

**STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED
PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2023**

HEARINGS

BEFORE A

**SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H.R. 8282/S. 4662

AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS FOR THE FISCAL
YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

**U.S. Department of State
United States Agency for International Development**

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CONTENTS

HEARINGS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2022

	Page
U.S. Department of State	1

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022

United States Agency for International Development	39
--	----

BACK MATTER

List of Witnesses, Communications, and Prepared Statements	81
Subject Index:	
U.S. Department of State	83
United States Agency for International Development	83

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 2:35 p.m., in room SD-192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher A. Coons, (Chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Coons, Leahy, Durbin, Van Hollen, Graham, Moran, and Hagerty.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Senator COONS. I call this hearing of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, the Senate Appropriations Committee to order. We have one witness today, the Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken.

It is great to have you here, Mr. Secretary. We have a lot to cover, so I will be relatively brief.

We have, many of us, just come from a moving, and a powerful service in memory of a former Secretary Madeleine Albright. An extraordinary person who lived a remarkable life and career, and whose impact on the Department, on the Senate, on our Nation, on the world rooted in her commitment to democracy, to advancing the role of women was profound.

I intend to propose naming a portion of the Fulbright Fellows for her, as we did for one of her predecessors for whom she also worked, former Senator and secretary, Edmund Muskie. The National Democratic Institute where she long served as Board Chair is naming their Annual Democracy Award for Secretary Albright.

And Mr. Secretary, we very much look forward to suggestions from you as to how the State Department may want to also honor her service, especially as a defender of democratic principles, and someone who advanced the role of women leaders around the world.

I have just returned from a number of Nations, including Georgia where the President, in particular, cited the mentorship and the example of Secretary Albright.

No Secretary of State has an easy job, but yours, in particular at this moment in our modern history, is exceptionally demanding.

And you have done exceptionally well at it. We are grateful both for the way in which you have represented us in the world, and for your recent trip to Kyiv which we look forward to hearing about, but also for your responsiveness to the committees of the Senate. You have testified frequently, at great length, and been very accessible.

And so I wanted to thank you both for your service more broadly, leading the State Department, and representing us in the world, but also for your engagement with this Committee.

We face a number of challenges, more than I need to take the time to recite in detail. Russia's unprovoked, unjustified, and brutal invasion of Ukraine, with regional and global security implications that we need to confront, and will be felt for decades.

A global food security crisis greatly exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, now threatening hundreds of millions with food insecurity, a global pandemic that has infected half a billion, killed a million Americans, caused immense economic damage, and that continues to pose threats to all of us as new variants may emerge, climate change which continues to accelerate and threatens the entire world.

Iran and North Korea, both, whose non-proliferation, whose efforts at nuclear proliferation threaten their regions; China which continues to be a peer competitor, and expands its influence around the world in ways we need to confront; and a growing clash between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism, to say nothing of a record refugee crisis, and ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Libya.

On the positive side, Mr. Secretary, you and the President have rallied a NATO in defense of Ukraine, its people, and its sovereignty. This administration is embracing our alliances and building coalitions, not embracing isolationism. You have shown the world that, as Secretary Albright so often said, we are the indispensable Nation, and the critical role that we can and must play.

We have provided hundreds of millions of U.S.-manufactured COVID vaccine doses which, unlike those provided by Russia and China, are effective against all the variants. You have reaffirmed, and the role that the United States must play in advancing democracy and human rights around the world, and shown strong leadership on tackling climate through a variety of means, including the Development Finance Corporation.

You are tackling global challenges, like economic instability, and violent conflict with new tools, like the Global Fragility Act, and you are addressing deeply rooted staffing and diversity challenges at the State Department with new resources provided by Congress.

We here in this Committee have worked hard to find a bipartisan path forward and to support and promote our national security diplomacy interests.

I am thankful for my Ranking Member, Senator Graham, who has been a good partner over a number of Congresses to myself, and to the former chairman of the subcommittee, and the chairman of the full Committee. Yet we have genuinely struggled to get either the allocation that this subcommittee deserves, or to fully meet the objectives that this subcommittee has taken on.

We faced huge challenges last year with an allocation of \$4 billion below the budget request, and we were able to soften that impact, really, only by rescinding \$2 billion from the Afghanistan account. An option we will not have again this year.

We have done nothing to address our UN arrears, we have not done enough to face the growing food security, and refugee crisis, and we have a great deal of work to do together. So as our NATO partners have, we need to demonstrate that we can pull together and work together in the way this subcommittee traditionally has.

We look forward to hearing from you, Mr. Secretary, how you see this year unfolding, what your highest appropriations' priorities are, and how we can work together to achieve our Nation's goals. Senator Graham.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome. You are a very hard worker, and I enjoy working with you where we can, and we have our differences.

This subcommittee has had a good track record of trying to put money into programs that produce value for the American people, and make the world a safer place. The World Food Program is under siege so there is a lot of talk in the building about another supplemental. Count me in. I am willing to look at Ukraine in terms of what their needs are.

So you are just going to have to come to reality here, that as the world changes this subcommittee has a role to play when it comes to the State Department. I want to thank those under your command.

Mr. Secretary, you know, I have spent a lot of time in the military, a lot of us go to war-torn regions, but it is the diplomat, the foreign service officer, the USAID worker, they are in harm's way just as much as anybody. And the work they do on behalf of stability can sometimes create a peaceful world, better than dropping a bomb. And I think the military agrees with that. So the military is a big fan of this account, because without developmental assistance in showing up you are going to lose ground.

I just got back from Japan, Taiwan, and Australia. They want to do more. There is a backlash brewing against China's misadventures. One of my colleagues, I think, had a discussion with you yesterday about: What is the big deal about Ukraine, it used to be part of the Soviet Union?

I think we can find common ground here that that Putin has no legitimate claim on Ukraine, it is a sovereign nation. Back in the '90s they did the Budapest Memo, where Russia, the United States, and Great Britain guaranteed the sovereignty of Ukraine if they would turn their nukes over to Russia. That agreement has been stepped upon.

I think most of us here believe that Putin wants to recreate the Old Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, Ukraine is just a warm-up act, Moldova; he will go until somebody stops him.

So this is not about a buffer zone between Russia and NATO, it is about a man with an ambition that I think is going to destroy his country, and has killed thousands of innocent people. And I ap-

preciate the flow of weapons. It has been on the increase. I hope we can do more, and I think we should do more.

But I want you to understand, Mr. Secretary, most Republicans do not see Putin's endeavors as any way legitimate, and that we all understand, if we don't stop him in Ukraine he will keep going.

Now, when it comes to China, Japan is going to increase their military spending, the Solomon Islands, I haven't heard about that much since World War II, China is in play there. Appreciate you sending some diplomatic presence there. Developmental Finance Corporation is a brilliant idea, I think. It is now time to have a DFC component for Asia to compete with the Belt, Road Initiative by China. And I would like to work with the Chairman and the Secretary in beefing up our developmental aid presence in Asia to combat China.

Afghanistan is heartbreaking. We will talk about all of that. It seems to be that the Iranians are making a demand on the administration to change the designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, no longer to be a foreign terrorist organization. I hope you resist that demand, and we will have a discussion about that.

But Putin gave a speech today to the Duma. He said he vows to accomplish the goals of the invasion. He will not be deterred.

So as we meet in Ramstein where Defense Ministers of NATO, and the "coalition of the willing" talk about providing more aid to Ukraine; Putin is basically telling his people, through the Duma that he is committed to see this through.

My commitment is this will be the end of Putin one way or the other. That when this is over the Russian people will see they have no future under his leadership, that we keep the sanctions on, that we increase sanctions at every turn, we provide the brave Ukrainians the ability to fight back and that, over time, the world isolate Putin.

I met with the International Criminal Court Prosecutor, Mr. Khan, yesterday, I think he has a good plan for those who are committing war crimes in Ukraine wearing Russian uniforms. So to Putin, you are committed to the invasion. We are committed to Ukraine's freedom. We are going to win, and you are going to lose. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you Senator Graham. Chairman Leahy.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY

Senator LEAHY. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am listening to the travel—I have been watching, and I have talked with Secretary Blinken again this morning about the amount of traveling he has done for us. And I must tell you, I worried greatly when you and Secretary Austin were going into Ukraine, because they announced it ahead of time.

I suspect that was not the way you would like to have done it. But I am glad you went, and I am glad you got back safely. Senator Coons and Senator Graham have been traveling quite a bit lately. I went to Vermont, but I am going to be doing some of those trips later this year.

I missed chairing this subcommittee, but I would note, Mr. Chairman, that over the years there are different chairs, myself,

Senator Graham, Senator McConnell and I chaired this Committee. We got things done, always in a unified fashion, and I can think of no one more qualified, or better suited for the job than Senator Coons.

And I am delighted that he is here. He cares passionately about it, not only in public, but in private he talks about these issues, and scurrying for diplomacy. I think the budget in this and the budget in the Department of State are extremely important in what we do in our non-military. I mean the military is obviously important, but we do in the non-military.

I know that in some of our issues of foreign aid, I remember former Secretary Mattis said, if you want to cut these programs, foreign aid, and other things. And the State Department would say, if you want to cut those programs, buy more bullets because he is going to need them. And I agree.

But the role you play with President Biden and Secretary Austin in marshalling the NATO countries, and all, to stand up united against Russia's unprovoked aggression, brutality in Ukraine, that is so important. And I know we spoke briefly, prior to leaving the funeral today, about how we have to stand up, and the fact that you were able to bring our NATO allies together. Sometimes they can be a disparate group, but they came together and this that is extremely important, and it shows a critical need for our country's leadership in NATO.

I think if it was just a couple years ago, I don't think it would have happened that way, and here we are facing the greatest challenge to democracy since the '40s.

Now, we are going to have another hearing on the global COVID and food security crisis. The pandemic continues to spread, it is mutating in scores of countries, the food security crisis has been greatly exacerbated by the skyrocketing commodity prices due to the war in Ukraine. COVID is important worldwide, because there is no place having a covert outbreak that is more than an airplane trip away from our shores.

