarks that the Burmese military had committed genocide against the Rohingya, why are you not yet prepared to make those same designations? When can Congress expect the Department to make the designation?**

Answer:

I am deeply concerned about the Burmese military's extensive, horrific human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya. To establish a comprehensive understanding of the human rights abuses committed in Rakhine State, the Department supported a large-scale documentation project in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The report clarified the extent and severity of the abuses, and the underlying information and findings will help inform our decisions as we seek accountability in Burma. Determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide, crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing are not made in all cases in which such acts may have been committed; they depend on our assessment of the facts and consequences of such determinations in each context.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#22)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

You said at the hearing that you are not prepared to provide an answer on whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya community constitute at least crimes against humanity, but you are looking at it more specifically. You also said that your objective is to change behavior as well as hold those responsible accountable. **Beyond sanctioning a few individuals and military units, what steps has the administration taken to change Burmese behavior? Why has the United States sanctioned fewer individuals than other partners, such as the European Union? Why has the administration failed to sanction the commander-in-chief of the Burmese military, and other top military leaders?**

Answer:

The United States was the first country to sanction a Burmese officer after the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya, and has since sanctioned a total of five Burmese commanders and two military units for human rights abuses in Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan States. The United States is the largest donor to the Rakhine State crisis, providing \$449 million in humanitarian assistance since August 2017. The U.S. helped create the UN Fact-Finding Mission and its successor, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar; supported the mandates of the UN Special Envoy and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation; and co-sponsored the UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in Burma in 2018.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#23)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

You said at the hearing that you are not prepared to provide an answer on whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya community constitute at least crimes against humanity, but you are looking at it more specifically. You also said that your objective is to change behavior as well as hold those responsible accountable. The Burmese military, acting with impunity, are now committing similar abuses against the largely Christian Chin and Kachin ethnic groups. **How will the Department hold them accountable?**

Answer:

In August 2018, the United States sanctioned Burmese Major General Khin Hlaing and the 99th Light Infantry Division for their roles in human rights abuses against minorities in Kachin and Shan States. We have supported the UN Fact-Finding Mission and its successor, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, which have mandates to investigate human rights violations throughout Burma. The United States also again designated Burma as a Country of Particular Concern for religious discrimination. We will continue to consider additional actions and will continue to call for accountability for Burmese security forces and others responsible for human rights violations and abuses and for the establishment of civilian control of the military.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#24)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

You said at the hearing that you are not prepared to provide an answer on whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya community constitute at least crimes against humanity, but you are looking at it more specifically. You also said that your objective is to change behavior as well as hold those responsible accountable. **Would you support re-establishing U.S. sanctions against Burmese military-owned business conglomerates such as MEC and MEHL? If not, why?**

Answer:

Accountability for human rights violations and abuses is a key priority for the United States in our policy towards Burma. We will continue to consider options for pursuing accountability and will implement those most likely to have an impact in changing the military's behavior, including targeted sanctions where appropriate.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#25)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Over one million Uighurs and Muslim ethnic minorities have been detained without due process under the guise of “anti-terrorism” efforts and Congress has repeatedly demonstrated bicameral, bipartisan support for condemning these abuses. **What has the Department done to ensure that U.S. technology transfers to Chinese entities have not contributed to China’s repression?**

Answer:

We are outraged by the Chinese Communist Party’s campaign of repression and mass detention of Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other members of Muslim minority groups in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and elsewhere in China.

In the wake of China’s human rights abuses in Xinjiang, the Department of State is actively working with other agencies on effective actions to address the challenge. The Department has conducted outreach to U.S. and Chinese companies with business in Xinjiang to urge them to implement human rights safeguards in an effort to ensure their commercial activities do not contribute to these abuses.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#26)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Over one million Uighurs and Muslim ethnic minorities have been detained without due process under the guise of “anti-terrorism” efforts and Congress has repeatedly demonstrated bicameral, bipartisan support for condemning these abuses. You said in your testimony that you and other Department officials raise this issue with your Chinese counterparts each time you interact. **What has been their response? What is the administration’s strategy for holding Beijing accountable for these abuses?**

Answer:

In meetings with Chinese counterparts, senior Department of State officials repeatedly speak out against Beijing’s highly repressive campaign against Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other members of Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China. On March 13, we co-hosted an event with partners on the sidelines of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to highlight the magnitude of the crisis. On March 26 in Washington, I met with affected Uighurs and pledged U.S. support.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#27)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Given that the State Department's March 25, 2019, report on the implementation of the RATA concludes the Chinese government violated the principle of reciprocity by systematically impeding travel to Tibet by U.S. diplomats, officials, journalists, and tourists in 2018, **have you begun identifying and denying visas to the Chinese officials responsible for implementing these restrictive policies, pursuant to the RATA of 2018?**

Answer:

We are committed to implementing RATA in the timeframe prescribed by Congress, including identifying those officials who are substantially involved in the formulation or execution of policies related to restricting access to Tibet for visa denials or revocations. We are currently determining the framework that will most effectively press Chinese authorities for reciprocity. We are committed to working closely with Congress in pursuit of our shared goal of seeing Americans have full access to China, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#28)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

March 10, 2019, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's exile. The Chinese government has barred foreigners from traveling to Tibet until April 1 given the politically sensitive anniversary and remains assertive on the Chinese Communist Party's role in suppressing "separatists" plots in Tibet and deciding who will succeed the Dalai Lama. In December 2018, President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA, PL 115-330) into law. **When will the Department appoint the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues role – a legislatively-mandated position?**

Answer:

In accordance with the Tibetan Policy Act, the Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues continues to coordinate U.S. government programs to preserve Tibet's distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity as well as efforts to promote dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama. We are in the process of selecting a Special Coordinator and hope to make the announcement soon.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#29)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

March 10, 2019, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's exile. The Chinese government has barred foreigners from traveling to Tibet until April 1 given the politically sensitive anniversary and remains assertive on the Chinese Communist Party's role in suppressing "separatists" plots in Tibet and deciding who will succeed the Dalai Lama. In December 2018, President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA, PL 115-330) into law. **Without the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, in what way and at what level is the Department engaging with Chinese authorities on the issue of Tibet? Have you engaged with your counterparts on these issues, as you had pledged to do in your written response to a question during your April 2018 confirmation hearing? If so, what has been the response from Chinese authorities?**

Answer:

U.S. government officials, including myself, the Vice President, our Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, and officials from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu continue to call upon the Government of China to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Tibetans and to provide U.S. officials, journalists, and tourists access to the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas. The Government of China continues to characterize the Dalai Lama as a separatist and accuses the United States and other governments of interfering in China's domestic affairs.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#30)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

March 10, 2019, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's exile. The Chinese government has barred foreigners from traveling to Tibet until April 1 given the politically sensitive anniversary and remains assertive on the Chinese Communist Party's role in suppressing "separatists" plots in Tibet and deciding who will succeed the Dalai Lama. In December 2018, President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA, PL 115-330) into law. **What has the Department been doing to engage with China on the issue of succession, since the Chinese government continues to publicly assert its right to select the next Dalai Lama (as they did most recently on March 20, 2019)?**

Answer:

The United States remains concerned about Chinese government leaders' interfering in the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders. U.S. officials at multiple levels have underscored with their Chinese counterparts that decisions regarding the selection of Tibetan Buddhist leaders rests with the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders, and the Tibetan people.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#31)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

March 10, 2019, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's exile. The Chinese government has barred foreigners from traveling to Tibet until April 1 given the politically sensitive anniversary and remains assertive on the Chinese Communist Party's role in suppressing "separatists" plots in Tibet and deciding who will succeed the Dalai Lama. In December 2018, President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA, PL 115-330) into law. **Are you reaching out to like-minded governments to challenge China's blatant violation of the principle of religious freedom of Tibetan Buddhists, and if so, what have you done specifically?**

Answer:

Promoting religious freedom is a core objective of U.S. foreign policy. We coordinate closely with like-minded governments and other partners on a variety of issues, including religious freedom and other human rights challenges. We monitor religious persecution and discrimination worldwide, including in China. We are concerned that, over the past decade, more than 150 Tibetan Buddhist monks have self-immolated in protest of China's repression of their beliefs and culture. We continue to raise the issue of religious freedom for Tibetan Buddhists, including the right of choosing their own leaders without interference, in our bilateral engagements with the Chinese.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#32)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

March 10, 2019, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's exile. The Chinese government has barred foreigners from traveling to Tibet until April 1 given the politically sensitive anniversary and remains assertive on the Chinese Communist Party's role in suppressing "separatists" plots in Tibet and deciding who will succeed the Dalai Lama. In December 2018, President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA, PL 115-330) into law. **Why has President Trump not yet publicly called upon President Xi to negotiate with the Dalai Lama or his representative to find a lasting solution, as all U.S. presidents have done since 1997?**

Answer:

U.S. government officials, including myself, the Vice President, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, and officials from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu continue efforts to establish conditions for a direct and meaningful dialogue between Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, that will lead to a sustainable settlement.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#33)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

March 10, 2019, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's exile. The Chinese government has barred foreigners from traveling to Tibet until April 1 given the politically sensitive anniversary and remains assertive on the Chinese Communist Party's role in suppressing "separatists" plots in Tibet and deciding who will succeed the Dalai Lama. In December 2018, President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA, PL 115-330) into law. **Will you commit to pressing the Chinese authorities to allow for the opening of a U.S. consulate in Lhasa and not to allow the opening of any more Chinese Consulates in the U.S. until such U.S. Consulate is opened?**

Answer:

I will press the Chinese government to allow the opening of a U.S. Consulate in Lhasa, consistent with the Tibetan Policy Act. I will also fully implement the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, and I will press Chinese authorities to reciprocate the access that China enjoys in the United States. I am committed to working closely with Congress in pursuit of our shared goal of seeing Americans have full access to China, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#34)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How is the Department engaging with third countries regarding Chinese investments, particularly when there are strategic risks or predatory Chinese lending terms at issue? What has been the general response? Do the countries share U.S. concerns about how Chinese investments may undermine their economic or national security interest?

Answer:

The Department is working with borrower countries to highlight the strategic risks associated with the predatory lending practices of countries such as China. U.S. engagement is showing results as we have started to see a number of would-be borrower nations scrutinize or reevaluate Chinese lending.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#35)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How have you ensured that we can identify these problematic investments and provide alternatives?

Answer:

As part of a broad, interagency effort, our embassies and officers in the field are speaking to third countries to assess the most problematic Chinese projects. The U.S. private sector is key to providing quality alternatives to Chinese engagement. We are working with U.S. companies to assist them to compete for projects in third countries where it makes sense to do so.

Through the new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, we will mobilize newly expanded resources including a more-than-doubled exposure limit and the capacity to engage earlier in the project lifecycle. This new tool will help catalyze private-sector investment in developing economies.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#36)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What specific steps has the Department taken to ensure that there are Western competitors everywhere where China is putting forth projects? How does the administration plan to resource these initiatives, given the decreased budget request for the region from the FY18 enacted amount?

Answer:

We are not seeking to match every Chinese-affiliated project. Some projects the Chinese pursue are poorly targeted to the country's needs or simply not viable. Instead, we are providing capacity-building support to enable countries to make fully informed decisions. We are working on transparent, effective procurement processes that help countries assess life-cycle costs of infrastructure and allow our firms and those of likeminded countries to compete in all markets where China is active. These initiatives have been funded through targeted re-allocations from other elements of the budget. Our programs seek to leverage private-sector resources rather than match, dollar-for-dollar, public expenditures by other governments.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#37)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How is the Department engaging with partners and allies regarding adoption of Chinese 5G technology? More broadly, how do U.S. partners – from Europe to Asia – view the geopolitical competition between the United States and China? Is there a concern that by making nations “choose,” we may end up having some of them make choices that are not in the U.S. interest?

Answer:

Information technology networks and services are a critical element of our national security and economic prosperity. These networks are an attractive target for foreign adversaries, and we are actively working with our partners and allies to reduce the risk of unauthorized access and malicious cyber activity as we implement 5G networks.

Ultimately, countries have the sovereign right to decide how to build their critical infrastructure. As we are sharing our concerns about the risks of vendors subject to extrajudicial control by foreign powers, we are seeing numerous countries strengthen their 5G security requirements and regulations in response.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#38)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

When you recently met with President Duterte in Manila, did you raise concerns over extra-judicial killings and the politically motivated charges against his political opponents, including Senator de Lima and Maria Ressa of the online media publication, Rappler? What is the State Department doing to mitigate the risk that constitutional changes being debated in the Philippines do not result in further entrenchment of political dynasties, including that of President Duterte himself?

Answer:

The United States has consistently engaged the Philippine government on human rights issues at the highest levels over the past three years, as we did during my March visit to Manila. On March 29, we publicly voiced our concern with Maria Ressa's arrest. U.S. Embassy Manila officials are in regular contact with Senator de Lima's staff. The United States has supported the capacity building of Philippine institutions, including through U.S. judicial sector training aimed to strengthen the rule of law, due process, and respect for human rights. We will continue to emphasize these values in our future engagements.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#39)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

It appears to many that the administration has failed to meaningfully respond to democratic backsliding in the Indo-Pacific region out of fear that these countries will turn toward China. **Do you believe that promoting U.S. values of democracy, human rights, and good governance is an obstacle to advancing our other interests that risks countries “choosing” China over the United States?**

Answer:

I believe promoting values of democracy, human rights, and good governance advances U.S. interests. These values make for more responsive and just governments; more dynamic and open economies; and more willing and capable partners. Promoting these values is a key U.S. objective, as Vice President Pence laid out when he announced the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative. I will continue to work to build stronger, more vibrant, and more resilient partners who work with the United States to combat democratic and human rights backsliding.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Mike Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#40)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Can you confirm that you will instruct your subordinates to reflect this position at any interagency meetings on the subject of military basing overseas? Will you commit to opposing any similar proposals to radically alter our current basing arrangements in Europe?

Answer:

I can assure you the United States is not asking our Allies to pay for our military presence at “cost-plus 50 percent.” However, we are asking our Allies to meet their commitment to invest in our collective defense and ensure fairer burden-sharing, which is a long-standing U.S. goal. The Department works closely with the Department of Defense on forward military presence issues, ensuring any changes are based on United States national security requirements.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#41)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

I am concerned about democratic backsliding in central Europe, particularly in Hungary and Poland, with growing corruption; shrinking press, academic, and religious freedom; and weakened judiciary independence. **Did you raise these concerns during your visit to the region in February? What steps are you taking to address this democratic backsliding?**

Answer:

I regularly speak with my Hungarian and Polish counterparts privately – and publicly when warranted – to promote shared Transatlantic principles, including the separation of powers, universal human rights, and fundamental freedoms. In the current era of heightened strategic competition, it is important to compete for positive influence in Central Europe. To that end, the State Department is working to bolster the democratic values that underpin the Western Alliance and remind people why the choices they made in 1989 are important today. We are working with civil society in the region to counter disinformation, strengthen the rule of law, fight corruption, counter Russian malign influence, and expand the space for independent voices.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Mike Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#42)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What steps are you taking to combat Russian malign influence in the Balkans?