And we know that 161 million people are facing starvation, another 227 million are facing acute food insecurity. We are the wealthiest, most powerful nation on earth; we have to step in on that. So I hope, Mr. Secretary, you can get the White House to ask for additional supplemental funds to address these global humanitarian emergencies. They have far-reaching economic security.

I have got to step outside for a phone call, but I am going to be coming right back in to hear this.

And Mr. Chairman I am so glad you are doing this.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Chairman Leahy. And thank you for your very long, and very effective, and very engaged stewardship of this subcommittee over three decades. You have steered this subcommittee ably through some really hard budget times, political times, global environments, and I cannot possibly hope to succeed in living up to the record that you have established, of focus and excellence in delivering on our role in the world.

Given the challenges we face, Mr. Secretary, if you can give us a broad overview, both of your insights from your trip to Kyiv, and

the challenges facing the State Department, and your priorities for appropriations this year, we would be grateful.

STATEMENT OF HON. ANTHONY BLINKEN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very, very much, to you, to Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Graham. I am grateful for this opportunity to talk about the administration's proposed budget for the State Department.

Let me just start by saying that later today we will welcome back to the United States Trevor Reed, who was wrongfully detained in Russia. We are deeply grateful to our allies and partners who helped in this effort to bring him home. And I especially want to thank Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, Ambassador Roger Carstens, known well to all of you; Ambassador John Sullivan in Moscow, and others in our Government, including in this Congress, who worked relentlessly to bring Trevor home, and who continue to press for the release of Paul Whelan, and other U.S. citizens wrongfully detained abroad.

As you have noticed, several of us just came from the ceremony honoring Madeleine Albright. And just to take a moment to honor her extraordinary service.

She was a friend to me, a mentor to me, someone I sought counsel in. She had, I think as you all know, an incredible clarity of voice, a voice that I think we can all still hear, and an ability to really get to the essence of things. Few diplomats have so clearly embodied the ideals for which our country stands, or done more to project them around the world.

We mourn her passing, which is softened only by knowing that her example is going to continue to guide our Department and our foreign policy for years to come. I look forward to finding ways to honor her in the Department.

And Chairman Leahy left the room but I did want to say to him that this may be the last time that I have the privilege of speaking on a budget request before a Committee that that he leads, and let me just simply join in the chorus of people thanking Chairman Leahy for his extraordinary service, not just for the service, but for the way that he has served and continues to serve.

Always championing the vital importance of investing in diplomacy and development, always insisting that human rights be at the heart of our foreign policy including, of course, by authoring a law requiring our government to withhold support for foreign security forces that commit gross human rights violations. And always being a partner to Secretaries of State eight administrations. The Department will always appreciate Chairman Leahy's support for our people, and for the work they do around the world.

I read about a surprise tribute that Chairman Leahy received last week in Vermont's General Assembly. I was struck by something that he said, and I quote, "I think Vermont is a place where you can develop your conscience. I think of the Senate as a place that should be the conscience of the Nation, and sometimes is."

So I would say for a long time, Senator Leahy has, in fact, been the conscience of this institution, when I served here I certainly felt that very strongly. Our Nation and the world are better for it.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Graham, I have a statement that goes to the budget proposal, it goes to our modernization agenda, but in the interest of time, I am happy to submit it for the record so that we can get to a conversation, and to questions.

[The statements follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ANTONY BLINKEN

Chairman Leahy, Chairman Coons, and Ranking Member Graham, I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak with you about the Administration's proposed budget for the State Department.

I just returned from Kyiv, where Secretary of Defense Austin and I demonstrated the United States' stalwart commitment to the government and people of Ukraine.

Moscow's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has brought into sharp focus the power and purpose of American diplomacy, and why it's more crucial than ever to our national security and the interests of the American people. Our diplomacy is rallying allies and partners around the world to join us in supporting Ukraine with security, economic, and humanitarian assistance, imposing greater costs on the Kremlin, strengthening our collective security and defense, and addressing the war's mounting global consequences, including the refugee and food crises.

President Putin's war of choice has achieved the exact opposite of his objectives. Uniting, rather than dividing, Ukrainians. Strengthening, rather than weakening, NATO and the U.S.-EU partnership. Undercutting, rather than asserting, the Kremlin's claims of military might. And that's not only because of Ukraine's bravery and resilience. It's also because of effective U.S. diplomacy.

We must continue to drive that diplomacy forward to seize the strategic opportunities and address risks presented by Russia's overreach, as countries reconsider their policies, priorities, and relationships. The budget request before you predated this crisis, but fully funding it is critical to ensuring Russia's war in Ukraine is a strategic failure for the Kremlin and serves as a powerful lesson to those who might consider following its path.

As we focus on this urgent crisis, the State Department continues to carry out the missions traditionally associated with diplomacy, like responsibly managing great power competition with China, facilitating a halt to fighting in Yemen and Ethiopia, and pushing back against the rising tide of authoritarianism and the threat it poses to human rights.

We also face evolving challenges that require us to develop new capabilities, such as the emergence and reemergence of infectious diseases, an accelerating climate crisis, and a digital revolution that holds both enormous promise and peril.

Last fall, I set out a modernization agenda for the State Department and U.S. diplomacy to respond to these complex demands, built on five pillars. Deepening our expertise in areas that are critical to the future of America's national security. Continuing to attract, retain, and develop the world's best diplomats. Fostering greater innovation and feedback. Modernizing our technology, communications, and analytical capabilities. And reinvigorating in-person diplomacy and public engagement—to get our diplomats beyond Embassy walls and engage the people we need to reach most.

In no small part thanks to the significant fiscal year 2022 budget approved by Congress, we've been able to make real progress on this agenda, though much remains to be done.

To give just a few examples, we've strengthened our capacity to shape the ongoing technological revolution, so it protects our interests, boosts our competitiveness, and upholds our values. With bipartisan Congressional support and encouragement, we recently launched a new bureau for cyberspace and digital policy, with 60 team members to start.

We're also making headway on ensuring our diplomats reflect America's remarkable diversity, which is one of our nation's greatest strengths. Our Department's first ever Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, has spearheaded an effort to analyze the obstacles that prevent underrepresented groups from joining and advancing at State, and will soon release a four-year strategic plan to tackle these problems. We've expanded the Pickering and Rangel fellowship programs and paid internships at State—again with strong Congressional input and support.

These efforts are showing results. We recently welcomed a new cohort of 179 exceptional Foreign Service professionals, putting the Department on track for its largest annual intake in a decade.

My first 15 months in this job have only strengthened my conviction that these and other reforms are not just worthwhile, but essential to delivering for the American people.

Today's meeting marks the 102nd time I've briefed Congress in meetings or calls, which is one of the ways I've worked to meet the commitment I made in my confirmation hearing to restore Congress's role as a partner both in our foreign policy-making and in revitalizing the State Department. These engagements have also helped further refine and strengthen our modernization agenda.

Ensuring we can deliver on that agenda will require sustained funding, new authorities, and most importantly, partnership from Congress.

If we want to deepen our capability in key areas like climate, public health, and multilateral diplomacy; expand on Secretary Powell's vision of a foreign service training float; strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks; and equip our workforce with the training, tools, and technology that today's challenges demand—we need additional resources.

If we want to be able to swiftly stand up new missions . . . deploy diplomats when and where they're needed . . . and make those decisions based on risk management rather than risk aversion—we need to reform the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act and Accountability Review Board statute to enable greater flexibility, while meeting important security standards.

If we want to rapidly scale up in response to crises like refugee surges and epidemics, while also avoiding costly overhead, we need more flexible domestic hiring authorities.

This is not about advancing the goals of any one administration or party. It's about refocusing our mission and purpose on the forces that will affect Americans' lives, livelihoods, and security for decades to come.

So I appreciate the opportunity to speak today about why this matters, and look forward to continuing to make this committee, and Congress as a whole, a partner in these efforts.

Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today for this hearing on the U.S. Department of State's fiscal year 2023 budget.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Department of State (Department) inspects embassies and diplomatic posts throughout the world to determine whether policy goals are being achieved and whether the interests of the United States are being represented and advanced effectively. OIG performs specialized security inspections and audits in support of the Department's mission to provide effective protection to our personnel, facilities, and sensitive information. OIG also audits Department operations and activities to ensure that they are as effective, efficient, and economical as possible. Finally, OIG investigates instances of fraud, waste, and mismanagement that may constitute either criminal wrongdoing or violation of Department regulations. In short, OIG plays a crucial role in overseeing the funds Congress appropriates to the Department for its many programs and activities and we believe that our work can assist Subcommittee Members in making funding decisions.

In this testimony, I will discuss the impact of our work and highlight some of our recent and ongoing projects, including our Afghanistan-related work. Finally, I will conclude by discussing some of the challenges we face in fulfilling our oversight mission in the current budget environment.

MISSION AND RESULTS

OIG's mandate requires us to oversee both Department and U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) programs and operations, which include more than 80,000 employees and more than 270 overseas missions and domestic entities. We also provide oversight for the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (USIBWC), a Federal agency that operates under the foreign policy guidance of the Department. In terms of dollars, we are responsible for the oversight of more than \$81 billion in Department, USAGM, and foreign assistance resources.

In pursuit of this mission, OIG provides valuable return on investment through its audits, evaluations, inspections, and investigations. In fiscal year 2021, OIG identified more than \$700 million in questioned costs and taxpayer funds that could

be put to better use. Additionally, OIG's criminal, civil, and administrative investigations produced \$17 million in monetary results (including fines, restitution, and recoveries) in the last fiscal year. Most recently, the contribution of our investigative efforts led to a nearly \$1 million settlement in a false claims case involving a contractor that provided medical services at Department facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹

Beyond the quantifiable, our work produces benefits that add enormous, if unmeasurable, value. First and foremost, our safety and security work is a source of immense pride. By helping the Department improve its security, OIG's work safeguards the lives of the thousands of people who work in or visit U.S. posts abroad and at home. For example, our recommendations frequently address inadequate compliance with emergency planning standards, facility safety and security deficiencies, and the lack of adherence to motor vehicle safety standards in the operation of official vehicles overseas.