Answer:

The United States is actively working to counter Russian malign influence, in particular by pushing back on Russian efforts to exploit vulnerabilities and weaken democratic institutions. In the Western Balkans, we are partnering with the countries in the region as they work to develop strong, democratic, transparent institutions, combat corruption, increase media independence and reject disinformation, build engaged citizenries, and improve their energy security. Montenegro's NATO accession and the historic Prespa Agreement between North Macedonia and Greece demonstrate that sustained U.S. engagement and foreign assistance programs are helping the region move forward towards greater Western integration.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Mike Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#43)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Is the Administration confronting Serbian leaders about their statements and actions cozying up to Moscow?

Answer:

We strongly support Serbia's Western integration and its stated, strategic goal of European Union membership. Serbia has said it seeks to balance this goal with its relationship with Russia but has also said it sees its future in Europe and the West. We also see Serbia's future in Europe and the West. Toward this end, we have urged Serbian leaders to undertake democratic reforms, especially strengthening rule of law and media freedom. These and other reforms are part of the EU accession process and ultimately will build Serbia's resilience against the malign influence campaigns carried out by actors like Russia.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Mike Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#44)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Have we communicated to the EU and EU member states our belief that Serbia should not join the EU until it recognizes Kosovo?

Answer:

Normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, with mutual recognition at its core, is a top priority for the United States in the Western Balkans. We have communicated this clearly to our European partners. The EU has linked both countries under Chapter 35 of Serbia's accession negotiation process, calling for a legally binding agreement on comprehensive normalization of relations. The United States supports both Kosovo's and Serbia's advancement on their respective EU paths by meeting criteria laid down by the EU. We trust the EU will continue to support and assess each country's progress in implementing the necessary steps to achieve its integration aspirations.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#45)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Since your announcement in February giving Russia a six-month ultimatum to return to compliance with the INF Treaty, what steps have you taken to engage the Russians? What else are you doing to pressure the Russians in this six-month window?

Answer:

Since 2013, Russia has not taken any demonstrable steps to return to compliance and has fielded multiple battalions of its INF non-compliant missile. On February 2, the U.S. suspended its obligations under the Treaty, in response to Russia's material breach and provided Parties with formal notice that the United States would withdraw from the Treaty in six months. Additionally, the United States is now moving forward with developing conventional ground-launched, INF-range missile capabilities. This work is designed to be reversible should Russia return to full and verified compliance. However, given Russia's February 2 announcement of its purported suspension of the Treaty and its stated interest in pursuing an additional ground-launched, INF-range system, Russia appears unlikely to do so.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#46)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Is Russia currently in compliance with the New START Treaty? Is the New START Treaty in U.S. national security interests?

Answer:

Both Russia and the United States are currently in compliance with the New START Treaty. The New START Treaty's numerical limits on Russia's strategic nuclear force; establishment of data exchanges including the locations, numbers, and technical characteristics of weapons systems and facilities; and its verification provisions contribute currently to U.S. national security. The Administration is currently reviewing whether to seek an extension of the Treaty, and central to that review is evaluating how the Treaty's expiration would impact U.S. national security, including Russia's ongoing development of new strategic offensive arms and serial noncompliance with its arms control obligations, as well as China's continuing nuclear modernization.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#47)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The last round of U.S.-Russia Strategic Stability Talks occurred in September 2017 and was chaired by then-Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Tom Shannon. This is a forum that we should be using to ensure we avoid a nuclear conflict with Russia. **Why haven't you held another round of talks since then? Have you proposed to Russia that another round be held? Do you support holding additional rounds of these talks?**

Answer:

At their July 2018 meeting in Helsinki, President Trump and Russian President Putin directed their respective national security advisors to continue discussions on issues relevant to easing tensions in the U.S.-Russia relationship and to explore cooperation in areas of mutual interest. In August and October 2018, Ambassador Bolton and his Russian counterpart, Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, discussed a number of issues, including some related to strategic stability. State Department officials regularly meet with Russian officials bilaterally and multilaterally to discuss matters relating to strategic stability. We will continue these discussions as appropriate in the interest of U.S. national security.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#48)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

When will you impose the second round of sanctions on Russia for its chemical weapons attack on the Skripals as required by the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991 (“the CBW Act”)? The CBW Act envisioned this second round of sanctions within three months of the initial determination that chemical weapons had been used. Why is it taking so long?

Answer:

We do not preview sanctions actions. However, we are working diligently with the interagency to prepare for imposing the second round of sanctions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#49)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Can you confirm whether President Trump has personally told President Erdogan that Turkey should not purchase the S-400 system?

Answer:

The Administration has been unequivocal in its opposition to Turkey's purchasing the S-400 system, and we have made clear that acquiring the S-400 will put at risk Turkey's continued role in the F-35 program – both aircraft acquisition and industrial participation – and expose it to sanctions under Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). In February, Vice President Pence stated publicly that, "the U.S. would not stand idly by while NATO Allies purchase weapons from our adversaries," specifically pointing to Turkey. Turkey's purchase of a \$2.5 billion S-400 air defense missile system from Russia poses great danger to NATO and to the strength of the Alliance and could lead to consequences for Turkey.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#50)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How does the U.S. military withdrawal from parts of Syria affect our assistance and the very limited diplomatic presence we had in Syria?

Answer:

We are keeping a residual force in Syria while the deliberate and coordinated withdrawal of our troops continues. We remain engaged in Syria and our policy objectives remain the same: (1) the enduring defeat of ISIS; (2) an irreversible Syrian-led and -owned political settlement; and (3) removing all Iranian-commanded forces from the entirety of Syria. Likewise, we will continue to support international efforts to establish local security, local governance, and a restored economy and justice and accountability in liberated areas. We will also continue to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to people inside Syria and the region. Our staff continue to perform their assistance oversight responsibilities from their permanent posts.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#51)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The 2020 budget calls for zeroing out all economic assistance to Syria. Last year, Saudi Arabia and other countries backfilled funding on those U.S.-designed projects after the United States decided to withdraw its assistance to communities seeking to hold territory after the battle with ISIS. **Is there a similar plan to fund projects that help Syrians in post-ISIS communities recover? Which U.S.-designed projects are set to receive funds from foreign governments and which governments have pledged to fund these projects? What specific role does the U.S. have in shaping and monitoring these projects that are not paid for by U.S. foreign assistance?**

Answer:

The Department is continually re-evaluating stabilization assistance levels and programming, regardless of fiscal year. Our objective in these reviews is to ensure our assistance is targeted, effective, and set at the appropriate level. We continue to seek contributions from Coalition partners, per the President's request. Coalition donors fund a number of programs managed by the United States, including essential services, explosive remnants of war removal, education, civil society, first responders, livelihoods, and local governance. We monitor these programs according to our own procedures and per the specific agreements set with these countries.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#52)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The Committee has been informed that the Department has decided to make significant staffing cuts to Embassy Baghdad. **Please detail how many positions will be cut, from which agency functions, and what plans (if any) exist to fulfill the duties those positions fulfilled? Please also provide a comprehensive accounting of staffing at all other U.S. diplomatic posts in Iraq, including in Basrah and Erbil.**

Answer:

The State Department regularly assesses staffing abroad to ensure our resources are properly aligned with our objectives. Embassy Baghdad recently undertook a staffing review of 232 positions with the goal of pursuing U.S. objectives with as few people as possible given a high-threat environment. It was determined that 70 positions could be eliminated: 26 from State; 35 from Defense; three from Justice; and six from USAID. Duties will be integrated into existing positions, fulfilled through Temporary Duty, or managed from an alternative location. As of March 27, total Chief of Mission staffing in Iraq totals 1,035, including 42 at the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center and 315 in Erbil. Operations in Basrah are suspended, and local staff are transferring to Baghdad.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#53)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How does the United States plan to adjust its diplomatic and development priorities given the ongoing political transition in Algeria, following over 20 years of rule by President Bouteflika? What opportunities and challenges does this transition present?

Answer:

Algeria remains an important partner on regional security, counter terrorism, economic development, and trade and energy. The United States has a strong partnership with Algeria that will endure as we continue working together to tackle shared challenges and promote the security and prosperity of our citizens in the months and years ahead. Although I will continue to monitor political developments, only Algerians can determine how they navigate this transition.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#54)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the State Department doing to advance a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis?

Answer:

The Administration supports UN Special Envoy (UNSE) for Yemen Martin Griffiths in his efforts to facilitate a political resolution. Since FY 2016, we have awarded grants to Yemeni organizations involved in local peacebuilding and post-conflict planning and provided the UNSE office \$6.2 million to support personnel and operations. We endorsed UNSCR 2452 creating the UN Mission to support the Hdaydah Agreement, and we communicate often with Special Envoy Griffiths to discuss how we can support his efforts. U.S. diplomatic engagement in the Quad (United States, UK, UAE, and Saudi Arabia) has influenced Coalition maintenance of the Hdaydah ceasefire, providing space for building momentum toward broader reconciliation.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#55)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What leverage does the United States have over the various parties to the conflict to get them to commit to a peaceful solution to the conflict? How are we using that leverage?

Answer:

Our positive relationships with the Republic of Yemen government (ROYG) and the Coalition have been instrumental in the Administration's ability to push for resolution at critical junctures. Common interests in countering malign Iranian activity are a cornerstone of our leverage with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the sale of U.S. defense articles to these regional partners protects their borders from Iranian and Houthi threats. For example, this past year, we were able to prevent a UAE-led offensive on the city of Hudaydah and worked with the Saudis to pressure the ROYG to attend peace talks in Sweden.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#56)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The State Department recently transmitted to Congress the Congressionally mandated Yemen strategy, in which the Department stated that “there is no military solution to this conflict.” **Have you communicated this view to the Saudi-led coalition? If the UN-led peace process falls apart, would you support the Saudi-led coalition and local Yemeni forces taking the Port of Hudaydah by force?**

Answer:

We have been clear that only a comprehensive political solution will bring the Yemen conflict to an end and resolve Yemen’s economic and humanitarian crisis. We communicate this regularly to the Coalition at the highest levels and will continue to do so.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#57)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

At a time when Yemeni people are trapped in conflict, why won't you consider lifting the travel ban on Yemenis?

Answer:

The Administration's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and of the United States itself. The ROYG does not have full control over its territory – which is home to the Houthis and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula – its passport issuance, or its airports. The Administration reviews its determinations under Presidential Proclamation 9645 every 180 days and takes into account progress made by the ROYG with regard to information-sharing and identity-management practices as part of this process.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#58)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

CNN recently reported that the UAE transferred U.S.-origin defense equipment to third parties in Yemen, including Yemenis who have ties to Al Qaeda. **Please provide the Committee with an update on the State Department-led investigation. What are the consequences for our defense relationship with the UAE if these transfers did take place?**

Answer:

We are investigating this matter and are coordinating with our partners to determine whether U.S.-origin weapons or other defense articles were transferred to unauthorized end-users in Yemen. We have not reached final determinations and continue to investigate. We will continue to update the Committee as additional information is available. If the articles were intentionally transferred without the Department's written consent, we will coordinate within the interagency to determine the appropriate next steps and inform the Committee of any repercussions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#59)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last year, Congress required the Pentagon to certify that the Saudi and Emirati governments were working sincerely to support diplomatic efforts to end the civil war in Yemen and reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure. Absent that certification, the United States would not be able to refuel Saudi and UAE jets operating over Yemen. Many of us believe the initial September certification was disingenuous, considering the coalition bombed a school bus just a month before. Since then, the Administration has stopped sending certifications, despite the fact that there is no legal authority to terminate these reports to Congress. **Are there plans to send a certification or a waiver to Congress? Are Saudi Arabia and the UAE making a good faith effort toward a diplomatic solution? Are they taking appropriate measures to alleviate the humanitarian crisis by increasing access at the airport in Sana'a? Are they taking demonstrable actions to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from their military operations?**

Answer:

As of November 11, 2018, the United States ceased refueling support to the Coalition's counter-Houthi operations in Yemen. Because the United States has discontinued in-flight refueling that would be subject to the restriction in Section 1290, a subsequent certification under Section 1290(d) is not necessary. The Coalition has demonstrated active diplomatic support for the Special Envoy's efforts before, during, and since the Stockholm talks in December 2018. Sana'a Airport has remained open to humanitarian flights throughout the conflict. Additionally, the Coalition's civilian casualty mitigation efforts have resulted in demonstrated improvements in its targeting practices.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#60)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

There have been numerous media reports about armed UAVs operated by Houthis in Yemen penetrating the air space of our partners in the Gulf. **What specific steps have you taken to protect U.S. diplomatic facilities and American citizens in the Gulf from this UAV threat?**

Answer:

Iran takes advantage of the instability resulting from the Yemen conflict to increase its presence in the Arabian Peninsula and the region. The provision of Iranian weapons to the Houthis threatens U.S. citizens residing in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, international shipping in the Bab al-Mandab strait, and our allies and partners in the region. The Administration supports UN-led efforts to bring an end to the conflict, which will reduce the instability in Yemen that allows groups like the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), as well as al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS, to thrive. The provision of limited support, including advice and intelligence, to the Coalition helps us to counter these common threats.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#61)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Just a few weeks after the heinous murder of Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi, you wrote that the Crown Prince has moved the country in a reformist direction. **What specific reforms is the Department working on with Saudi Arabia now?**

Answer:

The Department engages the Saudi leadership on a range of political, economic, and security issues that underpin the U.S.-Saudi relationship. *Vision 2030*, for example, provides an opportunity for the U.S. government to engage both leadership and the country's people in advancing an economically and culturally vibrant society. The current reform efforts underway seek to diversify the country's economy, advance a more progressive vision of the Kingdom's cultural space, and bring millions of young Saudis – both men and women – into the workforce. In engaging on these issues, Department officials routinely stress to the Saudis that political repression endangers the many positive reforms the Saudi government is pursuing.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#62)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last year, Senate Foreign Relations Committee leadership requested a determination within 120 days of any foreign person responsible for human rights violations tied to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi – which could result in sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act. Just over a month later, these Senators wrote again asking for a specific determination of the responsibility of the Crown Prince with respect to the murder. The deadline for these determinations has come and gone. **Why have you not submitted a report to Congress about whether the Crown Prince is responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi?**

Answer:

The Department shares your conviction that those responsible for this horrific act must be held accountable. The United States was the first country to take action to promote accountability, when on October 23 the Department placed visa restrictions on those suspected of involvement in the murder. On November 15, the Treasury and State Departments imposed financial sanctions on implicated Saudi officials under the Executive Order implementing the Global Magnitsky Act. The Department will continue to utilize these tools.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#63)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Why is there a discrepancy between the numbers of Saudis arrested by the Saudi government and the numbers of Saudis designated by Magnitsky sanctions?

Answer:

The Saudi Arabian Public Prosecutor's Office has indicted 11 individuals and continues to investigate others. The criminal trial of the 11 individuals is ongoing. The Department continues to monitor the trial, press Saudi authorities for full accountability of Mr. Khashoggi's killers, and urge transparency in its legal process. The Administration's own actions are based on an U.S.-developed fact set. The Administration has thus far utilized three different legal authorities to promote accountability – the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA), Executive Order 13818 implementing and expanding upon the Global Magnitsky Act, and Section 7031(c) of the Appropriations Act. The Department will continue to utilize these tools.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#64)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Media reports indicated that the White House blocked CIA Director Haspel from briefing rank and file members of Congress on the Khashoggi matter. Cleared committee staff have also been blocked from accessing this information. According to the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is responsible for the “review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating” to “intelligence activities relating to foreign policy.” **Will you commit to adhering to proper Congressional oversight and not stand in the way of any intelligence briefing to this committee or to members of this committee about the murder of Jamal Khashoggi?**

Answer:

Yes, the Department is committed to keeping the Committee informed regarding its ongoing efforts to hold those responsible for Jamal Khashoggi’s murder accountable.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#65)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

At what level of Saudi government has the Department of State raised the case of the detention of dual U.S.-Saudi national Dr. Walid Fitaihi without charge or due process? What has the Saudi response been? What efforts have been undertaken to secure Dr. Fitaihi's release?

Answer:

We continue to raise Dr. Fitaihi's case at the highest levels of Saudi leadership, and I spoke to the Crown Prince on March 19. Embassy Riyadh and the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau leadership also continue to raise our concerns with Saudi counterparts in Washington and Riyadh. The Saudi Arabian government does not recognize dual citizenship but has granted regular consular access following sustained U.S. government engagement. The Department's highest priority is the safety and well-being of U.S. citizens abroad. We will continue to engage Saudi leadership to ensure Dr. Fitaihi's well-being until the situation is satisfactorily resolved.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#66)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The 2020 budget request calls for \$175 million in a global Diplomatic Progress Fund, which Deputy Secretary Sullivan described as a fund to effectively respond to new opportunities arising from diplomatic and peace progress and emerging counter-Iran needs.” **What will these funds be used for? How will these funds be used to counter Iran? Will these funds be used to advance the President’s Middle East Peace plan? If so, how do you intend to use these funds, specifically, for the purpose of advancing peace between Israelis and Palestinians within the constraints of the administration’s interpretation of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act, which has prevented any U.S. economic assistance from supporting the Palestinians? Do you support a revision of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act?**

Answer:

The Diplomatic Progress Fund will enable the United States to provide assistance when diplomatic breakthroughs present an opportunity to advance U.S. interests, including to counter Iranian influence or to support diplomatic efforts such as a plan for Middle East Peace. When the Administration presents its vision for a lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and the Palestinians, I welcome the opportunity to discuss with Congress what role U.S. assistance can and should play in achieving that goal. I also look forward to discussing with Congress the role of assistance in light of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act (ATCA).

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#67)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2109**

Question:

Did the State Department tell the Afghan National Security Advisor that it would no longer participate in meetings with him? How does sidestepping the Afghan National Security Advisor, a close advisor of President Ashraf Ghani, advance U.S. policy in Afghanistan and support an inclusive reconciliation process?

Answer:

The State Department has communicated to Afghan National Security Advisor Mohib that U.S. officials will not meet with him in light of his sustained public campaign directly and falsely attacking United States policy in Afghanistan, as well as his unfounded and personalized accusations against the senior U.S. official implementing that policy, Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad. U.S. officials have also communicated the same message to President Ghani. The United States—led by Ambassador John Bass—continues to work closely with President Ghani and his team on all issues related to Afghan security, including on advancing an inclusive reconciliation process.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#68)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Given the widespread understanding that the 2018 Bangladesh general elections were neither free nor fair, what elements of U.S. policy towards Bangladesh will change to reflect the deterioration of democracy in the Country?

Answer:

Following Bangladesh's December 30 election, the Department expressed concern in a January 1 statement about "credible reports of harassment, intimidation, and violence in the pre-election period" and "election-day irregularities [that] prevented some people from voting, which undermined faith in the electoral process." President Trump sent a letter to Prime Minister Hasina further raising our concern about the election. We continue to raise these concerns with Bangladesh senior officials, including the prime minister and foreign minister, and support calls for an independent investigation into the suppression of political opposition, their supporters, and journalists and other electoral-related complaints.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#69)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Then-U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Bernicat's vehicle was attacked on August 4, 2018, when she was returning from a dinner party. Though she thankfully escaped unharmed, the incident prompts questions about the resources for U.S. diplomatic security. **Was the Regional Security Office in Dhaka fully staffed during the August 4 attack that targeted Ambassador Bernicat? What warnings, if any, did the Department of State have in advance of the attack? What concrete actions has the Department taken to understand how the attack occurred, who was responsible, or to bolster diplomatic security presence in Bangladesh since the attack?**

Answer:

In August 2018, the staffing pattern for the Regional Security Office at U.S. Embassy Dhaka included five Diplomatic Security (DS) Special Agents, including one Regional Security Officer (RSO), three Assistant RSOs, and one Assistant RSO-Investigator. At the time of the attack, Ambassador Bernicat's bodyguard program was fully staffed and two DS special agents were in-country (one agent was on leave and Post was awaiting two incoming agents). The Department was not aware of credible information indicating the attack would occur. After the attack, DS deployed a Mobile Security Deployment Training Team to conduct security training for Post staff. Post continues to work with the host government to investigate the attack.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#70)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

We are concerned that China continues to block the UN 1267 committee designation of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM). **What effort is the U.S. making to ensure that China stops enabling terrorism in South Asia?**

Answer:

Our views on Masood Azhar and JEM, the U.S.- and UN-designated terrorist group he leads, are well known. Azhar clearly meets the criteria for designation by the UN Security Council 1267 Committee as the founder and leader of JEM, a group the United Nations first designated in 2001. We are working to ensure the designation list is updated and accurate. We have made it clear we will work with our allies and partners to use all available avenues, including, if necessary, a standalone UN Security Council Resolution, to ensure that the founder and leader of JEM is held accountable by the international community.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#71)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

I understand that India claims its February 26 strike inside settled Pakistan hit an active JEM terrorist training camp, and the State Department termed the strike a “counter terrorism” operation. **Does the Department believe that India engaging in military action inside settled Pakistan is an appropriate response to a terrorist attack by a group based in Pakistan (albeit conducted by an Indian national)? Was the Department concerned by the potential escalatory or legal ramifications of such a strike?**

Answer:

Following Indian counterterrorism actions on February 26, I spoke with Indian Minister of External Affairs Swaraj to emphasize our close security partnership and shared goal of maintaining peace and security in the region. I also spoke to Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi to underscore the priority of de-escalating current tensions by avoiding military action and the urgency of Pakistan’s taking meaningful action against terrorist groups operating on its soil. I expressed to both ministers that we encourage India and Pakistan to exercise restraint and avoid escalation. I also encouraged both ministers to prioritize direct communication and avoid further conflict.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#72)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Can you characterize the current tension in Pakistan over scarce water resources? How might this stress amplify tensions with India should India seek to restrict the flow of rivers whose headwaters it controls, as India threatened during the recent Indo-Pak crisis that flared up last month?

Answer:

Although transboundary issues are a significant hindrance for Pakistan's water sector, the greatest challenges are internal to Pakistan and are linked to mismanagement of water resources and population growth. The Indus River Basin, which is fed from glaciers originating in India, is the primary source of water for most of Pakistan – including 90% of agricultural land – and is supplemented by transboundary water from Afghanistan. Pakistan continues to express concerns about India's building dam projects, which predate the Pulwama attack, and argue the projects are not in line with the 1960 Indus Water Treaty (IWT). However, Pakistan has stated it is not concerned about India's diversion of water as long as it adheres to the IWT.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#73)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How has the U.S. adjusted its assistance programming for Sri Lanka to reflect the impact that the breaking of democratic norms may have?

Answer:

At the time of constitutional crisis, the United States expressed concern publicly and privately that the crisis undermined the country's international reputation and economy. With likeminded states, we urged that parliament be reconvened and the rule of law be upheld. During the crisis, the Millennium Challenge Corporation declined to vote on approval of Sri Lanka's \$480 million compact, as was previously scheduled. Sri Lanka's democratic institutions, namely the judiciary and parliament, ultimately reinstated constitutional order, with senior Sri Lankan officials expressing appreciation for U.S. government efforts to ensure the crisis was resolved in accordance with the rule of law. As such, we are continuing appropriated assistance.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#74)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What impact does the Sri Lankan government's appointment of an individual accused of crimes against humanity to the position of Chief of Army staff have on our security assistance posture?

Answer:

I share your concerns about the appointment of Shavendra Silva. The Department takes all allegations of human rights seriously and raises its concerns with the Government of Sri Lanka when high-level appointments appear to conflict with Sri Lanka's commitments. As we have told the President of Sri Lanka, the appointment was not in line with Sri Lanka's commitment to accountability, justice, and reconciliation. We will continue to press Sri Lanka to fulfill its human rights commitments and obligations. We will also continue to enforce the Leahy Law and the restrictions it applies to U.S. security assistance.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#75)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How would you rate Sri Lanka's efforts to address longstanding issues of accountability as agreed to in the 2015 UN Human Rights council resolution adopted with support of the Sri Lankan government?

Answer:

We welcome Sri Lanka's co-sponsorship of UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/40/L.1 extending international monitoring of its commitments to reconciliation, justice, and accountability. Sri Lanka established an Office of Missing Persons in 2018. An Office of Reparations is also being established, with commissioners appointed. Sri Lanka's 2019 budget funded both offices. Over 80 percent of occupied lands have been returned. We support the government's efforts to repeal and replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We are encouraging the government to make progress on establishing a truth-seeking commission and judicial accountability mechanism, expected in 2020.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#76)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 27, 2019**

Question:

Given the Administration's priority on the Indo-Pacific region, and the National Security Strategy's focus on a global competition with China, will the administration be increasing the number of positions assigned to the Indo-Pacific region? If so, how many positions will be added? Will these be new positions or existing positions? If they are existing positions, from where will they be reassigned?

Answer:

I support the President's FY 2020 budget request and the position requests contained therein. The Department routinely reviews its staffing to ensure it is effectively advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives and uses a variety of tools, including diplomatic density, to assess staffing levels. The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs is also planning to reprogram three Public Diplomacy positions from Canberra, Seoul, and Beijing to Kolonia, Singapore, and Jakarta, respectively. The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs has reprogrammed six positions within the region to directly support the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#77)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please describe the impact of the FBI's Transnational Anti-Gang Units (TAG) in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which are funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). How many gang members have been brought to justice as a result of the TAG's efforts? How many gang leaders have been extradited to the United States?

Answer:

The Department supports specialized and vetted units in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras – including the Transnational Anti-Gang Units (TAG) – to combat transnational criminal organizations. In 2018, vetted and specialized units arrested more than 8,600 individuals in the Northern Triangle. Since mid-2017, coordinated regional operations led to the filing of nearly 4,000 criminal charges, including a Salvadoran MS-13 leader responsible for coordinating criminal activities in the United States. TAGs regularly share information with the FBI to support U.S. investigations. Since 2017, Northern Triangle governments have extradited more than 65 high-level criminals for prosecution in the United States.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#78)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Around the globe, LGBTQI people have been harassed, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. **Why did the U.S. not join over 30 other nations in signing the joint statement delivered to the UN Human Rights Council on March 18, 2019, calling for a thorough investigation into the anti-LGBTI crimes being perpetrated in Chechnya? Who made the decision to not sign?**

Answer:

That statement was made during the 40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, from which the United States withdrew in June 2018. Consistent with our withdrawal, the United States is not participating in any UN Human Rights Council sessions, including by signing onto or aligning with any resolutions or statements pertaining to those sessions. We continue to work to advance human rights at the UN and in regional fora, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where we joined 16 countries in invoking the “Moscow Mechanism” against Russia for allegations of human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya, including against LGBTI persons. We continue to press Russia to bring those responsible to justice.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#79)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Around the globe, LGBTQI people have been harassed, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. **Will you condemn the ongoing anti-LGBTI crimes happening in Chechnya and commit to helping LGBTI people in Chechnya, Egypt and other countries to ensure they are not targeted for abuse?**

Answer:

Under my leadership, the Department has been clear and consistent in affirming that human rights are universal and that no one should face violence, criminalization, or discrimination in areas such as employment, housing, and provision of government services because of their LGBTI status. We have and will continue to stand up and speak out in support of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons in all corners of the globe, including in Chechnya and Egypt, and press to hold perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses to account.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#80)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Around the globe, LGBTQI people have been harassed, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. **Do you pledge to continue to support State Department programming aimed at meeting emergency needs of human rights defenders?**

Answer:

Absolutely. The Department continues to provide strong U.S. programmatic and emergency support for LGBTI human rights defenders and civil society organizations working to counter violence, severe discrimination, and criminalization of LGBTI conduct and/or status.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#81)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Does the State Department believe that national leaders around the world have a duty to condemn hate speech or incitement? Does the Department believe its representatives, including at United Nations bodies, should advance this principle? Does the Department believe that fighting racism helps build diverse democratic societies, and is it U.S. policy to do so around the globe?

Answer:

State Department officials regularly speak out to condemn hate speech and encourage other governments to do the same. Unfortunately, we see many countries using restrictions on freedom of expression to target the political opposition or human rights defenders. We hold up our framework of civil rights laws and the infrastructure to ensure their implementation as a model for deterring and punishing those who discriminate or engage in violence based on race.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#82)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Given the many intensifying displacement crises around the world, why hasn't PRM used any Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) funds over the past two years? This account is fully funded at its \$100 million authorized level, which could be used to save lives and prevent further displacement. Are there new protocols or barriers to drawdown that may be impeding ERMA funds being spent?

Answer:

While there are more global humanitarian assistance needs now than there have been in decades, the Department has been able to address emergency needs through existing Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) resources and has not had to seek approval from the President to tap into ERMA funds. There are no new protocols or barriers to drawing down funds from ERMA.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#83)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

On January 29, 2018, new procedures were announced to process refugees from certain countries for resettlement, in addition to new data-collection and processing requirements put in place over the last two years. **Do these new systems, and the lengthened time it takes to process refugees, require additional resources beyond what was necessary under the previous procedures? Why did the Department of State request fewer funds in FY 2020 than it did in previous years for the U.S. refugee admissions program?**

Answer:

The screening and vetting protocols associated with the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) play a crucial role in preventing the admission of foreign nationals who may be involved in acts of terrorism or other threats to national security and public safety.