Finally, our investigative work consistently holds Department and USAGM employees, contractors, and grantees accountable. In fiscal year 2021, OIG obtained 22 indictments or informations and 17 convictions. One conviction led to a former Department employee being sentenced to 1 year in Federal prison for wire fraud. OIG special agents determined that, over the course of 3 years in his role as a budget analyst at Embassy Port-au-Prince, the employee embezzled more than \$150,000.² We also obtained nine debarments in fiscal year 2021.

OVERSIGHT EFFORTS

Our oversight work has identified persistent challenges that can be sorted into three categories: safety and security, stewardship, and staffing. Key findings in these areas are described below.

Safety and Security

Safeguarding people, facilities, property, and information is a continual challenge for the Department. While the Department's efforts to promote security are commendable, our work continues to find issues that pose health and safety risks, including physical security and safety deficiencies at residences. Many of our reports and findings on the topic of security are sensitive but unclassified or classified, but I will share some of our efforts that are appropriate for this setting.

One example of our work exposing a health and safety risk comes from the inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Fire Protection, which oversees a fire safety program responsible for promoting safe living and working conditions for Department employees at overseas posts.³ Our inspectors found that the Department's annual process used to assess management controls within Department entities did not require chiefs of mission to attest or certify that their posts had an effective fire protection program. We concluded that the lack of assurances that missions are complying with requirements related to fire protection could increase the risk of fires and expose staff to unsafe facilities.

Another example comes from a wire fraud case that led to a sentence of nearly 3 years in Federal prison and \$200,000 in fines and restitution.⁴ In coordination with other law enforcement agencies, OIG special agents helped reveal that a Texas man had been selling substandard Chinese-made military helmets, body armor, and other products to the Department and other Federal agencies while falsely claiming that his company manufactured the goods in Texas. Some of the equipment had been used at Mission Iraq but was removed from service when concerns about its quality were exposed.

In addition to the security of people and property, we often focus on information security, and our oversight of the Department's IT security program continues to identify numerous control weaknesses. The fiscal year 2021 Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) audit concluded again that the Department had not fully developed and implemented an effective organization-wide information se-

¹Department of Justice (DOJ), "Medical Services Contractor Pays \$930,000 to Settle False Claims Act Allegations Relating to Medical Services Contracts at State Department and Air Force Facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan," March 8, 2022.

²DOJ, "Former State Department Employee Sentenced to Federal Prison for Embezzling more than \$150,000 from Department of Defense," December 1, 2021.

³OIG, Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Fire Protection (ISP-I-21-22, May 2021).

⁴DOJ, "Texas Man Sentenced for Selling Chinese-Made Military Helmets and Body Armor to Federal Agencies," March 23, 2022.

curity program.⁵ We reported that the Department is operating below an effective level in eight of the nine FISMA domains, making it vulnerable to cyberattacks and threats to its critical mission-related functions.

Another issue of concern is the large number of outstanding recommendations addressed to the Bureau of Information Resource Management, the entity responsible for developing and administering the Department's computer and information security programs and policies. In a report issued in December 2021 that analyzed open OIG recommendations addressed to the bureau, we identified 90 recommendations awaiting action, including some that have been open since 2014.⁶ As a result of the concerns described in the report,⁷ OIG recommended that the Under Secretary for Management verify that the bureau is developing plans of action and milestones to address each open recommendation.

Information systems security officers are like frontline enforcers of Department information systems security policies that ensure the protection of the Department's computer infrastructure, networks, and data. Unfortunately, OIG has found widespread deficiencies in the performance of such duties. In a review of 51 OIG inspections issued from 2016 through 2019, we found nearly half identified repeated deficiencies related to reviews of user accounts, information systems audit logs, or proper configuration, operation, and system maintenance.⁸

Stewardship

Efficiently and effectively managing its significant resources is another longstanding challenge for the Department. OIG's work demonstrates that the Department could enhance its stewardship of taxpayer resources by improving its ability to identify and address weaknesses in financial and property management and contract and grant oversight. Additionally, identifying and addressing weaknesses in its internal controls is an element of the Department's stewardship challenge.

During one audit, we reported that the Department did not consistently use a general budget object code in accordance with requirements when recording expenses.⁹ Recording expense data to the appropriate code is essential for management officials to have complete and accurate data for assessing spending patterns. Until deficiencies in the use of the budget object codes are addressed, the Department will not have a full understanding of the specific purpose of its expenses or a method to easily identify how billions of dollars of funds were used.

Property management deficiencies are likewise common, as we frequently report in our inspections of overseas posts. We often note problems with managing the acquisition, storage, distribution, and monitoring of fuel. In a recent review of our own reports addressing fuel management from fiscal year 2016 to fiscal year 2020, OIG identified systemic weaknesses in the Department's management of its overseas fuel stock and we assessed the Department's progress toward addressing common deficiencies.¹⁰ The resulting information report serves as a reference for posts seeking to strengthen fuel management practices and the Department expressed its intention to use the report in applicable training. Additionally, a recent referral prompted us to review gift vault access controls at the Office of Chief of Protocol.¹¹ We determined stronger inventory controls were needed in order to ensure accountability of office staff and protect items stored in the gift vault, many of which are of significant value.

Turning to contracts, in a series of audits published last fiscal year, we examined myriad management and oversight shortfalls related to contracts in support of overseas contingency operations. Because of the Department's frequent use of non-competitive contracts for securing support services for its operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, we took a closer look at compliance with Federal regulation and acquisition policies when awarding such contracts. Our audit found that none of the

⁵ OIG, (SBU) Audit of the Department of State fiscal year 2021 Information Security Program (AUD-IT-22-06, October 2021).

⁶ As of March 31, 2022, OIG identified approximately 90 open recommendations addressed to the Bureau of Information Resource Management.

⁷ OIG, Management Assistance Report: Support From the Under Secretary for Management Is Needed To Facilitate the Closure of Office of Inspector General Recommendations Addressed to the Bureau of Information Resource Management (AUD-AOQC-22-07, December 2021).

⁸ OIG, Management Assistance Report: Department Can Take Further Steps to Improve Executive Direction of Overseas Missions (ISP-21-14, June 2021).

⁹ OIG, Audit of the Department of State's Use of "Not Otherwise Classified" Budget Object Codes (AUD-FM-22-21, February 2022).

¹⁰ OIG, Information Report: Systemic Deficiencies Related to the Department of State's Fuel Management From fiscal year 2016 Through fiscal year 2020 (AUD-MERO-22-20, March 2022).

¹¹ OIG, Management Assistance Report: Office of the Chief of Protocol Gift Vault Access Controls (ESP-22-01, November 2021).

awards we reviewed had been publicly justified, as required.¹² We also had concerns that the Department did not fully take the required steps to ensure that fair and reasonable prices were paid on noncompetitive contract awards, a risk inherent in foregoing competition when awarding contracts.

Further, we issued a management assistance report calling on the Department to reduce its use of “bridge contracts,” which are sole-source, short-term awards to the incumbent contractor to avoid a lapse in service when there is a delay in awarding a follow-on contract.¹³ We found these types of contracts were frequently used in Afghanistan and Iraq over multiple years to noncompetitively extend contract services. Such a practice limits the Department’s ability to realize potential cost savings by maximizing full and open competition. Another audit related to this body of work concluded that the Department, as a result of poor acquisition planning, noncompetitively awarded two contracts for essential services at Mission Iraq.¹⁴ Because Federal law does not permit poor planning as justification for the use of noncompetitive awards, we questioned the full value of the two contracts at a combined cost of \$663 million.

Likewise, proper oversight and management of grants and cooperative agreements continues to be a challenge for the Department. In an audit to determine whether recipients of certain Department grants and cooperative agreements complied with the cost-sharing requirements of their award agreements, we concluded that internal controls meant to ensure proper oversight of such awards needed improvement.¹⁵ For example, we found that monitoring plans were not tailored to awards, monitoring controls were not adjusted when the pandemic prevented site visits, and training for oversight staff did not provide adequate instruction regarding oversight of cost-share requirements. Such deficiencies led to unsupported or unallowable cost-share transactions for the Department.

During an ongoing audit related to grants and cooperative agreements awarded by the Department for countering Iranian influence, we issued a Management Assistance Report concerning internal control deficiencies at the Global Engagement Center (GEC).¹⁶ These lapses resulted in a situation where third-party contractors were performing inherently governmental functions on a large percentage of the awards reviewed. GEC did not ensure that grants officer representatives were properly assigned and designated throughout each award’s period of performance, which posed risks for award management and oversight. Finally, in an inspection of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, we highlighted instances where monitoring and grant oversight activity was not properly documented in award files, an issue frequently noted in our inspections of other entities.¹⁷

Our work also highlights the Department’s numerous difficulties related to internal controls. In a review of our own previous inspection reports, we found that 51 of the 52 reviewed contained findings that involved vulnerabilities in internal controls, which placed programs, personnel, resources, or sensitive information at risk.¹⁸ OIG found that missions did not effectively use the Department’s annual statement of assurance process to identify and address these deficiencies. In a more specific example, a recent audit concluded that internal controls involving the process to prepare residences for occupancy at Embassy Cairo were not fully effective in safeguarding expenditures related to this process.¹⁹ Internal control weaknesses contributed to questionable expenditures and a potential for over reliance on over-time.

¹² OIG, Audit of Noncompetitive Contracts in Support of Overseas Contingency Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (AUD-MERO-22-03, October 2021).

¹³ OIG, Management Assistance Report: Improved Guidance and Acquisition Planning is Needed to Reduce the Use of Bridge Contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq (AUD-MERO-21-37, July 2021).

¹⁴ OIG, Audit of Acquisition Planning and Cost Controls While Transitioning Support Service Contracts in Iraq (AUD-MERO-21-43, September 2021).

¹⁵ OIG, Audit of Compliance With Cost-Sharing Requirements for Selected Department of State Grants and Cooperative Agreements (AUD-CGI-22-12, November 2021).

¹⁶ OIG, Management Assistance Report: Internal Controls Are Needed To Safeguard Inherently Governmental Functions at the Global Engagement Center (AUD-MERO-22-19, February 2022).

¹⁷ OIG, Inspection of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (ISP-I-22-01, October 2021).

¹⁸ OIG, Management Assistance Report: Department Can Take Further Steps to Improve Executive Direction of Overseas Missions (ISP-21-14, June 2021).

¹⁹ OIG, Audit of the Process To Prepare Residences for New Tenants at U.S. Embassy Cairo, Egypt (AUD-MERO-22-23, March 2022).

Staffing

Our work reveals that many of the critical challenges facing the Department are caused or compounded by staffing gaps, frequent turnover in key positions, and inexperienced or undertrained staff. Moreover, instances of poor leadership, lack of coordination between and within Department bureaus and offices, and conflicting lines of authority have, at times, undermined the Department's effectiveness and negatively impacted employee morale.

We took a closer look at some of these human resources issues during an audit conducted in the Bureau of Global Talent Management, which has the critical responsibility of recruiting, developing, assigning, and supporting the Department's workforce.²⁰ We audited certain human resources services provided to eight other Department bureaus and found that over 90 percent of competitive hiring recruitment actions were not completed within required timeframes. Some of the bureau's difficulties were a result of its own staffing challenges, which hampered its ability to help other bureaus recruit, classify, and fill mission-critical Department positions.

Another example of challenges related to staffing comes from our inspection of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, a bureau encompassing a region with many crucial foreign policy priorities, including U.S.-China relations.²¹ There, we found that inefficient organizational structures, staffing constraints, large numbers of temporary staff that frequently turnover, and increasing workloads hindered operations in some offices.

Our inspectors regularly measure senior officials' practices against the Department's leadership and management standards and note where leaders fall short. In one review, we noted numerous leadership failures in the Bureau of Consular Affairs contributed to a stunning lack of progress on a long running initiative to modernize and consolidate approximately 90 discrete consular legacy systems into a common technology framework.²² Even though the office responsible for the initiative has continually missed deployment dates, we found no evidence that leadership scrutinized the office or held staff accountable for missed deadlines. More worrisome, even though the modernization effort has cost millions of dollars and is critical to the bureau's ability to meet its mission in the future, leaders were unable to provide a clear, uniform definition of the initiative, what components it included, and which contracts supported it.

AFGHANISTAN-RELATED WORK

In the wake of the Department's suspension of operations in Afghanistan last year, OIG devoted substantial time and directed significant resources to planning and coordinating oversight activities that focus on key aspects of the situation and its aftermath. Our plans include reviews of the Special Immigrant Visa program, the resettlement of Afghan evacuees, and Embassy Kabul emergency planning and evacuation efforts. The latter work will focus on whether the Embassy followed established Department guidance in preparation for the evacuation of U.S. Government personnel, private U.S. citizens, Afghans at risk, and others from Afghanistan prior to and following the suspension of operations. These projects are in progress, and we continue to closely coordinate our ongoing and planned work with other relevant OIGs.

In January, we completed a project that reviewed open recommendations specific to Embassy Kabul and analyzed whether, in consideration of the suspension of operations, they should be closed, redirected, or remain open.²³ The review allowed us to identify issues that had been rendered moot by the events of last August. We have also attempted to add value in ways that do not require new work to be performed. For example, we published a report on lessons learned for establishing remote missions when events dictate that Department operations must cease in another country.²⁴ Although not directly related to Kabul, after the suspension of operations, we provided a copy to the Embassy Kabul management team to use as a reference when establishing the Afghanistan Affairs Unit.

²⁰ OIG, Review of the Bureau of Global Talent Management, Office of the Executive Director, Office of Technology Services' Information System Processes (ISP-I-21-29, July 2021).

²¹ OIG, Inspection of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (ISP-I-22-06, December 2021).

²² OIG, Review of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Consular-One Modernization Program—Significant Deployment Delays Continue (ISP-I-22-03, November 2021).

²³ OIG, Information Report: Office of Inspector General's Analysis of Open Recommendations Specific to U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan (AUD-MERO-22-18, January 2022).

²⁴ OIG, Audit of Department of State Protocols for Establishing and Operating Remote Diplomatic Missions (AUD-MERO-21-33, July 2021).

RESOURCES

We appreciate this Subcommittee's ongoing support of our work. In particular, we are grateful for the inclusion of supplemental funding for Ukraine-related oversight work in the fiscal year 2022 omnibus appropriations bill. The Subcommittee's timely foresight in recognizing the draw on OIG resources created by Ukraine-related events means that OIG will be able to initiate important oversight work without compromising other mission-critical oversight projects as would be necessary without the additional funds. We are in the process of planning Ukraine-related oversight projects and will be in contact with you and your staff as we progress.

However, OIG's budget has remained relatively flat in recent years, jeopardizing our ability to sustain high-quality oversight work across the wide spectrum of programs and activities at the Department and USAGM. Increased IT costs (including costs associated with cybersecurity), unforeseen pandemic-related expenses, mandated work, and large-scale oversight projects like our oversight work on Afghanistan-related events, have resulted in an increasing and alarming strain on our budget and required us to delay some previously prioritized work.

OIG has been grappling with these funding challenges while facing perhaps its greatest challenge—advancing OIG's oversight mission in the midst of a global pandemic. On this front, I am particularly proud to highlight OIG's remarkable adaptability. Despite 2 years of restrictions that made traveling overseas to conduct inspections and audits of embassies and posts nearly impossible, we continue to meet our unique oversight requirements under the Foreign Service Act by performing audit work remotely and by developing and deploying remote and hybrid inspection models. However, with an anticipated increase in travel costs in fiscal year 2023, OIG will be forced to decrease the amount and scope of work we complete in order to support the resumption of travel unless additional funding is provided.

OIG also has demonstrated remarkable ingenuity and resilience in the face of ever-evolving IT challenges. After years of operating within the Department's IT systems, OIG made the decision to migrate to an independent IT architecture in 2015, a congressionally supported initiative. We believed then, and continue to believe today, that an independent IT network is critical to OIG's independence, security, and ability to fulfill its mission. Since then, OIG has striven to be a model within the Federal government; in the annual FISMA report, we received one of the two highest ratings across all five risk categories, a major and rare accomplishment across the Federal Government, despite the significant IT challenges we faced related to the pandemic. Yet, with increasing IT and labor requirements, adequately providing the necessary maintenance, support, and cybersecurity for the network is a challenge in our current budget environment. Moreover, recent IT modernization and cybersecurity requirements, including Executive Order 14028, "Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity," issued on May 12, 2021, place additional strain on existing labor resources and require adequate funding to accomplish.

Beyond making the sustainment of current operations a challenge, a largely static budget also presents implications for our ability to take on important discretionary work, including work on big initiatives of congressional interest such as Afghanistan. OIG developed its Afghanistan-related oversight plans in close coordination with the broader IG community. OIG's Afghanistan-related projects will—when combined with the work being performed by other agencies' OIGs—provide a comprehensive, whole-of-government review of recent and ongoing developments related to Afghanistan. In order to fund the timely completion of this important work, OIG had to abandon or delay plans to conduct eight non-Afghanistan-related projects and shift an estimated \$5.5 million in resources to the emerging Afghanistan priority.

Unfortunately, without supplemental funding for this unexpected work, OIG does not have the means to undertake these Afghanistan-related projects and complete the eight non-Afghanistan projects from which OIG diverted the required resources. Such work included Worldwide Protective Services (WPS) II Contracts, the Central America Regional Security Initiative, Counter-narcotics Assistance in East and Southeast Asia, Overseas Construction Contracts, the Department's COVID-19 response, and Whistleblower Protection Notifications to Contractor and Grantee Employees. Due to increasing resource constraints, we are unfortunately having to delay or cancel projects that were designed to target high-risk areas and that could have led to significant improvements in the programs and activities we oversee. I want to take this opportunity to clearly communicate the nature of these difficult trade-off decisions so that Members may consider alternative approaches to funding OIG's operations going forward.

CONCLUSION

I am incredibly proud of the work done by my colleagues in OIG and the value we provide to the Department, USAGM, Congress, and U.S. taxpayers. We are a talented and committed team of professionals dedicated to helping the Department and USAGM successfully accomplish their respective missions through robust oversight and solution-oriented recommendations. I want to thank my team for their resilience, ingenuity, integrity, and leadership.

I also want to again thank Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, and Members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit testimony. I take my statutory requirement to keep Congress fully and currently informed seriously, and I appreciate your interest in our work.

Senator COONS. Terrific. Thank you very much Mr. Secretary. I will begin what are 7-minute questions. We may get to a second round, but there is a vote scheduled for 3:30. So if Members intend to come back for a second round please make sure that my staff knows.

Thank you for your tireless work on pulling together our allies in support of Ukraine. Ukraine faces a brutal invasion by Russia, and I would be interested, first, just in a few questions about a supplemental that we understand may be coming soon.

Bridget Brink has been nominated to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. Will you be resuming operations in Kyiv as well as in the rest of the country, and will the supplemental include funding to return U.S. Embassy personnel, and provide for their security; first? Second, in addition to military and humanitarian assistance do you think this supplemental will or should include funds for the global food security crisis, and the pandemic?

And then last, I have just returned from Georgia, many of us have expressed concern about Moldova, and Georgia, which are also roughly in the position that Ukraine is, meaning not members of the EU, not members of NATO, countries that are receiving Ukrainian refugees, and where there is a real and present threat of Russian aggression against Moldova and Georgia.

So if you would, Mr. Secretary; that is my opening set of questions.

Secretary BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman thank you very, very much. So a few things; first of all with regard to the supplemental, that should be coming forward in the next couple of days, and it will include very robust assistance requests for Ukraine, for partners and allies, and as well as, of course, our ability to function in Ukraine.