The budget request for the USRAP includes funding to support all overseas processing steps, data collection, transportation, and initial reception and placement services for 30,000 refugees and 10,000 Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs). The request reflects anticipated costs of the program based on current operating levels. The FY 2020 Admissions ceiling will be set after consultations between the Administration and Congress before the start of the fiscal year.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#84)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How will the administration's reported plan to close USCIS international operations impact refugee processing? Is the U.S. continuing to conduct overseas interviews for all priority streams of refugee applicants? If so, how many individuals are currently going through this process and how long will this process take? Has the State Department established any benchmarks or goals for case processing times?

Answer:

The Department already performs services on behalf of USCIS at more than 200 posts overseas and is committed to working with USCIS to ensure a smooth transition of services over the next year. The specific USCIS functions the Department will absorb will be determined in the months ahead. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program continues to conduct overseas interviews for all priority streams of refugees. Over 109,000 applicants now await initial interviews by Department-funded Resettlement Support Centers, and over 81,000 applicants await interviews by USCIS. The average case processing time from date of referral to departure to the United States (or closure if denied) is two years and five months.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#85)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What new security vetting is being implemented in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program by the administration? Given the extensive scrutiny that refugees have previously faced, what benefits have such vetting changes added? How is the Administration ensuring that security screening of refugees before their entry to the United States is being done in a timely manner? How long are current wait times for security advisory opinion (SAO) requests and what has been the increase in case processing times under the new SAO procedures? Which agencies have typically processed SAO requests and which agencies are involved under the new SAO procedures?

Answer:

In January 2018, the Secretary of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced additional security enhancements to strengthen the integrity of the USRAP. The process for screening refugees is managed by DHS and includes the involvement of the Intelligence Community, including the National Counterterrorism Center, as well as the Departments of State and Defense and the FBI. Only after an applicant has cleared all security screening will DHS consider granting admission to the United States. Refugee applicants undergo a number of different security checks at different stages in their processing, and the length of these checks can vary based on the unique traits of each individual applicant.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#86)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the State Department doing to address the concern that fewer individuals granted SIVs will contribute to fewer individuals willing to serve with the U.S. in the future, thus damaging our national security?

Answer:

We are committed to supporting those who have helped U.S. military and other government personnel perform their duties, often at great risk to themselves and their families.

We are aware of how much we owe our Afghan and Iraqi colleagues and of the risks they face.

In FY 2017, we issued visas to 4,120 principal applicants – more than any other year. In FY 2018, we issued approximately 1,645 visas to principal applicants. While we encountered longer processing times in FY 2018, we have identified the challenges and are working proactively to resolve them. The SIV process is a collaborative effort among our interagency partners and our focus is to facilitate visa issuance while protecting our national security.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#87)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Regarding the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum on Trafficking in Persons, what was the process used to determine the number and scope of the waivers in the Presidential Memorandum?

Answer:

The Department and the Administration engaged with relevant agencies to conduct a detailed review of the programs that would be affected by any applicable restrictions for Tier 3 governments and the available justifications for potential waivers. Waivers on restricted assistance were granted only where the President determined waivers promoted the purposes of the TVPA or were otherwise in the U.S. national interest.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#88)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Regarding the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum on Trafficking in Persons, what guidance was provided, particularly to USAID missions, regarding the implementation of the Presidential Memorandum?

Answer:

The Administration seeks to implement the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) foreign assistance restrictions in a way that holds governments accountable for failing to meet the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking in persons in accordance with the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum. This has included providing guidance, as needed, to State Department and USAID bureaus and missions on the application of the TVPA restrictions as they relate to existing and planned programs. I have directed my leadership team to explore the use of available authorities in certain limited cases where it is in our foreign policy and national security interest to continue assistance that would otherwise be subject to the TVPA restrictions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#89)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Can you explain how the Department's interpretations of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) provision on "avoidance of significant adverse effects" was included in the determinations of the waivers included in Presidential Memorandum and additional waivers?

Answer:

The authority to grant waivers of the assistance restriction under the TVPA is exercised by the President, consistent with applicable requirements. The restrictions will be applied in a way that is mindful of the impact on people who rely on life-saving services, particularly vulnerable populations in greatest need. The restriction applies only to assistance for the governments of countries listed as Tier 3 in the annual Trafficking in Persons report. United States assistance for the people of these countries provided through NGOs and civil society organizations is generally not subject to the restriction.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#90)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) definition of “nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance,” which is referred to in the TVPA, has been stated as the benchmark for excluding certain activities. The definition in TVPA (codified at 22 USC 7102(8)) sets out that the following, among other things, should be treated as humanitarian assistance: Economic Support Funds (ESF) authorized for use as Development Assistance (DA); disaster relief assistance, expressly including International Disaster Assistance (IDA) under FAA Sec. 491; “humanitarian and other development assistance in support of programs of nongovernmental organizations [under FAA Development Assistance authorities]; and a catch-all for “other programs involving . . . humanitarian assistance.” **What is the administration's definition of “humanitarian” in the context of the November presidential memorandum? What criteria were used to determine which activities were or were not excluded? What approach has the administration taken in using its discretion under the catch-all authority? What steps has it taken to avoid arbitrary and capricious application of this discretion?**

Answer:

I have directed my leadership team to take a common-sense and consistent approach to implementing the restrictions under the TVPA in accordance with the Presidential Memorandum. The restrictions will be applied in a way that is mindful of the impact on people to whom we provide these life-saving services, particularly vulnerable populations in greatest need. As part of implementing the restrictions under the TVPA, certain limited activities, such as life-saving health programs and other programs benefitting conflict-displaced and refugee populations will continue under available authorities.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#91)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Additionally, under the definition in Sec. 110 (d) (1) (A) of the TVPA of 2000, is the term “provided” interpreted to mean the obligation of funding, and/or disbursement of previously obligated funds? If the latter, how much funding does the Administration estimate is no longer eligible to be provided to these countries, and what are the plans for its notification and reprogramming?

Answer:

The TVPA restrictions under the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum apply to the new obligation of certain types of foreign assistance during FY 2019 for the governments of countries listed as Tier 3 in the Department’s 2018 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, regardless of the fiscal year of the funds. The State Department and USAID are still considering plans for potential reprogramming of funds, and I look forward to providing you more information as additional decisions are made.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#92)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please explain how dual-key authorities such as DOD Section 333 (global train and equip) are being handled in the context of the presidential memorandum. For example, DOD notified its intent to provide \$7.2 million in CT assistance to Mauritania's military in FY2018; since this notification was sent up in the previous fiscal year, is the Sec. 333 package to Mauritania unaffected by the Tier III designation, or will assistance be held up at the point of obligation/equipment transfer?

Answer:

I have directed my team to exercise the State Department's concurrence under 10 U.S.C. 333 in accordance with restrictions imposed under the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum, which applies to new obligations made in FY 2019. The Department of Defense is the agency with further insight on the specific activity referenced in the question.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#93)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Additionally, we understand that CVE assistance for Mauritania has been allowed to proceed, even though it generally involves working with one or more government entities. **Under what exemption (policy or legal) was this allowed?**

Answer:

Ongoing CVE assistance for Mauritania as a part of the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) was obligated prior to the beginning of FY 2019 and, therefore, not subject to the current TVPA restrictions. TVPA restrictions under the Presidential Memorandum only apply to the new obligation of certain types of foreign assistance during FY 2019 for the governments of countries listed as Tier 3 in the Department's 2018 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#94)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The FAA definition also explicitly states that NGO activities are excluded, but there have been numerous reports of NGO programs being impacted by the presidential memorandum. **What is the Department's legal rationale for what constitutes providing assistance to the government of a country? How is this interpretation being implemented in additional waiver decisions? What role, if any, does an NGO coordinated/supporting development program with local vs. national government play in this interpretation?**

Answer:

The restriction under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) applies to assistance for the benefit of the government, regardless of the type of entity implementing the assistance. The State Department and USAID assess whether the restriction applies with respect to a particular program on a case-by-case basis.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#95)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Are NGO implementing partners affected by the presidential memorandum permitted to incur closeout costs for the responsible winding down of any relevant activities?

Answer:

Where an activity will not receive additional funding as a result of the restrictions under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), implementing partners are generally permitted to incur closeout costs to allow for the responsible winding down of the activity.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#96)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

We have heard reports of organizations having to address questions about whether coffee was provided at program workshops where local government partners were present in order to determine the nature of government support. **How is the Department determining what activities constitute government support, particularly in the context of NGO-run programs?**

Answer:

The restriction under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) applies to assistance for the benefit of the government, regardless of the type of entity implementing the assistance. The State Department and USAID assess whether the restriction applies with respect to a particular program on a case-by-case basis.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#97)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Does your interpretation of what constitutes assistance to governments include assistance programs administered through NGOs directly to general populations, where the government does not participate in or receive any kind of financial or in-kind support? If so, why? Given the lack of direct support to a government in these instances, what is the Department's legal rationale for stopping or slowing these programs?

Answer:

The restriction under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) applies to assistance for the benefit of the government, regardless of the type of entity implementing the assistance. The State Department and USAID assess whether the restriction applies with respect to a particular program on a case-by-case basis.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#98)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

We have heard reports from numerous organizations that additional waivers are being considered on a sectoral basis with potentially different criteria across the sectors. For example, some PEPFAR funded programs are being granted waivers – and PEPFAR program models require coordination and some level of integration with Ministries of Health, local governments, and government hospitals. However, some education and civic engagement programs run through local civil society organizations – without the involvement of local or national governments or schools – are being impacted. **What is the explanation for this discrepancy in criteria for providing such waivers?**

Answer:

In connection with the issuance of the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum, the Administration made clear that Departments and agencies should rely on available authorities to provide certain limited types of life-saving assistance in countries that did not receive waivers from the restrictions under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). It also made clear that Departments and agencies should implement the restrictions in a way that is mindful of the impact on people's lives who are served by our life-saving assistance, particularly vulnerable populations in greatest need. I have directed my leadership team to work with State Department and USAID bureaus to follow this approach.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#99)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the administration's position on addressing the spread of infectious diseases? Does it view the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases as in the US national interest?

Answer:

Infectious diseases present a risk to U.S. political, economic, and health security. It is in the national security interest of the United States to strengthen global health security and manage these risks. The U.S. government remains committed to preventing, detecting, and responding to infectious disease threats – including through initiatives like the PEPFAR program and the Global Health Security Agenda. The United States utilizes a whole-of-government approach to address infectious disease threats – as outlined in the U.S. National Security Strategy, the U.S. National Biodefense Strategy, and the forthcoming U.S. Global Health Security Strategy.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#100)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How has the limited number of waivers in the Presidential Memorandum and the processing of additional waivers delayed obligations or disbursements? Please, identify the accounts, programs, activities and fiscal year of those funds. When are these funds expected to be obligated and disbursed?

Answer:

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) restrictions under the November 29, 2018, Presidential Memorandum apply to the new obligation of certain types of foreign assistance during FY 2019 for the governments of countries listed as Tier 3 in the 2018 TIP report, regardless of the fiscal year of the funds. There is an ongoing process to consider certain limited cases in which it is in our foreign policy and national security interest to continue assistance that would be subject to the TVPA restrictions by relying on available authorities. I look forward to providing you more information as additional decisions are made.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#101)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Are there additional waivers that have been prepared and are awaiting review?

Answer:

I have directed my leadership team to work with State Department and USAID bureaus to explore the use of available authorities in certain limited cases where it is in our foreign policy and national security interest to continue assistance that would otherwise be subject to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) restrictions. That process is ongoing, and I look forward to providing you more information as additional decisions are made.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#102)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Some of the Tier 3 identified countries, including South Sudan and DRC, are also under ongoing foreign aid reviews. **How have the lack of waivers impacted programs on the ground for countries under such reviews?**

Answer:

Restrictions on U.S. assistance to the governments of Tier 3 countries serve as a diplomatic tool to urge action to meet the TVPA's minimum standards. A government's efforts to combat human trafficking is just one factor among many that are taken into account when reviewing how best to use our foreign assistance resources to achieve our national security and foreign policy goals. We recognize the importance of implementing the TVPA foreign assistance restriction in a way that avoids significant adverse effects on vulnerable populations.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#103)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How does the administration plan to manage and improve proactive and timely communication around TIP designation/granting waivers in the future?

Answer:

The Department will work with relevant agencies to identify considerations relevant to the potential waiver of assistance restrictions for Tier 3 governments pursuant to the TVPA. The President will determine whether any waivers of the restriction would promote the purposes of the TVPA or would otherwise be in the U.S. national interest. The President's determinations regarding the imposition and waiver of the TVPA restriction for Tier 3 governments are transmitted to Congress and posted on the White House website.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#104)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What processes will be in place for issuing waivers following the Department's next annual TIP report and tier designations? What are you doing to ensure that waiver process will be efficient, timely and transparent?

Answer:

The Department will work with relevant agencies to identify considerations relevant to the potential waiver of assistance restrictions for the governments of countries listed as Tier 3 in the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report, following the transmission of the report to Congress. The President will determine whether any waivers of the restriction would promote the purposes of the TVPA or would otherwise be in the U.S. national interest. The Administration will take into full consideration the implications of such restrictions and justifications for any waivers. As with every year, the Department reviews the process leading to such decisions with a view toward improving the process going forward.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#105)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please provide a list of State Department staff positions and associated responsibilities that are funded, in whole or in part, by a foreign government.

Answer:

There are five (5) U.S. Direct Hire State Department positions wholly funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pursuant to a Technical Cooperation Agreement (TCA) for critical infrastructure protection and public security capacity-building under section 573 (22 U.S.C. 2349aa-2) and section 607 (22 U.S.C. 2357) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195). The TCA was signed on May 16, 2008, and extended on January 16, 2013.

Currently, the Government of Saudi Arabia funds salaries and benefits for the following five positions covered by the TCA:

U.S. Direct Hires Under Technical Cooperation Agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia		
Location	Type	Title
Domestic	Civil Service	MANAGEMENT ANALYST
Domestic	Civil Service	DEPUTY UNIT CHIEF
Domestic	Civil Service	ATTORNEY ADVISOR (part time)
Overseas, Saudi Arabia	Foreign Service	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER
Overseas, Saudi Arabia	Foreign Service	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER

**Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#106)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

You held a telephone press briefing on March 18, 2019, that was focused on international religious freedom but made the briefing available only to faith-based media outlets. **Did any element of the State Department create a transcript or any other recording or summary of the content from this on-the-record phone briefing? Which faiths were represented among the “faith-based” media outlets included in the call? How was participation in this call determined, and by whom?**

Answer:

I have conducted numerous interviews in the past year with a variety of outlets and reporters, including those that regularly cover the Department as well as other media that typically do not have the opportunity to interview a Secretary of State. The Department posts transcripts of press briefings. The March 18 event was an interview with a select group of invited print journalists, not a press briefing. The Department does not normally publish transcripts of interviews with print journalists, as journalists do not always publish in full or at a certain time. This facilitates the ability of media outlets to use material from such interviews at their discretion.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#107)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please provide the following: The total number of security violations issued to Department employees in 2018, including the number of security violations broken down by Bureau and by Mission. The number of security violations committed by an employee with a history of one or more prior security violations. The number and nature of actions taken by the Department in response to security violations, including: disciplinary actions taken or criminal referrals; and the administration of remedial training in response to any security violation(s).