With regard to our diplomatic presence, we have diplomats going back to Ukraine this week, as we speak, to begin the process of looking to reopen the Embassy in Kyiv, and my anticipation is that they will start in Lviv, in western Ukraine, and look to reopen the Embassy as quickly, but also as safely as possible. And we look forward to working with you on that.

A number of other countries that left with the onset of the Russian aggression are also coming back, reopening their missions, it was very important for Secretary Austin and I to go, to show the flag, but we want to be able to show the flag every day. But it is a process that we take very seriously in terms of making sure that we do it in a way that ensures the safety and security of our personnel, but I think this will play out over the next few weeks.

We very much appreciate the Senate's prompt consideration of Bridget Brink to be Ambassador to Ukraine, she is extraordinarily

qualified for this job. I think she is known to many Members of this Committee, and hopefully she will be confirmed quickly once she is sent formally to the Senate.

I anticipate the supplemental will include a request for resources for food security, something that we can and should talk about. This is, as Chairman Leahy said, a very, very dramatic problem that already existed of course, and has been exacerbated by Russia's aggression, by the invasion.

We have Ukrainian farmers, who, instead of being able to deal with their crops, they have been forced to fight or to flee for their—because of the Russian aggression. We have Russia blockading Black Sea ports, so that even though Ukraine is actually producing a lot of wheat, it can't get out of the country because of this blockade.

And all of that is having an effect, not just in the immediate region, but literally around the world. And I know in all of your travels, you have heard this too, everywhere we go, everywhere I go I am hearing this. We have we have plans to address this, not just with the supplemental, we are trying to get countries to support the World food Program with additional funding, the Food and Agriculture Organization with more funding, they both have needs for resources.

We are looking at countries that have large stockpiles of food to use those stockpiles, to not hold them back, to not put export restrictions on food. The President has incentivized the production of fertilizer here in the United States, and we are working in a variety of ways to try to address this.

The last thing I will say on this, Mr. Chairman, is that we have the presidency of the UN Security Council in May. I intend to focus our month of the presidency on food security, and I will be spending some time there as well. And again, very much look forward to working with this Committee.

Finally, on Moldova and Georgia, I share the concerns that you have expressed about the vulnerable position they are in. We are working very closely with both. I was in Moldova a few weeks ago, our Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration, Secretary Noyes, was just there as well. We have contributed, through a German pledging conference, an additional \$100 million to help support Moldova.

The request that you have before you would fund programs to do a number of things, including bolstering cybersecurity, economic stabilization and resilience, to counter disinformation where they are on the receiving end, to try to integrate their energy system to Europe. There is, I think a significant development in the connection of Moldova, as well as Ukraine to the European security grid, but there is work to do to make that work.

We also need to get the UN agencies to be prepared for a potential huge influx of additional refugees to Moldova. They have already taken in a lot of people. It is a small country.

Anyway, in the interest of time, there is more on Georgia. I could speak to that as well. But the point that you make is exactly right, we need to be looking out for these countries that are at risk, and in between we see, again, in Moldova, some things happening in Transnistria that we are looking at very, very carefully as well.

Senator COONS. Thank you Mr. Secretary. To the United Nations, if I might, just a few points and then I will lead to the Ranking Member.

First, we did not succeed last year in paying anything in our UN arrears. We have arrears now totaling a billion dollars, and in my view failing to pay what we could, and should, weakens our credibility, and frankly strengthens some of our global competitors, who would take advantage of that opportunity.

I was just in Paris, and had the chance to meet with Director General Azoulay of UNESCO. I would be interested in your thoughts, on whether in our absence, our competitors have used that absence to expand their role.

And then last, on the UN Human Rights Council, on March 4th the UN Human Rights Commission adopted a resolution opening a Commission of Inquiry for the human rights violations, the war crimes being committed in Ukraine. I would be interested in whether the administration supports an ICC or other war crimes investigation into a prosecution of Russian soldiers and leaders, and what assistance we could provide there, and how significant you think it is that Russia has been suspended now from the UN Human Rights Council, the first permanent member of the UN Security Council to be so suspended? And whether you would make a case for our renewing our participation in that Council?

And with that I will yield to the Ranking Member, if you would take a minute and answer those.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much. I very much share your view that it is to our detriment to not be making good on our commitments to the United Nations in terms of the budget, in terms of dealing with arrears. It puts us in a position of disadvantage in a place that we should be in a position of advantage.

And to your point some of some other countries are able to make the rhetorical case because of this, that U.S. leadership, U.S. influence can't be counted on, and it also, of course, contributes to some operational challenges. So we think that paying our dues, paying into the budget is vital both for the functioning of the UN, but also for our standing and our ability to carry the day, and carry the debate at the UN.

I think we have some proof positive of this, by the way, in what you just referenced, because we are back on the Human Rights Council we were able to actually lead in the creation of this Commission of Inquiry for Ukraine. So it is something we are going to very much support, looking at the atrocities and human rights abuses that were committed by Russia in Ukraine.

Similarly, we support and welcome the fact that the ICC has opened an investigation, we found ways to support the ICC in a number of instances in the past, including most recently with the prosecution of Janjaweed from Darfur that prosecution resulted, in no small measure, from information and evidence we were able to bring forward.

Our main focus when it comes to Ukraine is on helping the Prosecutor General and her team that is investigating these war crimes allegations. We have experts who are working very closely with that team to make sure that they can do their jobs effectively.

And finally, on UNESCO; this is, I think, a perfect example of a situation where our absence is clearly to our detriment because, among other things, UNESCO is in the business of setting standards, norms around the world for education, for the way new, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence are used, to cite just two examples.

So when we are not at the table shaping that conversation, and so actually helping to shape those norms and standards, well, someone else is, and that someone else is probably China. So it really does not make a lot of sense for us to be absent from that body.

Now, there is a very understandable concern expressed in the past because of the Palestinians seeking ignition, and that going forward, that Congress chose to act to make it difficult for us to continue our participation. We believe that having waiver authority would be important, and necessary. And I can say with authority that our partners in Israel feel the same way. They would support our rejoining UNESCO, and I think it is in the national interest to do that precisely because these debates are so important, and we should be at the table making sure that we shape them, not someone else.

Senator COONS. Thank you Mr. Secretary.

I will yield to the Ranking Member, Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. If it is okay, I will let Senator Moran go first. He has a hearing to chair in about 5 minutes.

Senator MORAN. Someday I hope to chair a Committee again, but at the moment I am only the Ranking Member. But I appreciate your willingness, not only to promote me, but to allow me to go ahead of you. So Senator Graham, thank you.

Mr. Secretary, thank you. I would join in my commendation for the chair of the full Committee, and the chair of this subcommittee, and I always appreciate the opportunities I have to work with them.

Mr. Secretary, yesterday you told the Foreign Relations Committee that you believe our allies and partners are prepared to sustain and build upon the sanctions imposed. And I am a member of the NATO Observer Group, so I am talking about NATO, and I am talking about the circumstances that we all face in regard to the invasion, the evil invasion of Ukraine.

From your conversations with our allies, and particularly Germany, who have pledged to increase their defense budgets, what do you—what do you see as happening next? Will this last longer than this particular circumstance? And you indicated that they would build it—build upon sanctions imposed, what do you anticipate that building to include?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, thank you very much. And thank you for your leadership at this critical time on this issue.

A couple of things; first, I think what we have seen to date is extraordinary, in terms of allies coming together both in support of Ukraine, but also in exerting pressure on Russia. We said before this Russian aggression took place, as we saw it coming we tried to head it off, but Putin went ahead, we said back in December that there would be massive consequences imposed on Russia if it went ahead with the aggression.

The reason we were able to say that with confidence is because for many months we have been working with allies and partners to build those massive consequences, including unprecedented sanctions. And I think that many of us would not have fully expected that we would actually be able to carry that through.

Thus far we have, and we are seeing, as a result of the pressure imposed on Russia, an economy in free fall. Most predictions suggest it will contract by 15 percent this year. We are seeing capital flight from the country to the extent that Putin is not able to prevent that. We are seeing an exodus of companies, more than 600 businesses, international businesses, with brand names, leaving Russia, denying Russian consumers the ability to get those products.

And the export controls that we have been able to impose working with other countries mean that Russia will not be able to effectively modernize critical parts of its economy, and a system, including the defense sector.

But to your point, it is vitally important that we sustain this effort. And that means making sure that as we have done to date, allies and partners come along as we do this. We are in constant contact with them. We will continue to roll out sanctions in the weeks ahead. This is not stopping as long as Russia is not stopping. And the European Union itself is continuing to do that.

I think the next step is one of the things that they are looking at is an oil embargo on Russia. They are working on that. We are looking to see what they do. We will continue to focus on additional sectors of the Russian economy to make sure that we continue to ratchet up the pressure.

I anticipate that this is going to go on for some time, and all the more reason why we have to make sure that we sustain what we have been able to put in place.

Senator MORAN. Mr. Secretary, thank you. I was on the border of Ukraine a few weeks, just a couple weeks ago. My takeaway then, as it was previously, and continues to be, and what I am looking for is reassurance. I want to make sure the United States, in my view, it would be immoral for us just to provide enough assistance for the Ukrainians to survive, and not win.

And I also think that our help should include more than defending Ukraine, the offensive capabilities of Ukraine to attack those areas that are attacking them. Can you assure me that that is policy; that is what we are doing? Or would you want to dissuade me from my views?

Secretary BLINKEN. A couple of things; first, thanks to the tremendous support, generosity of the American people, through this Congress, we have been able to date to provide the Ukrainians with exceptional support. And this is something that started well before the Russian aggression.

The initial presidential drawdown took place back in Labor Day of last year, \$60 million, then there was another significant drawdown of about \$200 million around Christmastime. All that was done relatively quietly, the Russians had not yet committed their aggression, but we wanted to make sure that Ukrainians had in hand what they needed if Putin carried this forward.

And when he did, the main reason that the Ukrainians have been so successful thus far in repelling the Russians is, of course, because of their own courage, remarkable. But it is also because they had in hand the tools they needed to do that, and in particular the Javelins, the Stingers, systems of that nature were critical in winning the battle for Kyiv.

I can tell you that, broadly speaking, when it comes to anti-armor systems, and anti-air systems, for every Russian plane, and every Russian tank in Ukraine, we, and allies, and partners have been able to provide the Ukrainians to date with about systems for every plane and every tank.

But to your point, the nature of the battle has now shifted, and what is happening in the East and Southern Ukraine is very different than what was happening around Kyiv in terms of what the Ukrainians need to be able to repel the Russian aggression. And so heavier artillery has been critical, and we are working assiduously, and others are, to get them that.

Shore-to-ship weapons, and to deal with the challenges in the Black Sea are also vital, heavier armor, tanks, et cetera, all of that is in train.

Secretary Austin was in Germany yesterday, as you probably saw. A pretty remarkable scene, 40 Defense Ministers sitting around a huge table, all working on coordinating the effort to get to the Ukrainians what they need. We spent three hours with President Zelenskyy, his Minister of Defense, his Chief of the Armed Forces, the Foreign Minister, et cetera, and a chunk of that time was spent on going in detail through Ukraine's needs going forward.

So the short answer is, we are determined to get them what they need to deal with this Russian aggression, and to push the Russians out of the country. It is another matter as to whether the Ukrainians should take actions that go beyond their borders.

My own view is that it is vital that they do whatever is necessary to defend against Russian aggression. And the tactics of this are their decisions, but what we are doing with all of these systems is making sure the Ukrainians have the means to defend themselves, that is what this is about, and making sure that they can do whatever is necessary to push the Russians out of the country.

Senator MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I won't ask another question, but if I can complement, or at least support a decision that the Secretary has made. I encouraged you several weeks ago, a week or more ago, to return to Kyiv with our diplomatic Embassy, you are headed that direction, it sounds like it is going occur in stages, but I am supportive of the United States having its Embassy in Kyiv as quickly as it is safe for our personnel.

And I want to thank you for a couple of folks, several of your folks, Nas, Courtney, Paul, Jeff, Consular Affairs folks who have been exceptionally helpful to us in our efforts to solve problems for Kansans-Americans around the globe. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, thank you for saying that. We very much appreciate it, and we look forward to continue to work with you.

Senator MORAN. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Chairman Leahy.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Secretary Blinken, I stepped out, but I heard your kind words outside. I didn't jump back in because I didn't want to interrupt you guys, enjoying it too much. But thank you, it was undeserved but greatly appreciated.

And regarding Ukraine, that some have urged the U.S. to liquidate the Russian Central Bank's nearly—was it \$100 billion, I believe, in foreign exchange reserves that are frozen at the Federal Reserve, to use all those funds to help the people of Ukraine, does the Department have that capacity to identify the assets of Russia, and other oligarchs? And can they coordinate with the Treasury and Justice Departments in seizing and freezing such assets?

Secretary BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, we are working very closely with Treasury and Justice to look at both how we can effectively freeze, but also seize assets. And we have blocking sanctions, as you know, in place against a variety of individuals and institutions that effectively freezes their property in the United States.

The question when it comes to the seizure piece, is do we have the relevant provisions in place, civil criminal forfeiture authorities, Justice is in the process of reviewing that. And I know that there are a number of ideas that I find compelling about finding ways to use these assets to support Ukraine. The short answer is, the Justice Department lawyers are looking at all of that.

Senator LEAHY. Of course it doesn't help that a lot of those assets are behind various walls, one after another, fake corporations, and things of that nature.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes. And I think it goes to the importance of having transparency, beneficial ownership, rules, et cetera.

Senator LEAHY. And I can't think of anything I have seen more shocking than the scenes of what the Russian soldiers are doing, machine gunning families as they are trying to run away from something, the children, innocent civilians have been murdered. And can that be investigated by the International Criminal Court? Should it be? And can we help?

Secretary BLINKEN. We welcome the fact that the ICC has opened an investigation, one of the critical things they are doing is making sure that potential evidence of atrocities is being compiled effectively. As I mentioned, I think when you are out of the room Mr. Chairman, besides the ICC work, I think the critical focus that we have is on supporting the work of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General. And we have experts who are working every single day with that team to make sure that they have what they need to document, compile the evidence. And actually look at potential prosecutions.

But those two efforts, as well as the Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, with our leadership, are three of the critical vehicles we see, going forward, to get accountability to deal with this.

And to your point, some of the things we are seeing are, I think, beyond almost our collective imaginations. For example, there are very credible reports that the Russians have been, in retreat, booby-trapping things like people's washing machines, and toys, so

that when people are able to return home and go about their lives they are killed or injured as a result of one of these booby traps.

Senator LEAHY. I look at some of the land mines, and cluster mines used this Javelin type—

Secretary BLINKEN. That is right.

Senator LEAHY [continuing]. Mine that you won't even have to touch it, if you come near it and it's off.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is exactly right. And Mr. Chairman, part of our request, and I think this will be in the supplemental, will be for some additional funds for demining because, unfortunately, we have to deal with that now as a result of what Russia has been doing.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you for mentioning it, because I know your request is \$18 million below what was requested last year. I have a feeling you are going to need a lot more for humanitarian demining. And as you know, I have long sought to rid the world of landmines, but I think also what the prosecutors are getting, it is going to be extremely important for historians. You know, those who don't understand the mistakes of history, it is almost a cliché, but they are condemned to repeat them.

The world is going to see this, because there is no question that it is crimes against humanity. And we are going to need, I think, the World Food Program, projects the unmet need of \$10 billion. I would hopefully have a request to beef that up. And the President's budget request is about \$8 billion above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level, but the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and so on, this is not the moment—we should be investing more in the State Department, and other agencies, and more. I know this is something Chairman Coons has talked about at length, putting more in Foreign Ops, not less.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator LEAHY. And lastly, and my time is running out, the Leahy Law, would you and your staff please talk with us, how that—the one that prohibits assistance, are units of foreign security forces that are committing gross violations of human rights, I think you have some money in your budget for Leahy Law vetting, but are you confident that that is being carried out as much as it should be?

Secretary BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, in my judgment it is, I think it is being consistently and effectively applied. We have million dollars in the budget this year to conduct the vetting. It is a critical part of what we do, and I think we have the resources, as well as the focus necessary, to carry that out in the way it was intended.

Senator LEAHY. And I would just mentioned, Mr. Chairman, your plane was delayed, but we had a meeting, some extensive meeting. I know Senator Durbin and I were there yesterday with the President, and others, about Cuba. Nobody condones the crackdown on the people who are peacefully protesting in there, but I also don't—I don't condone the total rollback of the policy that we had under the Obama administration.

I hope that attention is given to finding a way that we can start having normal relations with Cuba for the good of their own people, and for us.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to catching up with the President. I haven't talked to him since your meeting, but I look forward to hearing from him on the meeting.

Senator COONS. Thank you Mr. Chairman. Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I won't request a second round; we will try to make this as quick as possible, but there is a lot going on in the world, and let us start here at home.

Mr. Secretary, do you believe if we repeal Title 42 authority to deport illegal immigrants because of the threat of a COVID outbreak that we will have more illegal immigrants coming?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, two things on that. First, as you know, Title 42 is a CDC authority.

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary BLINKEN. Public health authority.

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary BLINKEN. It is not an immigration policy——

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, that is right.

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. Authority. The question is what practical effect would its repeal have? I think we are likely to see more people seeking to enter the country, but if they cannot present a credible claim of asylum they will be returned. That is the policy. That doesn't change. The order is not opening with the repeal of Title 42, if that is what happens.

Senator GRAHAM. I am just saying the border is completely broken. We have 1.2 million illegal crossings since October of last year, and there will be a tsunami more coming if we repeal Title 42. Will there be COVID money in the supplemental?

Secretary BLINKEN. I can't speak to that at this point because I think the White House is still looking at that.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Secretary BLINKEN. One way or another, Senator, in my judgment we need COVID money.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Secretary BLINKEN. Internationally, whether that is in this supplemental or in some other vehicle, I don't know, but we need it.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. I think we do need money for COVID internationally, I will agree with that. And I think if you want to stop, as Senator Leahy said, one country away from an outbreak, you would revisit Title 42. I would encourage you to do that.

Let us go to Afghanistan. What is the state of play in Afghanistan for women right now?

Secretary BLINKEN. The state of play is extremely mixed to negative, and the——

Senator GRAHAM. What is the upside for women?

Secretary BLINKEN. The only upside that we have seen at all, is that somewhat, ironically, you might say there is, in the country at large, greater stability, and relative peace than there has been. That is about the only upside I can think of.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Secretary BLINKEN. The downside of course is that we have seen, including most recently, the Taliban fall back on its commitment that it had made to ensure that girls can go to school above the

sixth grade. This is, among many things, something that is a deep, a deep concern.

Senator GRAHAM. Is our homeland more at risk now than it was before the withdrawal in Afghanistan, from al-Qaeda, and ISIS presence in Afghanistan?

Secretary BLINKEN. If you look at the—if you look at the presence and the threat, I would say there are three things that are going on. First, there is al-Qaeda itself, and I can go into more detail in another setting—

Senator GRAHAM. We will do it. It is just a general question. Is al-Qaeda and ISIS more free to roam now that we are out of Afghanistan than they were before we left?

Secretary BLINKEN. ISIS-K is, as you know, is of course an enemy of the Taliban. And the issue there is not the will of the Taliban to take them on.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Secretary BLINKEN. It is their capacity. That is, right.

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary BLINKEN. When it comes to al-Qaeda, and the Arab al-Qaeda Corps, there are a very, very small number of people in Afghanistan.

Senator GRAHAM. How do we know?

Secretary BLINKEN. Based on the—again, without going into detail in this setting—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, Mr. Secretary, with all due respect, if you are a Shiite in Afghanistan, it had been a good week for you. There is no upside to the Taliban in charge, for women anywhere in Afghanistan, and I think our homeland is far more at risk now that we have no presence on the ground, no ability to detect what al-Qaeda, and ISIS-K are up to. So to me, that is an easy question to ask.