Answer:

In 2018, the Department adjudicated 28 security violations, some for incidents that occurred prior to 2018. Seven Department employees who received security violations in 2018 had received one or more prior violations. Thirteen employees who had committed security violations were referred to the Bureau of Human Resources (HR) and/or the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) for appropriate action. The Department made no criminal referrals for these security violations and six cases remain open with HR to determine disciplinary action. We instituted a mandatory annual classification and information security course for all employees and contractors and administer remedial security training on a case-by-case basis.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#108)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What has been the Department's total cost of providing security for the Secretary of State by month in 2016, 2017, and 2018?

Answer:

Total security costs depend on the Secretary of State. Historical costs expended for the Secretary's 24/7 Protective Detail are as follows: \$8.6 million (FY 2018); \$9.5 million (FY 2017); and \$14.8 million (FY 2016). Secretary Tillerson's annual at-home security cost was \$3,116,225, with a one-time security countermeasures cost of \$332,000. Secretary Kerry's annual at home security cost was \$3,208,200, with a one-time security countermeasures cost of \$225,000. Secretary Clinton had a one-time security countermeasures cost of \$800 paid by State (USSS paid for her at-home security). Secretary Pompeo's at-home security cost is expected to be \$1,618,879 annually, with a one-time security countermeasures cost of \$274,796.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#109)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What entities at the Department of State and Department of Defense were responsible for organizing the Secretary's housing arrangements on the military base?

Answer:

A number of entities at the Department of State were involved in reviewing arrangements related to the Secretary's housing on the military base, including the Bureau of Administration, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and the Office of the Legal Adviser. We refer you to the Department of Defense (DOD) to answer your question concerning which DOD entities were responsible for organizing the Secretary's housing on the military base.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#110)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What month/year did the current Secretary move onto the military base? The State Department said the Secretary is paying fair market value. What is his per month cost to rent the home? How did the State Department assess fair market value in this case?

Answer:

The Secretary moved onto the military base in September 2018. The Secretary has his own personal residential lease agreement and the Department does not pay his personal expenses.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#111)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

By what measures have security requirements related to the Secretary changed as a result of this move to housing on a military base?

Answer:

No physical or technical security requirements changed as a result of this move. As the Secretary moved onto a U.S. military base, DS reduced uniformed guard services by 25 percent.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#112)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Date of hearing, March 27, 2019**

Question:

Have you or your staff used WhatsApp or other non-government, third-party platforms to communicate with colleagues or foreign counterparts? If so, how do you maintain these communications for official records purposes? Are you concerned about sensitive messages in non-U.S. government servers?

Answer:

At times Department staff use non-government, third-party platforms to conduct USG business. The Department's mandatory records management training and issued guidance makes clear that all employees have a responsibility to capture federal records into official USG systems. All employees or contractors who create or receive federal records on WhatsApp or other non-government, third-party platforms must: (1) copy an official electronic messaging account in the original transmission of the record; or (2) export and forward a complete copy of the record to his or her official electronic messaging account within 20 days. These messaging apps may not be used to transmit classified or sensitive information.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#113)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What policy guidance does this administration provide to staff about use of non-US Government systems – including electronic messaging apps – to conduct foreign relations? Does the State Department have a policy and practice of allowing use of these third-party platforms for communication? If so, does the State Department retain copies or recordings of the communications made by State Department employees in the conduct of foreign relations on behalf of the United States?

Answer:

The Department's mandatory records management training and Department-wide issued guidance makes clear that all employees have a responsibility to capture federal records onto official USG systems. The Department currently allows the use of these third party platforms only in limited circumstances. Due to an increased demand to use these platforms in the conduct of the Department's mission, we are exploring the potential impacts of expanding the official use of these platforms, focusing first on our preservation requirements under the Federal Records Act. Department personnel who conduct any USG business on third-party platforms must export all federal records onto Department systems for preservation.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#114)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Mr. Secretary, on March 4, 2019, you received a joint letter from the Chairmen of HFAC, COR, and HPSCI seeking records regarding President Trump's communications with President Putin; to date, the State Department has not furnished any of the requested records, including any created pursuant to its obligations under the Federal Records Act. When you were a member of Congress, you received documents from the Obama Administration of a nature almost identical to the ones sought in the March 4, 2019, letter. These included documents created before, during, and after calls that Secretary Clinton and President Obama had with foreign leaders – including memoranda of conversations from the calls. **What is the legal rationale for the State Department producing such records during the Obama Administration but withholding them during the Trump Administration?**

Answer:

In response to your letter of March 4, 2019, we wrote to you on March 26 concerning this matter, and I refer you to that response.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#115)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How much has the State Department spent on the Congressional Document Production Unit (CDP) since it was first established in 2015, on staff, document production, and other associated costs respectively? What source of funding was used, and under which authorities? How many FTEs are currently allocated to the CDP? How many of those are currently filled? How many documents have been produced to Congress by the CDP since January 3, 2019? Which committees have received these documents, and how many documents have been provided to each committee?

Answer:

The Department has spent \$3 million on staff and \$5.1 million on document production and other associated costs – for a total of \$8.1 million – on the Congressional Document Production branch (CDP) since it was established in 2015. Funding for the CDP comes from the Diplomatic Programs account. The CDP's activities are part of the Department's routine operations. Ten FTEs are allocated to the CDP, of which five are currently filled. The CDP searches, collects, reviews, and organizes documents in response to Congressional requests. It does not itself provide documents directly to Congress. All document productions from the Department are transmitted via the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#116)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please provide a list of all current Department employees at the rank of Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) or above who have been advised by the Office of the Legal Adviser's Office of Ethics and Financial Disclosures (L/efd) that they must recuse themselves from involvement in particular matters or subjects while employed by the Department of State. For each such individual, please also provide: (1) a complete description of the terms of said recusal; (2) a description of any incidents in which the Department provided subsequent counseling, feedback, or any other advice to that individual regarding compliance with said recusal; and (3) a description of any monitoring or reporting requirements associated with ensuring that such recusals are honored and adhered to. (Note: To the extent this information includes Personally Identifiable Information (PII), please contact the Committee to make appropriate accommodations in order to ensure its protection.)

Answer:

Federal ethics rules do not require employees to notify the Ethics Office or to make a written record when they recuse from a particular matter. Therefore, the Department does not have a list responsive to this request. Ethics agreements document a commitment to avoid conflicts of interest, but they do not identify particular matters requiring recusal. Financial disclosure review provides an opportunity to discuss potential conflicts with senior employees, and the Ethics Office routinely advises employees when recusal might be appropriate, but written records of an actual recusal decision are not generally required and are not centrally tracked. Compliance with the ethics rules, including recusal when appropriate, is a personal obligation of each Department employee.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#117)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

On January 3, 2018, the State Department reportedly revised the "public charge" provision of the Foreign Affairs Manual (9 FAM 302.8) to make it harder for immigrants to obtain visas if they or their families have used supplemental, non-cash benefits like SNAP and Medicaid. Since the FAM change went into effect, reports indicate that visa denials on public charge grounds have skyrocketed. There have also been reports that immigrants are turning down public benefits because of fear that they will face immigration penalties. **Which officials or staff within the State Department were involved in the decision to revise the Foreign Affairs Manual? To what extent, and how, did State Department officials or staff consult with other federal agencies or offices, including the White House, before making this FAM revision?**

Answer:

The Bureau of Consular Affairs' Visa Office made the revisions to the Foreign Affairs Manual guidance on the public charge visa ineligibility. The changes were pursuant to the President's March 6, 2017, Memorandum, "Implementing Immediate Heightened Screening and Vetting of Applications for Visas and Other Immigration Benefits, Ensuring Enforcement of All Laws for Entry into the United States, and Increasing Transparency among Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government and for the American People." Relevant elements of the Executive Branch and relevant offices within the Department of State were consulted prior to publication.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#118)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Does the State Department maintain data concerning the number of visa denials under the “public charge” ground of inadmissibility broken down by racial or ethnic group, consular office, country of origin, or any other categories? If so, please provide those disaggregated figures to the Committee.

Answer:

The Department maintains data associated with immigrant and nonimmigrant visa applicants found ineligible under public charge grounds. Attached are immigrant and nonimmigrant refusals under the public charge ground of inadmissibility aggregated by the nationality of the applicant and the post that adjudicated the visa. The Department does not have data related to the race or ethnicity of applicants refused under the public charge ground of inadmissibility as the Department does not solicit race or ethnicity information from visa applicants. This data represents refusals for FY 2017, FY 2018, and year-to-date for FY 2019.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Eliot Engel (#119)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Has the State Department or individual subcomponents or units of the Department, including individual consular offices, disseminated additional guidance, instructions, memoranda, training, or other information regarding the application of the “public charge” ground of inadmissibility since January 20, 2017? If so, please provide those documents to the Committee.

Answer:

In 2018, the Department of State updated guidance on the public charge inadmissibility in the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). Enclosed is a copy of 9 FAM 302.8, Public Charge.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Michael McCaul (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is your position on zero-based budgeting? Would you be open to its implementation?

Answer:

Zero-based budgeting (ZBB) can provide insights on the efficient delivery of government programs and services but relies on assumptions that are not consistently feasible in the current fiscal environment. ZBB assumes annual budgetary allocations are set at zero, meaning that no costs or activities are automatically recurred, and programs will need to recalculate 100 percent of expenses in advance. While the Department seeks to apply such principles when establishing new programs, existing programs must account for considerable uncertainty in the timing of appropriations, as well as differing perspectives on priorities. When preparing the budget request, we conduct intensive reviews of accounts to ensure resources are well justified.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Brad Sherman (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Will you support \$1.5 million in funding for Voice of America to broadcast in the Sindhi language in Pakistan?

Answer:

This is an important area of engagement, which is why we have a substantial public diplomacy operation in Pakistan and why we have expanded our outreach in vernacular languages, including Sindhi. We regularly publicize U.S. initiatives in the Sindhi language. For example: Consulate Karachi's website is available in Sindhi, and the Consulate issues press releases and engages with the public via social media in Sindhi. We can certainly consider Sindhi in the input the Department provides for the U.S. Agency for Global Media's annual language review.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Brad Sherman (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last month the Treasury Department announced new sanctions against two small Chinese firms for doing business with North Korea. A few hours later President Trump tweeted that he was rescinding those sanctions because, in the words of Sarah Sanders, “President Trump likes Chairman Kim.” Then, reports emerged that President Trump’s tweet was referring to larger sanctions the Treasury Department had prepared but not announced yet. Later, reports said President Trump had actually meant to rescind the two sanctions that had been announced but was convinced by administration officials not to do so. **Can you confirm that there was a larger sanctions package on North Korea ready to go and commit to providing the Committee with its contents this week?**

Answer:

We continue to be a leader in the global pressure campaign on the DPRK, backed by most of the world, including the UN Security Council, which unanimously passed all the UN Security Council Resolutions in 2017. We will continue to work with allies and partners and the interagency to implement and enforce our sanctions regime and combat DPRK sanctions evasion. It would be inappropriate to comment on internal deliberations on potential actions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Brad Sherman (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Are you supportive of continued U.S. assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh, with a special focus on completing demining efforts and expanding our support to include health care and rehabilitation services?

Answer:

As of September 2018, HALO Trust had cleared 97.9 percent of the mined areas with 27 known active minefields remaining. More than 125,000 people have benefited from the demining, which saves lives, prevents injuries, generates local jobs, and promotes economic rehabilitation. HALO Trust is currently conducting demining activities to clear known minefields as surveyed within Nagorno-Karabakh with \$3.5 million in resources USAID provided last year. We will continue to assess the humanitarian needs in Nagorno-Karabakh and potential engagement.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Brad Sherman (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Relations
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Are you willing to work with Congress to help provide Armenia – a landlocked, blockaded nation of limited means – with the resources needed to support transitional programs for at-risk refugees, including short-term housing/rental assistance and social and economic integration initiatives?

Answer:

The Department of State, through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), supports vulnerable Syrian nationals of Armenian descent in Armenia, and our Embassy's Public Affairs Section's Democracy Commission supports local NGOs working with refugee communities. In FY 2018, PRM's contributions to international humanitarian organizations and funding to local and international NGOs operating in Armenia helped vulnerable Syrians integrate into Armenia by facilitating access to housing, jobs, education, legal assistance, and vocational training. PRM's regional funding to UNHCR also supports the strengthening of the government's asylum procedure and improving reception conditions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Brad Sherman (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Will you pledge to raise the gross human rights violations Sindhis face in Pakistan in all your interactions with Pakistani officials?

Answer:

The State Department highlighted human rights violations against Sindhis in the 2018 Human Rights Report, released in February, including reports of kidnappings, political prisoners, and killings. We continue to raise these and other human rights issues in conversations with Pakistani officials at the highest levels, and the United States remains committed to working with the Government of Pakistan to improve the human rights situation there.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Scott Perry (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What are the consequences for the United States and its national security interests of Israel losing control of the Golan Heights? In addition, what are the strategic implications this recognition has for the region and for the peace process?