President Biden said he had no regrets about leaving Afghanistan. Do you have any regrets?

Secretary BLINKEN. I don't Senator, in the sense that—

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. This was America's longest war.

Senator GRAHAM. No. That is fair enough. Is the war over? Have we ended the war between us in radicalism by leaving Afghanistan?

Secretary BLINKEN. As much as we—we went to Afghanistan, as you know well, for one reason which is to deal with the folks who attacked us on 9/11. We decimated al-Qaeda in its ability to continue attacks beyond Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden was brought to justice more than a decade ago. It was time to end, end the longest war.

Senator GRAHAM. Have you heard the assessment by the Secretary of Defense, and others that: How long would it be before an attack against America originating from Afghanistan would mature? And they said 2 years. Is that a successful withdrawal? That is what they said. I asked them.

Secretary BLINKEN. And I don't want to, myself, put words in their mouths, but the question—

Senator GRAHAM. Anyway I just think it is—

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. Goes to if the threat could potentially—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. It is just ridiculous to say that we are safer by letting the Taliban take over Afghanistan, and that women have any upside.

Let us go to the Ukraine. Are you pursuing Russia being a state sponsor of terrorism?

Secretary BLINKEN. We are looking at that. And the question is—

Senator GRAHAM. What is hard about that?

Secretary BLINKEN. The question is this, and this is something that the lawyers are looking at. There is no doubt in my mind, Senator—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. That the Russians are terrorizing the Ukrainian people.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, what about Syria?

Secretary BLINKEN. The question is this, and again, this is something that the lawyers are looking at, to make sure that we actually meet the statutory requirements of that designation.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, if you need to change the law so that Russia fits in, you will have 100 votes. I don't know what more you would have to do as a country to be at state-sponsored terrorism. They have decimated the Ukraine—Ukraine, and they are all over Syria dropping barrel bombs on people. So you mentioned that you are looking at it. I would encourage you to look at it, and act upon it.

Putin vowed today in the Duma that he would stay committed, even though there have been heavy losses to accomplishing the goal of the invasion. What would you like to say to him?

Secretary BLINKEN. Very simply, end this aggression. End it now.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, it seems not to be working. What are the consequences to him if he keeps this up?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think we have already seen devastating consequences for Russia. And let me say this first, in terms of his actual objectives, as stated in his own words.

Senator GRAHAM. Uh-huh.

Secretary BLINKEN. He has already failed, because those objectives were to eliminate Ukraine as an independent and sovereign country, to subsume it back, in some fashion into Russia, we know already, as a result of the extraordinary courage of the Ukrainians, that that is not going to happen.

And as I have said, there is going to be an independent and sovereign Ukraine around a lot longer than Vladimir Putin will be on scene. So it is already a strategic—

Senator GRAHAM. From your lips to God's ears. And I want to help you where I can in that endeavor. When it comes to winning in Ukraine, describe very briefly what winning looks like for Ukraine and the United States?

Secretary BLINKEN. Winning is going to be defined by the Ukrainians, and we will support whatever they decide is in their interest.

Senator GRAHAM. Have they told you what winning looks like?

Secretary BLINKEN. Right now for them, and I don't want to put words in their mouths, but I think their focus is, of course, on repelling the Russian aggression, and getting the Russians out of their country.

Senator GRAHAM. As said by Senator Moran, that our goal was to get Russia out of Ukraine. Is that our goal?

Secretary BLINKEN. That is Ukraine's goal, and as a result that that is our goal as well.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay, great. If Russia uses banned chemical weapons in Ukraine, what will our response be?

Secretary BLINKEN. The President has been clear, that there would be severe consequences for any use of weapon of mass destruction by Russia. We have been working, not only within our government, but with allies and partners across.

Senator GRAHAM. Can we put a parameter on what severe consequences would look like?

Secretary BLINKEN. I am not going to telegraph in public, what we would do. I can tell you that a lot of work has gone into planning against every possible scenario. And again, in a different setting I am happy to get into that.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. We will take that up. If Russia explodes a tactical nuclear device in Ukraine would you consider that an attack on NATO because the radiation would go well beyond Ukraine?

Secretary BLINKEN. All of this, including the potential use of a nuclear device, attack with a nuclear device is part of the planning we are doing. And again, we can get into that in more detail in a different setting.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, just a couple more minutes. Do you think our policy regarding Russia and Ukraine has been successful?

Secretary BLINKEN. To date, in my judgment?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes. In the sense that we said this, Senator, before—when we saw the likelihood of a Russian aggression, many months ago—

Senator GRAHAM. So you think this is successful?

Secretary BLINKEN. I would say two things. First, when we saw this as a possibility, we did two things, and we did both of them at the same time. We worked to see if we could head it off through diplomacy, and that—

Senator GRAHAM. And that didn't work.

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. And at the same—that did not work.

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Secretary BLINKEN. But we also said at the same time that we would make sure that we, and the Ukrainians, and the world, were prepared if Russia went through this aggression; and we have been. Ukraine has done an extraordinary job in pushing the Russians back from Kyiv, the world has come together to support the Ukrainians as a result of American leadership in American engagement. The world has come together to impose massive consequences on Russia for its aggression, again as a result of the Russia's invasion.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, with all due respects I don't—

Secretary BLINKEN. So I think in terms of what we set out to do, so far, this has been successful, but it has to be sustained.

Senator GRAHAM. I just take issue with the fact that we are being successful in Ukraine, one, they invaded and we told them not to, they did. They are killing people right and left, and you know we are slow getting weapons in. I hope it turns out well.

But do you think our withdrawal from Afghanistan affected Putin's decision to invade at all?

Secretary BLINKEN. I do not. Senator I think he looks at these things on their own terms when——

Senator GRAHAM. Why did he pick this year?

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. When he went, well, he went into Georgia in 2008 we had more than 150,000 troops between Afghanistan and Iraq.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Secretary BLINKEN. That did not deter him. When he went into Ukraine in 2014——

Senator GRAHAM. But he hasn't dismembered the State of Georgia, he has occupied—you know, there is two provinces there, but why did he choose to invade Ukraine this year, you believe?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think a number of factors came into play. I think he saw Ukraine moving inexorably to the west, to Europe, and he saw nothing that was going to interrupt that process, it was democratizing, it was strengthening its system. And having a successful democracy on Russia's borders was bad for Putin, and he had the ambition that he said in his own words——

Senator GRAHAM. Last year.

Secretary BLINKEN [continuing]. Ending its sovereignty and independence, and this was all that——

Senator GRAHAM. He doesn't recognize Ukraine as a separate nation.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. So it is not really about them being—they have been moving toward democracy for a long time. I think he invaded this year because I thought he——because he thinks he can get away with it.

So very quickly, 1 minute here. China, I just got back from the region. The people in Taiwan are very concerned about what happens in Ukraine. Do you agree that the outcome in Ukraine can influence what China does regarding Taiwan?

Secretary BLINKEN. I do. I think China is looking at this very carefully, and the fact that it is seen, as a result of our leadership, 40 countries or more, come together in a variety of ways to impose these massive costs on Russia for its aggression, that would have to factor into its calculus about Taiwan going forward.

Senator GRAHAM. Are you, as administration, committed to following Putin to the ends of the earth in supporting war crimes investigations and prosecution against him, individually? Do you believe that we could ever forgive and forget when it comes to Putin? Do you believe it is the right policy for the international community to pursue him as a war criminal in perpetuity?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, we are committed to doing everything we possibly can for as long as it takes to ensure that there is accountability for the crimes that have been committed.

Senator GRAHAM. That includes Putin himself?

Secretary BLINKEN. That includes—whoever committed the crimes, whoever ordered the crimes.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you Mr. Secretary. We both went about 10 minutes. We will endeavor to encourage others to stick to about seven, but I appreciate your forbearance.

I am going to ask Senator Durbin, who is next, if he would both question, and then preside if I have to run to vote during the next few minutes. You may uniquely, among the cabinet, be familiar with exactly how this all works, so thank you for your forbearance.

Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Thanks Mr. Chairman I want to make a point of being here today, Mr. Secretary, after I witnessed on television last night the exchange between you and the junior senator from Kentucky.

I hope that no one left that hearing, or believes today that his questioning represents the feeling of America. If Putin, or the Russians, or anyone take comfort in his questioning they are making a mistake. I think it should be clear, and you tried to make it as clear as you could, that we are not conceding any sphere of influence to Vladimir Putin, we are not conceding an anxious effort to understand what he is doing in Ukraine.

I understand what he is doing in Ukraine, it is very clear what he is doing, he has launched a vicious, barbaric, genocidal attack on this nation, unprovoked by them, and unsustained by international law as we know it. And I did not want any friends and allies of the United States to think that the junior senator from Kentucky expresses our point of view.

I cannot imagine the reverberations of that comment in the Baltics, for example. The Baltics were part of the Soviet Union because of the aggression of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, it had nothing to do with the people of those countries, asking to be part of any Soviet Union. And they survived to this day, a small, vibrant democracy that is loyal to the United States, because they are part of NATO, and they share our values. And we are not giving that up to Vladimir Putin under any circumstances. I hope what I have just said you agree with.

Secretary BLINKEN. I do.

Senator DURBIN. Good. Let me talk to you about a sentiment that has been expressed by Senator Moran, and also by Senator Graham, and I share. And the sentiment is this: The earliest analysis of what would occur when the Russians invaded Ukraine suggested, and this is before the invasion, that Kyiv would last a matter of days, the bulk of the country a matter of weeks, but the resistance that would be formed against any Russian occupation could go on for months or years.

And Putin would have learned under those circumstances that he had won a pyrrhic victory, if he even wanted to call it that. The reality of the situation is much different. Kyiv has not fallen, you were able to visit that city with the Secretary of Defense, the bulk of Ukraine is at least stable, though there are terrible examples of fighting going on at this point, and my concern is this, we are try-

ing to scramble in the last 53 days; is that correct, 54 days, to readjust our thinking about the future of Ukraine.