Answer:

President Trump's decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights was taken in full awareness that we cannot allow the Golan Heights to be controlled by the likes of the Syrian and Iranian regimes. We also cannot turn a blind eye to the threats emanating from a Syrian regime that engages in atrocities, or the threats posed by Iran and terrorist actors, including Hizballah, who seek to use the Golan Heights as a launching ground for attacks on Israel. Our recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights will enhance Israel's security and strengthen our ability to partner with Israel in fighting common threats. This decision is of critical strategic and security importance to the stability of the Middle East.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Scott Perry (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

On March 25, the State Department released a report required by the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act on the level of access Chinese authorities grant U.S. diplomats and officials, journalists, and tourists to Tibetan areas in China. This report documented outrageous actions taken by the Chinese government to keep American diplomats, journalists, and citizens out of Tibet – including repeatedly denying requests from the US ambassador and other US officials. This report is important in showing that the United States is serious about opening access to Tibet for American citizens. It is no secret what the Communist Government of China is doing in Tibet. There is systematic suppression of Tibetan's rights to freedom of speech, press, association, and religion. There is a serious intention by the Communist Party to eliminate Tibet's culture and religion – including the destruction of monasteries and the prohibition of the Tibetan language. These efforts by the Communist Government only continue to intensify. **How is the Administration planning to push back against the Communist government's continued suppression in Tibet and the restriction on access for Americans? Even broader, how is this administration pushing back against the CCP's efforts to subjugate all faiths beneath their Party line?**

Answer:

This Administration is fully committed to implementing the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA), and we are pressing Chinese authorities for Americans to have the same open access to China as the Chinese enjoy when in the United States. We raise concerns regularly with Chinese authorities about the lack of regular access to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan areas for U.S. journalists, diplomats, academics, Tibetan-Americans, and others. We have urged China to end its campaign of repression against religious groups and its efforts to "Sinicize" all religions, including Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, and Muslims, and to respect the rights of faith groups guaranteed in the Chinese constitution.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Scott Perry (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

A recent report by the Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations found that the Department of State does not collect information on the Exchange Visa Program (J-1) related to Confucius Institutes or Hanban. As such, the Department does not know the number of Chinese nationals in the United States associated with the Confucius Institute program. Since 2017, the State Department issued four Letters of Concern to U.S. schools for inappropriately using J-1 visas related to Confucius Institutes. The State Department revoked 32 visas for Confucius Institute exchange visitors following reviews at two of the schools that received letters. In 2019, the State Department is expected to conduct four field site reviews of Confucius Institutes for proper visa use. **Does the Department have any additional plans to begin tracking the distribution of J-1 visas as a means to understand how many Chinese nationals are in the United States for the purpose of a Confucius Institute or classroom?**

Answer:

The Department takes seriously its responsibility for monitoring the Exchange Visitor Program, including the exchange visitors who enter the United States on J-1 visas. The bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs assesses information on exchange visitors associated with Confucius Institutes when the U.S sponsoring institution itself is part of a larger monitoring review. The Department has increased its monitoring of these sponsors, including thorough electronic reviews and intensive field site reviews, to confirm correct use of exchange visitor visas.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Scott Perry (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In accordance with Article 27.3 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR), a properly designated diplomatic pouch should not be opened, either physically or electronically, or detained. The Government of China has gone against this international norm in preventing the United States from sending needed repair parts to our diplomatic mission in Beijing. In contrast, the United States government has allowed China to bring in material unimpeded for construction of an embassy residence on Connecticut Avenue. **Is there a provision in any agreement that the Government of China has signed that prohibits the Chinese government from bringing in construction material under diplomatic pouch status for their mission in the United States?**

Answer:

The People's Republic of China (PRC) imposes size and weight limitations on all diplomatic pouches entering the PRC. All diplomatic pouches entering the PRC must be no larger than one cubic meter with a weight limit of 100 kilograms per piece and 1000 kilograms per shipment. The Department does not believe such restrictions are supported by the VCDR. As a matter of reciprocity, per diplomatic note sent to the PRC in 2004, the Department of State imposed equivalent restrictions on PRC diplomatic pouches entering the United States. Chinese construction materials for the Connecticut Avenue project are imported under the Conditions of Construction Agreement II (which does not implicate the pouch, but rather diplomatic cargo).

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

I ask that you provide the committee with a written summary of the current status of FY 2018 foreign assistance funds for Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala – detailing the current status and planned schedule for obligating and expending the funds appropriated by Congress.

Answer:

U.S. law requires the Department to submit spend plans to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America and the Central America Regional Security Initiative, as well as several certifications and reports prior to the notification and obligation of funding that benefits the Northern Triangle countries. As of the date of this Congressional hearing, the Department had submitted the 25 percent certification for all three countries on September 4, 2018, and notified funding for FY 2018 Foreign Military Financing International Military Education and Training benefitting these countries.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the rationale for requesting just \$6 million for Nicaragua, given that a majority of U.S. assistance has supported civil society and independent media? What message does this send to those Nicaraguans risking their lives in pursuit of a freer and more democratic society?

Answer:

The Administration remains committed to supporting the people of Nicaragua in their call for freedom, justice, democracy, and change. Since the beginning of the political crisis, and in close coordination with the Congress, the United States has mobilized more than \$25 million in FY 2017 and FY 2018 resources to support civil society and independent media in Nicaragua. While there is a reduction from appropriated levels due to an overall constrained budget environment, the bilateral request for \$6 million for Nicaragua in FY 2020 affirms the Administration's priority to support civil society engagement and independent media.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the rationale for cutting U.S. democracy assistance to Cuba to just \$6 million in this year's request?

Answer:

Foreign assistance was reduced globally, and Cuba was not singled out for reductions.

The Administration's FY 2020 request provides a sustainable level of democracy support.

Advancing democracy and human rights in Cuba remains the Administration's priority through

U.S. foreign assistance to Cuba, and we are committed to ensuring that U.S. democracy

assistance in Cuba achieves results.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The Administration has requested authority in its budget to transfer up to \$500 million to support a democratic transition in Venezuela. **What are the specific criteria you will use and what conditions must be met to certify that these funds should be disbursed? What type of support would this assistance entail and from what accounts would the aid be transferred?**

Answer:

The Administration's FY 2020 request for assistance to Venezuela reflects the need for flexibility and agility given the rapidly changing situation in Venezuela. I look forward to consulting with Members of Congress on the situation, our FY 2020 request, and the most appropriate use of funds to support a democratic transition in Venezuela. The Department is working to ensure we have an effective response when the Maduro usurpation ends, as the road to rebuilding Venezuela will be long and difficult. We continue supporting the Venezuelan people's efforts to ensure Maduro's departure as well as addressing their humanitarian needs. Congress plays a critical role in this process, and I look forward to consulting with you more in the future.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Since 2010, the Chinese Government has suspended the official dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives to resolve the Tibetan issue. In your written response to a question on Tibet during your confirmation hearing in April 2018, you said you “will express publicly, and at the highest levels of government, that Chinese authorities need to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to lower tensions and resolve differences.” **Have you done so since then, and if so, what was the response from the Chinese authorities?**

Answer:

U.S. officials repeatedly raise Tibetan issues with Chinese government counterparts at multiple levels. We have pressed Chinese authorities to resume a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue to lead to a settlement that resolves differences. The Government of China, however, continues to characterize the Dalai Lama as a “separatist.” We believe that Tibetan communities, like all faith communities, should be able to select, educate, and venerate their religious leaders without government interference.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#6)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Since 2010, the Chinese Government has suspended the official dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives to resolve the Tibetan issue. In your written response to a question on Tibet during your confirmation hearing in April 2018, you said you "will express publicly, and at the highest levels of government, that Chinese authorities need to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to lower tensions and resolve differences." Since 1997, all U.S. Presidents have publicly challenged the sitting Chinese President to negotiate with the Dalai Lama or his representative to find a lasting solution to the Tibetan issue. **Why has President Trump not done so yet during the U.S.-China Summits held to date?**

Answer:

The Administration is fully committed to implementing the Tibetan Policy Act. We urge Chinese authorities to resume a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions and engage in meaningful and direct dialogue to lead to a settlement that resolves differences. U.S. government officials, including myself, the Vice President, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and officials from the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu and U.S. Embassy in Beijing continue efforts to establish conditions that lead to that end. We continue to urge China to respect the human rights of Tibetans as well as their religious, cultural, and linguistic identity.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Albio Sires (#7)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

As required by RATA, have you already identified, and accordingly started to deny visas to the United States, to the Chinese officials responsible for creating and implementing these restrictive policies?

Answer:

We are fully committed to implementing the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA) in the timeframe prescribed by Congress. We are determining how to effectively press Chinese authorities for reciprocity with respect to the open access that China and many other countries enjoy in the United States, and how to identify those officials who are substantially involved in the formulation or execution of policies related to restricting access to Tibet. We are committed to working closely with Congress in pursuit of our shared goal ensuring that Americans have full access to China, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Tim Burchett (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Cultural Exchange programs are an important tool to showcase American values with young people from other countries. I understand that some of these programs expose program participants to American entrepreneurship, including training on how to start businesses in their home countries. **Can you provide examples to the Committee of how the Department is supporting such initiatives and offer some examples of their successes, including in the Summer Work Travel program?**

Answer:

The State Department has a variety of exchange programs that promote entrepreneurship, including the Summer Work Travel program, which provides thousands of participants first-hand experience with American businesses. Another example is the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLA), which has brought approximately 250 young entrepreneurs from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States for fellowships with American small businesses, strengthening their entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Evaluations indicate 78 percent of YLA fellows expanded their market after the program, while 57 percent increased revenue.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative William Keating (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What are you doing to ensure the Government of Russia is respecting [Mr. Whelan's] rights under international law? How is the U.S. Embassy working with the Russian government to ensure Mr. Whelan is able to secure independent legal counsel, sign necessary legal documents, and discuss his case with U.S. officials at his discretion?

Answer:

Ambassador Huntsman and his team consistently raise Mr. Whelan's case with Russian authorities. The U.S. Embassy in Moscow and the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., urge Russian officials to guarantee a transparent judicial process without undue delay. U.S. consular officials visit Mr. Whelan monthly to monitor and ensure his health and welfare. The embassy continues to press Russian officials for unrestricted consular visits to include permitting Mr. Whelan to communicate with consular officers to discuss his case freely and without obstruction from Russian authorities. The embassy also continues to advocate for his ability to sign essential documents.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative William Keating (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How has the Department worked toward the release of any previous American detainees, hostages, arrests, and prisoners in Russian custody? What type of U.S. intervention or dialogue took place during their detention, and what was the outcome for the detainees?

Answer:

U.S. consular officials assist detained U.S. citizens in Russia by conducting regular consular visits to monitor their health and welfare, providing information on legal resources, facilitating communication between the detained citizen and his or her family, and pressing Russian officials to guarantee a fair and transparent judicial process. Due to privacy considerations, the Department of State cannot provide details about specific cases, but in general, outcomes of detentions in Russia vary widely due to the range of criminal charges and differences in individual case circumstances and judicial processes.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

As Special Representative for Venezuela Elliott Abrams confirmed, there is no current statutory authorization for a military intervention in Venezuela. **Is the Administration currently planning any military action against Venezuela? Will the Administration honor the Constitution and seek Congressional authorization for any military engagement?**

Answer:

The President has been very clear that all options are on the table. Any action with respect to Venezuela, whether it's military action or action otherwise, will be in full compliance with U.S. law. This Administration will uphold the Constitution. The United States stands with interim President Juan Guaidó, the democratically elected national assembly, and the people of Venezuela as they peacefully restore constitutional order to their country. We continue to apply diplomatic and economic pressure to encourage Nicolas Maduro to accept a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis in Venezuela.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

As Special Representative for Venezuela Elliott Abrams confirmed, there is no current statutory authorization for a military intervention in Venezuela. **What's the plan if Maduro stays in the short, medium, and even long term? If Maduro goes, what is the plan for supporting a democratic transition in Venezuela and longer-term rebuilding of the country?**

Answer:

When Maduro leaves, the Guaidó interim government will find the U.S. and the international community ready to assist. We are supporting the people of Venezuela by providing emergency humanitarian assistance and full diplomatic support so they can restore democracy and stability to their country. We are seeking to curtail corrupt actions of members of the Maduro regime who have deprived the Venezuelan people of their liberty, leveraging bilateral and multilateral partnerships to raise the cost of repression. The U.S. and international community are working with the democratically elected national assembly, civil society, and others to re-build democratic institutions and economic capacity, in preparation for a long-term peaceful democratic transition.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In August, the Administration announced it would cut off funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine – UNRWA, claiming that the UN body – which provides a lifeline and truly vital assistance – needs reform. Your spokeswoman pledged then: “The United States will intensify dialogue with the United Nations, host governments, and international stakeholders about new models and new approaches, which may include direct bilateral assistance from the United States and other partners, that can provide today’s Palestinian children with a more durable and dependable path towards a brighter tomorrow.” **Who has the Administration spoken to as part of this intensified dialogue? What concrete steps has the United States taken and what specific reforms are you working on?**

Answer:

The Administration has made it clear to key host country governments that we are ready to explore how the United States can assist them in assuming responsibility for UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) services, or transitioning those services to other international or local non-governmental organizations as appropriate. We believe that UNRWA’s business model, which is tied to an endlessly and exponentially expanding community of beneficiaries, is unsustainable. Palestinians deserve better than a service provision model that operates in permanent crisis mode.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In August, the Administration announced it would cut off funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine – UNRWA, claiming that the UN body – which provides a lifeline and truly vital assistance – needs reform. Your spokeswoman pledged then: “The United States will intensify dialogue with the United Nations, host governments, and international stakeholders about new models and new approaches, which may include direct bilateral assistance from the United States and other partners, that can provide today’s Palestinian children with a more durable and dependable path towards a brighter tomorrow.” **Have any other countries signed on to any specific proposals the Administration has made?**

Answer:

We continue to consult with key host country governments on how the United States can assist them in assuming responsibility for UNRWA services, or transitioning those services to other international or local non-governmental organizations as appropriate. While we have yet to see an UNRWA host government take steps to start this transition, we believe that the unsustainability of UNRWA’s business model, which is tied to an endlessly and exponentially expanding community of beneficiaries, mandates a new approach.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In August, the Administration announced it would cut off funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine – UNRWA, claiming that the UN body – which provides a lifeline and truly vital assistance – needs reform. Your spokeswoman pledged then: “The United States will intensify dialogue with the United Nations, host governments, and international stakeholders about new models and new approaches, which may include direct bilateral assistance from the United States and other partners, that can provide today’s Palestinian children with a more durable and dependable path towards a brighter tomorrow.” **What specific reforms are you seeking to UNRWA? Has the Administration submitted any specific reforms to the UN? To UNRWA?**

Answer:

For years, the United States has urged UNRWA to seek out new voluntary funding streams, increase financial burden sharing among donors, and find ways to reduce expenditures. We reiterated this when we made our final \$60 million contribution to UNRWA in January 2018, and communicated the need to institute such reforms directly to UNRWA and the UN, as well as to the regional and international stakeholders who make up UNRWA’s largest contributors. While several donors did provide new or increased contributions to UNRWA in 2018, UNRWA continues to operate in crisis mode with its unsustainable business model.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#6)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Around the globe, LGBTI people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured, and even killed, just for being who they are. We've seen it in Chechnya, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and other places. While I was pleased to see your statement last year that the U.S. "opposes criminalization, violence and serious acts of discrimination" against LGBTI persons, the U.S. refused to join a recent statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council calling for the perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. **Why did the U.S. not join over 30 other nations in signing the recent joint statement to the U.N. Human Rights Council calling for a thorough investigation into the anti-LGBTI crimes being perpetrated in Chechnya?**

Answer:

The referenced statement was made during the 40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, from which the U.S. withdrew in June 2018. Consistent with our withdrawal, the U.S. is not participating in any UN Human Rights Council sessions, including by signing on to or aligning with any resolutions or statements pertaining to those sessions. We continue to work to advance human rights at the UN and in regional fora, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where we joined 16 countries in invoking the "Moscow Mechanism" against Russia for allegations of human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya, including against LGBTI persons. We continue to press Russia to bring those responsible to justice.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#7)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Around the globe, LGBTI people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured, and even killed, just for being who they are. We've seen it in Chechnya, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and other places. While I was pleased to see your statement last year that the U.S. "opposes criminalization, violence and serious acts of discrimination" against LGBTI persons, the U.S. refused to join a recent statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council calling for the perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. **Will you condemn the ongoing anti-LGBTI crimes happening in Chechnya and commit to helping LGBTI people in Chechnya, Egypt and other countries to ensure they are not targeted for abuse?**

Answer:

Under my leadership, the Department has been clear and consistent in affirming that human rights are universal, and that no one should face violence, criminalization, or discrimination in areas such as employment, housing, and provision of government services because of their LGBTI status. We will continue to stand up and speak out in support of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons in all corners of the globe, including in Chechnya and Egypt, and press to hold perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses to account.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#8)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Around the globe, LGBTI people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured and even killed, just for being who they are. We've seen it in Chechnya, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and other places. While I was pleased to see your statement last year that the U.S. "opposes criminalization, violence and serious acts of discrimination" against LGBTI persons, the U.S. refused to join a recent statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council calling for the perpetrators of violence in Chechnya to be held accountable. **Do you pledge to continue to support State Department programming aimed at meeting emergency needs of human rights defenders?**

Answer:

Absolutely. The Department continues to provide strong U.S. programmatic and emergency support for LGBTI human rights defenders and civil society organizations working to counter violence, severe discrimination, and criminalization of LGBTI conduct or status.

**Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#9)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

On March 18, the Secretary briefed members of the press including only faith-based media.
a. What criteria did the Department use to determine which outlets were allowed to participate? b. Was the State Department Press Corps barred from this briefing? c. Did your press office release the transcript? d. Why did you depart from the practice of releasing transcripts of all press briefings? e. Will you commit to releasing transcripts of all on-the-record briefings you conduct?

Answer:

The Department posts transcripts of press briefings. However, the March 18 event was not a press briefing. It was an interview with a select group of invited print journalists. The Department does not typically publish transcripts of interviews with print journalists. The Department remains committed to the principles of transparency and press freedom. We do our utmost to support the work of the journalists who cover the Department. Since I became Secretary of State, I have actively engaged with the media and supported increased access to me and other senior officials.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#10)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: “Iran must declare to the IAEA a full account of the prior military dimensions of its nuclear program and permanently and verifiably abandon such work”. **Has that happened? What steps are you taking to achieve that goal?**

Answer:

The Trump Administration is bringing unprecedented pressure on Iran to end its destabilizing conduct while denying Iran all pathways to a nuclear weapon. We will continue to impose maximum pressure on the Iranian regime until it changes its malign behavior and returns to the negotiating table to conclude a comprehensive deal. As I outlined last May, such a deal must include a declaration to the IAEA providing a full account of the prior military dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program. Iran must cooperate fully with the IAEA, including by providing unqualified access to any location requested by the IAEA.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#11)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: “Iran must stop enrichment and never pursue plutonium reprocessing.” **Has that happened? What steps have been taken?**

Answer:

The Trump Administration is bringing unprecedented pressure on Iran to end its destabilizing conduct while denying Iran all pathways to a nuclear weapon. We will continue to impose maximum pressure on the Iranian regime until it changes its malign behavior and returns to the negotiating table to conclude a comprehensive deal. As I outlined last May, such a deal must include stopping uranium enrichment and preventing plutonium reprocessing.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#12)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: “Iran must end its proliferation of ballistic missiles ...” **Has it? What steps have been taken?**

Answer:

The United States is using a variety of multilateral and unilateral tools to address Iran’s ballistic missile programs and proliferation activities. We routinely work with other governments to interdict missile-related transfers to or from Iran and to target Iranian missile proliferation activities in third countries. The United States uses participation in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC) to raise awareness of Iran’s missile development programs and press countries to take steps to impede Iran’s acquisition or proliferation of missile technology. We continue to use our sanctions authorities to penalize entities involved in Iranian missile-related procurement and proliferation.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#13)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: Iran must release all U.S. citizens.” **Have they?**

Answer:

The return of U.S. citizens wrongfully detained abroad remains a top priority for this Administration. Sadly, none of the U.S. citizens wrongfully detained or missing in Iran has yet been released. Our team, led by Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs Robert O’Brien, continues to work diligently on these cases to bring our citizens home. We also recently enlisted the support of the international community through the creation of a working group on wrongful detainees and hostages, which held its first meeting in February as part of the Warsaw ministerial.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#14)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: “Iran must end support to Middle East terrorist groups.” **Has it?**

Answer:

Iran remains the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism, providing nearly \$1 billion to designated terrorist organizations annually, including Hizballah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Kata’ib Hizballah in Iraq, and Al Ashtar Brigades in Bahrain. Iran also continues to directly engage in terrorist activity using state institutions including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). The regime’s support of terrorism intensified conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon, and supports attacks against Israel. This Administration has enacted the toughest sanctions ever imposed on the Iranian regime to deprive it of vital revenue to export terror around the world.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#15)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: “Iran must end its military support for the Houthi militia...in Yemen.” **Has Iran done that?**

Answer:

In Yemen, Iran continues to support the Houthis by providing military equipment, funding, and training. The Houthis use this equipment and assistance to attack vessels in vital Red Sea shipping lanes, launch ground attacks into Saudi territory, and fire ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia. We work in close coordination with the UN and the international community to hold countries, Iran included, accountable to arms embargo provisions of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2216, as well as to UNSCR 2231 to prevent the supply, sale, or transfer of arms from Iran. We continue to support comprehensive peace negotiations under the auspices of the UN and support the UN Special Envoy to Yemen’s efforts to restart talks among parties.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#16)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In May of last year, you presented what you called a New Iran Strategy, laying out 12 “very basic requirements” that included: “Iran must end its threatening behavior against its neighbors.”
Has that happened?

Answer:

The Iranian regime has taken advantage of regional conflicts and instability to aggressively expand its regional influence and threaten its neighbors. The Administration’s strategy of maximum pressure, including enactment of the most robust sanctions to date, is designed to neutralize and counter the threats Iran poses to its neighbors, particularly Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Our sanctions are draining Iran’s proxies of sufficient revenue to spread terror and militancy. In March, for example, Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizballah, publicly appealed for donations for the first time ever.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#17)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

There is compelling evidence that the Burmese military committed ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Rohingya, Muslim minority population in Burma. Last year, the United Nations appointed Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar called for an investigation and prosecution of Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Last year, Congress appropriated \$1.5 million dollars for the State Department to conduct an evidence documentation report to make a legal determination on what crimes took place. **But the State Department released the report without a legal determination, and press reports indicate that you decided not to pursue a legal determination even though one was recommended to you by the Department. Why did you ignore the recommendations of your own department and not pursue a legal determination?**

Answer:

I am deeply concerned about the Burmese military's extensive, horrific human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya. To establish a comprehensive understanding of the human rights abuses committed in Rakhine State, the Department supported a large-scale documentation project in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The report clarified the extent and severity of the abuses, and the underlying information and findings will help inform our decisions as we seek accountability in Burma. Determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide, crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing, are not made in all cases in which such acts may have been committed; they depend on our assessment of the facts and consequences of such determinations in each context.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#18)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last year, Congress appropriated \$1.5 million dollars for the State Department to conduct an evidence documentation report to make a legal determination on what crimes took place. But the State Department released the report without a legal determination, and press reports indicate that you decided not to pursue a legal determination even though one was recommended to you by the Department. **We know that the gross human rights violations were committed in 2017 by members of the Burmese military when the Rohingya were raped, tortured, burned, and killed. So I ask you a simple question: yes or no, do you believe that the crimes committed were crimes against humanity? Do you think that there is evidence pointing to the possibility these crimes meet the legal standard of genocide?**

Answer:

I am deeply concerned about the Burmese military's extensive, horrific human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya and the need for accountability. To establish a comprehensive understanding of the human rights abuses committed in Rakhine State, the Department supported a large-scale documentation project in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The report clarified the extent and severity of the abuses, and the underlying information and findings will help inform our decisions as we seek accountability in Burma. Determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide, crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing, are not made in all cases in which such acts may have been committed; they depend on our assessment of the facts and consequences of such determinations in each context.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#19)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last year, Congress appropriated \$1.5 million dollars for the State Department to conduct an evidence documentation report to make a legal determination on what crimes took place. But the State Department released the report without a legal determination, and press reports indicate that you decided not to pursue a legal determination even though one was recommended to you by the Department. Ethnic cleansing is not a term that is found in any U.S. national law or international law. Former Secretary Tillerson also called it “crimes against humanity” on November 15, 2017 in a press conference with Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma. **Does the Department stand by Secretary Tillerson’s words today?**

Answer:

I am deeply concerned about the Burmese military’s extensive, horrific human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya. Determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide, crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing, are not made in all cases in which such acts may have been committed; they depend on our assessment of the facts and consequences of such determinations in each context.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative David Cicilline (#20)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last year, Congress appropriated \$1.5 million dollars for the State Department to conduct an evidence documentation report to make a legal determination on what crimes took place. But the State Department released the report without a legal determination, and press reports indicate that you decided not to pursue a legal determination even though one was recommended to you by the Department. A crimes against humanity determination is important under human rights law and international law it could support accountability and help convict and seek justice against those who committed such crime. The world looks to the United States to be a leader on human rights leader – when we act others follow. A crimes against humanity or genocide determination could galvanize the international community and build support for holding senior military officials accountable – whether it be through sanctions or international justice mechanisms. **If the U.S. doesn't show leadership on this issue, what signal does this send to the rest of the world?**

Answer:

The United States has been the largest single donor to address the humanitarian crisis stemming from northern Rakhine State; our humanitarian assistance has exceeded \$494 million. The State Department supported a large-scale documentation project in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to establish a comprehensive understanding of the human rights abuses committed in Rakhine State, Burma. The report made clear the extent and severity of the abuses that were committed, and the underlying information and findings assist in informing the decisions that I and my team make as the U.S. government continues to seek to advance accountability in Burma.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019

Question:

I remain concerned over the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the possibility of a broader pandemic reaching our shores. The State Department plays an important role in responding both to the current Ebola outbreak and a possible pandemic. **In the event of a health emergency or high consequence biological event, what are the specific criteria and plan to deploy U.S. personnel? How will the State Department work with other parts of the U.S. government to facilitate the deployment of these personnel? If you cannot share those details in great specificity, do such criteria and plan exist and what office at the State Department is responsible for its origination and update?**

Answer:

Immediately following confirmation of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in August 2018, the U.S. government provided technical assistance and other support for DRC-led response efforts, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization. Every decision regarding the deployment of USG personnel during health emergencies is made on a case-by-case basis and in coordination with the interagency and Chiefs of Mission, who have authority over the personnel deployed in-country. The security of these personnel is a critical component of this decision-making process, along with the scope of the health emergency, ability to affect its trajectory, and political and economic conditions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How are Chiefs of Mission engaged in Global Health Security? Do missions and embassies have protocols in place to respond and deal with naturally occurring pandemics and deliberate events?

Answer:

Chiefs of Mission use a broad array of diplomatic tools to engage on global health security, including direct bilateral engagement with host country officials, messaging through the media, and outreach to relevant civil society and private sector actors. The Global Health Security Agenda is a key mechanism through which Chiefs of Mission promote their host- nation's capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease. Each mission or embassy has in place an Emergency Action Plan with detailed protocols for response to naturally occurring or deliberate events.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

I remain concerned over the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the possibility of a broader pandemic reaching our shores. The State Department plays an important role in responding both to the current Ebola outbreak and a possible pandemic. **What are the implications for health security of vaccine development for addressing other threats from other emerging infectious diseases – be they on the DHS Material Threats list or the World Health Organization’s Priority Pathogen’s list? Should developing vaccines for other emerging diseases like Nipah, MERS, or Lassa Fever be a high priority for the United States and other countries? Are the right efforts in place and making progress toward development of vaccines for these emerging threats – be it U.S. Government work directly or in partnership with other countries?**

Answer:

In today’s globally connected world, outbreaks of infectious disease have the potential to kill millions, cost billions of dollars in GDP, and greatly disrupt travel and trade. The U.S. National Biodefense Strategy (NBS) outlines a comprehensive approach to address natural, accidental, and intentional biological threats. A key pillar of the NBS is to accelerate research and development of vaccines. Vaccines are one of the most cost-effective public health interventions and are a foundation of a well-functioning health system. The U.S. government, including the Department of State, supports the development and implementation of international processes to facilitate the development, production, and distribution of vaccines and therapeutics.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

**What is the current status of these CDC positions created through the NSDD 38 process?
Does the State Department have a plan to sustain these positions, even if they may be
unfilled, to ensure the United States can respond to future high consequence health events?
How does the State Department coordinate with CDC and HHS to fill these positions?**

Answer:

The Department of State coordinates closely with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on issues related to global health security, including the Global Health Security Agenda, to ensure the best possible preparedness for any high consequence health event. This requires aligning resources with shifting needs and priorities. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and HHS are best positioned to discuss the details of these staffing decisions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The State Department stated it would complete a second review of the Mexico City Policy, also known as the global gag rule, by the end of 2018, yet we are still waiting on that report. Your first report admitted you did not have enough data to properly evaluate the impacts of the administration's initial expansion of the policy. Last week, you announced a further expansion of the policy. Recent research from civil society groups indicates the current global gag rule is disrupting health care services, weakening civil society, and halting national policy progress on health and human rights. **How are you evaluating the impact of the global gag rule on service delivery?**

Answer:

We have worked closely with our interagency partners to implement the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy, examine progress in carrying it out, and monitor its effects. The six-month review released in February 2018 called for further analysis when more experience would enable a more thorough examination. The Department of State is working with USAID and interagency partners to complete that review. The United States is a leader in assistance for global health, including in its monitoring, evaluation, and use of data for learning. I will continue to support robust efforts to review and evaluate U.S. foreign assistance programming.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#6)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The State Department stated they would complete a second review of the Mexico City Policy, also known as the global gag rule, by the end of 2018, yet we are still waiting on that report. Your first report admitted you did not have enough data to properly evaluate the impacts of the administration's initial expansion of the policy. Last week, you announced a further expansion of the policy. Recent research from civil society groups indicates the current global gag rule is disrupting health care services, weakening civil society, and halting national policy progress on health and human rights. **What process are you putting in place to regularly review service disruptions due to the policy and review any requests for exemptions?**

Answer:

Both the Department of State and USAID have robust systems in place for monitoring and evaluating their respective programs. In the six-month review of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) policy, we found that less than one percent of prime partners had declined to agree to the PLGHA term in their awards. In those rare instances, State and USAID have worked to minimize any potential changes in services. The Mexico City Policy does not change overall funding levels, nor does the Secretary's recent announcement. In consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, I may authorize case-by-case exemptions to the PLGHA policy, and I stand ready to consider requests for exemptions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#7)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The State Department stated they would complete a second review of the Mexico City Policy, also known as the global gag rule, by the end of 2018, yet we are still waiting on that report. Your first report admitted you did not have enough data to properly evaluate the impacts of the administration's initial expansion of the policy. Last week, you announced a further expansion of the policy. Recent research from civil society groups indicates the current global gag rule is disrupting health care services, weakening civil society, and halting national policy progress on health and human rights. **What criteria will you use to determine any potential exemptions?**

Answer:

In determining whether an exemption is necessary, factors may include, but are not limited to: the existence of a public health emergency that impacts global health assistance; the possibility of extreme and irreversible service disruption if the exemption were not granted; whether there are other partners qualified to execute the program; or, other extenuating circumstances that warrant granting an exemption.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#8)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Last November, you announced the creation of the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council. You stated, “the purpose of the Council is to coordinate U.S. government efforts in order to achieve seamless, efficient, and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance overseas in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives, including promoting burden-sharing and UN humanitarian reform.” **What specific authorities have been delegated to the Council? What additional reforms, or tasks, is it currently undertaking?**

Answer:

I established the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council (HASC) to improve the coordination among U.S. humanitarian agencies. There have been no changes to existing delegations of authorities; however, the Council has a clear mandate to implement co-budgeting and co-planning, oversee U.S. humanitarian policy initiatives to promote burden sharing and UN humanitarian reform, and coordinate and oversee U.S. humanitarian assistance in support of U.S. foreign policy goals. The creation of the HASC alone cannot optimize humanitarian assistance, and that is why the FY 2020 President’s Budget proposal goes further and addresses the necessary structural changes.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#9)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please elaborate on the role and authorities of the “new dual-hat leadership structure to oversee humanitarian assistance under the authority of the Secretary of State” that is proposed in the 2020 CBJ. **Would this be a new position or delegated to an existing position? What would this oversight role entail, and how would it correspond to the existing designation of the USAID Administrator as the President’s “Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance?”**

Answer:

The current U.S. Government overseas assistance structure is outdated and fragmented. To deliver on the President’s commitment to optimize the effectiveness of the U.S. Government’s overseas humanitarian assistance, the FY 2020 Budget proposes to maximize the impact of taxpayer dollars, help more beneficiaries, and deliver the greatest outcomes to them by creating a new senior-level dual-hat leadership structure and consolidating all overseas humanitarian programming in the new Bureau at USAID while retaining State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration’s lead role on protection issues as well as the U.S. refugee-admissions program. The dual-hat would engage and coordinate diplomatic efforts across State to resolve conflicts in areas with major humanitarian crises and increase global burden-sharing.

The senior dual-hat State and USAID leadership structure, under the authority of the Secretary of State, would elevate humanitarian assistance within the U.S. government to address more effectively the continuum of humanitarian response from relief to conflict resolution and to the eventual transition from aid. No changes are anticipated to the existing designation of the USAID Administrator as the President’s Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ami Bera (#10)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the current status of synchronizing the State Department and Commerce Department's watch lists? When should Congress expect the complete synchronization of this data?

Answer:

The Department of State is in the process of modernizing its IT infrastructure to provide the Department of Commerce access to the information contained in State's internal watch list, which is used to screen parties on all license applications, including firearms, artillery, and ammunition exports. The Department does not have an exact timeline for the debut of this new program, due to the high volume of archived data requiring manual review for operational sensitivities, as well as the complexity of upgrading a system designed for internal use only. However, the Department will keep you apprised of its progress.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In your March 28 appearance at the National Review Institute's 2019 Ideas Summit, you were asked about U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. You said, "Factually, frankly, the American role there has reduced civilian casualties there inordinately. I can – I think it's declassified. I can show you the statistics. Since America's begun to assist the Saudis in their campaign, the ratio of civilian casualties to effectiveness has decreased dramatically, and that's important. And so it's been a good thing that we've helped them." **What specific activities are you referring to as our assistance to the Saudis that decreased the ratio of civilian casualties to effectiveness, and when did those activities begin?**

Answer:

While we believe that only a political solution will resolve the conflict and ease the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, we have worked with the Coalition to improve its targeting procedures by providing training seminars on best practices, including on the Law of Armed Conflict, and advisory efforts in Saudi Arabia's Combined Fusion Cell. The Administration continues to support the efforts of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to bring the Houthis and Republic of Yemen government to the table for negotiations to end the conflict.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In reference to your March 28 comments at the 2019 Ideas Summit, will you provide to my office the statistics you discussed on U.S. assistance to the Saudis? If so, who can I follow up with to obtain that information?

Answer:

The Administration works with Saudi Arabia to improve its civilian casualty mitigation efforts, and we have seen progress on this front. Data collected by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project shows a steady decline in Coalition-caused civilian casualties since fall 2018. During this timeframe, we have worked with the Coalition to improve its targeting procedures, including providing training seminars on best practices for mitigating harm to civilians and the Law of Armed Conflict. For additional information, I refer you to the Department of Defense.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In March 2019, an airstrike hit a Save the Children-supported hospital in northwest Yemen and killed seven people. According to Save the Children, this was a de-conflicted site and should never have been attacked. **Has the U.S. Government asked the Saudis or Emiratis for information regarding the strike, and does the administration believe an independent investigation is necessary for the strike?**

Answer:

Following news reports of the strike, Embassy Riyadh and the Yemen Affairs Unit contacted Saudi officials to request additional information about the strike on a gas station near the hospital, and they continue to investigate this incident. We are urging the Saudis, who have been receptive to our inquiries, to release the findings as soon as possible, and will continue to work with the Coalition to help them to find ways to minimize risk to civilians.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

In November 2018, the administration announced an end to U.S. refueling assistance provided to Saudi-led coalition aircraft conducting operations in Yemen. **Has refueling assistance resumed since the 2018 announcement?**

Answer:

As of November 11, 2018, the United States ceased refueling support to the Saudi-led Coalition counter-Houthi operations in Yemen and refueling has not resumed.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Please describe all forms of assistance the U.S. is still providing to the Saudi-led coalition conducting missions in Yemen.

Answer:

The United States provides Saudi Arabia defense articles and services; certain intelligence support, and military advice, including on compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict and best practices to reduce the risk of civilian casualties. Foreign Military Sales, Direct Commercial Sales, and provision of limited advice and intelligence to the Coalition help us counter common threats and protect Americans living in Saudi Arabia and UAE, international shipping in the Bab al-Mandab strait, and our partners in the region. The Administration works with the Coalition through the Quad format to support UN-led efforts to bring the Houthis and Republic of Yemen government together for negotiations to end the conflict.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#6)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The Committee has been informed of an ongoing interagency investigation into the disappearance of Saudi nationals facing trial in the United States, possibly circumventing the U.S. justice system. **Is the State Department involved in that investigation?**

Answer:

The Department of State has engaged with our interagency partners to ensure we are sharing information and working together to respond to Congressional inquiries surrounding the absconding of Saudi citizens with pending criminal charges in the United States.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#7)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Have State Department officials raised the issue of Saudi nationals fleeing the U.S. justice system directly with the Saudi government? If so, at what level has it been raised?

Answer:

Yes, the Department of State has raised these cases with senior leadership of the Saudi cabinet, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as with senior leadership of the Saudi Embassy in Washington, DC.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (#8)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Does the State Department have any evidence or reason to believe that Saudi diplomats in the United States knowingly helped Saudi nationals flee the United States to avoid legal proceedings?

Answer:

The Department of State does not currently possess any credible information that Saudi diplomats knowingly helped Saudi nationals abscond from legal proceedings in U.S. courts.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Congressman Ted Lieu (#9)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Given that the United States does not have an extradition treaty with Saudi Arabia, what options is the State Department pursuing to pursue the return of the accused individuals?

Answer:

The State Department has raised these cases – including the case of Abdulrahman Sameer Noorah – with senior members of the Saudi Government in both Washington and Riyadh. We have underscored the importance of justice for the families affected and made clear our commitment to the rule of law.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (# 10)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

According to State Department documents contained in a soon-to-be-released Senate Foreign Relations Committee Democratic staff report, it appears that the Department's public justification for cancelling the Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award to Jessikka Aro is not true. The Department claims it made a "regrettable error" and that Aro had never been a finalist. But according to State Department documents and communications, Ms. Aro was a finalist and the reward was rescinded at the last minute and given to someone else. According to public reporting, sources within the Department assert the award was rescinded after the Department discovered social media posts Ms. Aro made that were critical of President Trump's attacks on the media and the rule of law. **Can you confirm that Ms. Aro's social media postings, some of which were critical of President Trump's statements, had nothing to do with the Department not giving her the award?**

Answer:

A number of errors were made in the nomination and approval process of Ms. Jessikka Aro. Ms. Aro was chosen as a finalist, but she should not have been considered for approval before the Department completed the research needed to vet candidates. Ms. Aro should not have been notified that she was an awardee in the absence of a comprehensive review, which is a prerequisite for the nomination process. We commit to improving the process moving forward.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Ted Lieu (# 11)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

The decision for who does and does not receive the International Women of Courage Award is made by the Secretary of State. I understand that your office initially approved of giving the award to Ms. Aro, but then subsequently reversed the decision. **Can you please explain to the Committee why you rescinded the award to Ms. Aro?**

Answer:

A number of errors were made in the nomination and approval process of Ms. Jessikka Aro. Ms. Aro was chosen as a finalist, but she should not have been considered for approval before the Department completed the research needed to vet candidates. Ms. Aro should not have been notified that she was an awardee in the absence of a comprehensive review, which is a prerequisite for the nomination process. We commit to improving the process moving forward.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Colin Allred (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2109**

Question:

Has the Taliban agreed to publicly renounce Al-Qaeda? Why do you and Mr. Khalilzad believe the Taliban can be trusted to keep any promises to renounce their relationship with Al-Qaeda? If you have evidence that the Taliban will renounce this relationship, will you share it with this committee? Do you agree that Al-Qaeda and ISIS are present and training in Taliban-controlled territory?

Answer:

The United States is seeking a negotiated settlement to the war in Afghanistan that ensures Afghan soil is never again used by international terrorists to launch attacks against the United States, its allies, or any other country. Throughout any peace process, we must calibrate our own actions and judge the Taliban not on what they say, but on what they do to ensure that terrorists cannot threaten the United States from Afghan territory. Because al-Qaeda remains in the region, the Taliban would have to send a strong and clear message that they would not be allowed to operate from Afghan soil. The Taliban and ISIS-Khorasan are currently fighting one another.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Colin Allred (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2109**

Question:

Previous U.S. policy required the Taliban to accept the current Afghan constitution, including its provisions protecting women's rights. **Has this condition been dropped? Has the Taliban promised to include this condition in any peace reconciliation? Can you guarantee the U.S. will require it as a necessary part of any peace reconciliation?**

Answer:

The Department continues to emphasize the importance of an inclusive Afghan national negotiating team, including the Afghan government, to participate in an intra-Afghan dialogue. Women will participate in the intra-Afghan conference in Doha in April, marking an important first step in this process that will bring the Taliban face-to-face with Afghan men and women who have made it clear that peace and reconciliation will not come at the cost of their hard-fought rights. A process that includes women and truly represents Afghan society will add legitimacy, increase public confidence, and help Afghans secure the gains their society has made since 2001.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Chrissy Houlahan (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What steps is the Department taking to comply with the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 in the Afghanistan reconciliation negotiations? How is the Administration ensuring that Afghan women are represented in those talks and follow-on talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban?

Answer:

The Department remains committed to advancing the goals of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017. The meaningful participation of women in peace processes results in accords that are less likely to fail, and we will continue to encourage women's participation in national and local peace efforts in Afghanistan. To this end, the Department continues to emphasize the importance of an inclusive Afghan national negotiating team, including the Afghan government, to participate in an intra-Afghan dialogue. Women will participate in the intra-Afghan conference in Doha in April, marking an important first step in this process.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Chrissy Houlahan (#2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

What is the State Department doing to boost international cyber-enforcement capacity, which is needed to keep pace with increasing cyber threats?

Answer:

Building international cyber capacity is a key priority for the Administration, as articulated in the Department's 2018 report to the President on *Protecting American Cyber Interests through International Engagement*. To address the growing threats and challenges in cyberspace, the Department leverages diplomatic engagements and foreign assistance funds to enhance the capabilities of international partners to organize national efforts on cybersecurity and related law enforcement efforts to combat cybercrime and counter terrorism. Through U.S. efforts to assist partner nations to develop policies and practices and modernize laws, we promote a common vision of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Chrissy Houlahan (#3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How is the Department measuring the effectiveness of its (cyber) capacity-building efforts?

Answer:

The Department is committed to using design, monitoring, evaluation, and data analysis best practices to achieve the most effective U.S. foreign policy outcomes and provide greater accountability to our primary stakeholders, the American people. The Department collects annual performance information to monitor progress against strategic objectives. We also coordinate closely with the U.S. interagency to ensure our capacity building efforts effectively achieve the strategic objectives as reflected in the *U.S. National Cyber Strategy*.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Chrissy Houlahan (#4)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

How is the U.S. working with other countries to increase international cooperation on cybersecurity issues?

Answer:

Given the interconnected nature of cyberspace, international cooperation is fundamental to our diplomatic engagements on cyber issues, as articulated in the Department's 2018 report to the President on *Protecting American Cyber Interests through International Engagement*. The Department works closely with the U.S. interagency, likeminded foreign government partners as well as regional and global multi-stakeholder and multilateral organizations to increase international cooperation by sharing information and best practices, leveraging resources, and shaping the global agenda in platforms such as the Global Forum for Cyber Expertise on a range of cybersecurity issues.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Michael Pompeo by
Representative Chrissy Houlahan (#5)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
March 27, 2019**

Question:

Over the past few years, we have seen a ransomware cyberattack, known as WannaCry, cripple companies and systems around the world. That attack, like the attack against Sony Pictures and the attack on the Bangladesh Bank through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, was carried out by state-sponsored hackers in North Korea. This month, a United Nations panel of experts issued a report to the Security Council documenting North Korea's continued use of cybercrime as a tool to make up for the financial losses the country faces due to sanctions. **While the Administration is negotiating with the North Koreans over the fate of the country's nuclear weapons program, what steps are you taking to hold the North Koreans accountable for these cyberattacks?**

Answer:

North Korean cyber-attacks and other malicious cyber activities pose a risk to critical infrastructure in countries around the world and to the global economy and are a source of revenue for its illicit WMD programs. The Department of State is working closely with the interagency and our allies and partners to counter these DPRK cyber operations with all available diplomatic, economic, legal, network defense, and other tools.