We underestimated the courage and resiliency of the Ukrainian people, the determination they have shown to defend their own country. We perhaps overestimated the power of the Russian Military, and as a consequence we have to readjust to the fact that Ukrainians have won significant victories.

My concern, as expressed by my Republican colleagues, is this, are we throwing a 10-foot rope to someone drowning 20-foot offshore? Are we falling short of what they need for something decisive to happen in our interest and their interest? Are we doing enough from a diplomatic or military viewpoint, from your point of view?

I would hate to be able to—I would hate to see the situation where we are seeing how proud we are of NATO coming together with all its strength, and at the end of the day a devastated Ukraine with refugees by the millions, and people in unmarked graves is what is left behind by Putin. That is hardly a NATO victory. Would you comment on that?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. What Russia has done and continues to do to Ukraine every day, the brutalization of the country, and the parts where Russia is engaged, is a tragedy that in and of itself can't be undone; people have died, been killed in the most awful ways, that can't be undone. People have been displaced from their homes, 5 million refugees, 7 million displaced persons inside of Ukraine, including, by most estimates, three-quarters of the children of the country have been displaced at one point. Some are moving back; and even if they come—when they come home that is not going to fully erase the trauma that they have been through.

So some of the—some of the damage that has been done is quite, literally, irreparable. Having said that, I believe that we are—the United States, many other countries coming together to make sure that—to the best of our ability—the Ukrainians have what is necessary to push back this Russian aggression.

They have done that successfully in and around Kyiv. They are engaged now in a ferocious fight in Southern and Eastern Ukraine. And as I mentioned a few moments ago, Secretary Austin was just in Germany yesterday with 40 Ministers of Defense to make sure that we are all coming together to get the Ukrainians the kind of weaponry that they need in a battle that has changed in its nature, to continue to do what they need to do to push back this Russian aggression.

We are focused like a laser on that, and on making sure that they have what they need. Some of that is coming from the United States, some of it is coming from many other countries that are engaged, and it is being done in an organized and coordinated fashion, and it is being done in full consultation with the Ukrainians. But as I said we have to continue to sustain that and follow through.

Let me just cite one quick example though, of how this has evolved. It used to be that when you—the President made a draw-down order, it might take some weeks for—between the time the order was given, and the time the equipment in question got into

the hands of those it was going to. This is now happening in many cases in as little as 72 hours. From the time the President did the drawdown to the time weapons are getting into the hands of Ukrainians to use them against the Russian aggression, 72 hours.

We were just there as you noted, and talked with all of the folks on the ground who are helping to make sure and coordinate the security assistance getting in to the Ukrainians. It is a remarkable operation, and it is working in real time. We have to keep that going, and we have to make sure that they are getting what they need to deal with the actual threats that they face.

Senator DURBIN. The President has made it clear that a patch of Polish real estate is a tripwire. He said that over and over again. I assume there are other tripwires which you may not want to be as explicit with us in this Committee setting in describing. I hope that they will include the consideration of the genocide which is taking place there as well, if there is a point beyond which we cannot, with good moral conscience, justify or even look the other way, or wait for a day to resolve it.

On the question of war criminals, I was surprised to learn that current American law does not give us any criminal authority to prosecute those who committed war crimes in other countries, nor does it give us any civil, anyone any civil authority over those same people. I have legislation to change that.

We should make it clear to anyone that has been engaged in Putin's strategy, they will never find a comfortable, safe home in the United States. And I hope that I can bring that to your attention and that you will—your people will take a look at it.

Secretary BLINKEN. I look forward to looking at that, Senator. Thank you.

Senator DURBIN. If I could mention two or three other things, Senator Hagerty, I will wrap it up quickly, because I know you probably are waiting to vote as well.

Afghanistan, Mark Frerichs, I wanted to make a point of making a record of our continuing concern about this Illinois resident, who is being held captive in Afghanistan; are you familiar with this situation?

Secretary BLINKEN. I am more than familiar with it. It is something that I am intensely focused on.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you. We hope that we can bring him home.

The Chinese bullying of Lithuania over their decision to recognize the Taiwanese office; are you aware of this situation?

Secretary BLINKEN. Again, more than aware of it; extremely focused on it. We jumped in very quickly when that happened, to make sure that we could bolster Lithuania, including with economic assistance, creating greater opportunities for trade and investment. We have also rallied countries and partners in the European Union to do the same thing. The European Union has stood up against this kind of coercive action by China, to combat the bullying that it has tried to use. And Lithuania has been extraordinary in its resilience and fortitude against it. But yes, very focused on that as well.

Senator DURBIN. Is there a path forward in Haiti with the situation that we currently face?

Secretary BLINKEN. It is a—it is long path forward, there are, as you know very well from the time you spent on this. There are two things that they rely on. First, we need to see the government, civil society, all actors come together to get us to elections, free and fair elections, that reestablish a fully legitimate Haitian Government and leadership. And that work is in progress. We are trying to facilitate that, and support that.

But having said that, the problems are so deep-rooted, and so challenging that I think that the road is very long, the criminality, violence, the lack of basic law and order is a fundamental problem that we are working to address, including by supporting and strengthening the Haitian National Police, and getting other countries to do the same, that is very much a work in progress.

The endemic poverty, and lack of economic opportunity, one of the challenges, Senator, is that, you know we have—we and other countries, over many years have devoted substantial resources to Haiti, but to date the honest truth is that it has not made a sustainable difference. We have to be, and we are, looking at: How can we do this more effectively, to help Haiti get to a place where it is sustainable.

And of course, it has been on the receiving end of one horrific thing after another, including natural disasters that continue to set back what progress is made. So the short answer is: This is a long road, we are looking at and focused on trying to get the elections, and having a government that can fully represent the people.

We are trying to work on basic security by bolstering the police, and dealing with the criminality, the gangs which are terrorizing parts of the country, but then there is a much longer project in helping Haiti to really stand on its feet in a self-sustaining way.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you I am going to send you a written question related to my efforts to secure the release of Philippine Senator Philippine Sen. Leila de Lima.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator DURBIN. One of the critics of the Duterte Regime.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator DURBIN. I would like to know your take on the current state of affairs there? I will save that because I see Senator Hagerty waiting, I know he has to vote. So Senator, please take it away.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator Durbin.

And Secretary Blinken, it is good to see you again. I appreciated our interaction yesterday at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as we talked about the importance of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, the Quad, the Indo-Pacific, and I look forward to continue working with you on those issues.

I would like to turn my discussion with you today, though, on something else that is related to the region but also it hits us right here at home. And that is China's refusal to stop the flow of fentanyl and its precursors into the Western Hemisphere.

I have raised this issue with your assistant secretaries, with your deputy assistant secretaries, but I want to raise it with you today because it is that important. I feel like we need decisive action, and it is for the safety of Americans, it is for the safety of our children. We are both parents. I am sure you feel the same.

Today in America, the number one cause of death for young people between the age of 18 and 45 is drug overdose, 100,000 lives were lost last year to drug overdoses, and most of those drug overdoses were fentanyl-related. And the DEA continues to assess that fentanyl coming from China into Mexico is the major cause of this.

It is it is something that I talked about with Mexican officials last May when I traveled to Mexico. They talked about the fact that Chinese entities are sending technicians, they are sending equipment, and setting up production in partnership with Mexican cartels there. And these cartels are multi-billion-dollar industries that have basically taken control of the northern border of Mexico.

I met with your counterpart, Foreign Minister Ebrard, and asked him what we could do to cooperate, what we could do to help. And he told me that they would greatly appreciate help with things in the nature of scanning technologies, anything that would help them determine whether fentanyl, or its precursors, or the machinery to produce it was coming into his country.

I appreciated his concern there, and I think it is something that we ought to continue to focus on. You know, I was on the phone with White House Staff during the Buenos Aires G20, when President Trump directly asked President Xi to stop sending fentanyl to the United States.

My sense is that we need to really double down on our pressure with China on this. If President Xi and the Chinese Communist Party can shut down a city the size of Shanghai, one of the three largest cities in the world, I think they could certainly shut down the flow of fentanyl and its precursors into our hemisphere.

And I know you have many difficult conversations with your Chinese counterparts, but I would like to hear your thoughts on what our strategy might be, and encourage you to take on this difficult challenge too?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, thank you for raising that. I very much share your concern I appreciate your focus on it, and the efforts you have been making. And I agree with you, this is a problem that needs intense focus and solutions. We have been working on this in a number of ways. We have been working to add some of the precursors to a prohibited list to make clear that you can't get fentanyl or variants in through the back door by using precursors that are, for one reason or another, not on a prohibited list.

We have made some progress there. We are working with the Mexicans on exactly this question, to reestablished the security dialogue with them last year, and part of this is looking at the—of course the flow of drugs of any kind into the country. And what assistance do they need to more effectively police it.

I am going to follow up on the specific suggestion that you referenced, to make sure that we are, if we haven't already done it, actually looking at that, and doubling up back with them on what it is they need to effectively police fentanyl. I can tell you this has come up in engagements between President Biden and President Xi. So it has been raised to that level as well,

But I would also welcome working with you and your team on ways that we can effectively address this problem.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate that very much. And again in my conversations with Foreign Minister Ebrard that may have predated what you have been talking about. But he sincerely believed that there were technology solutions that we could help provide that would help them. I have seen some of those technology solutions deployed at our southern border.

I went to our southern border earlier this month to see what is happening there, it is a travesty in terms of the flow of narcotics coming across the border. But again, I saw the technology that we are putting in place now that sense, in a very sophisticated manner, the illegal substances that, at least where they may be hidden. So I appreciate any efforts that you might make to work on that.

I also wanted to take on, for just a moment longer, the topic of India, and our U.S.-India relations. The world's oldest democracy, of course, is the United States, but India is the world's biggest democracy. And I think they have you know—I think what I see before us is something I am certain that is very frustrating in the short term, when we have our differences, and you deal with that every day.

But in the long term, this strategic partnership that we have with India I think poses the opportunity to do more good in the 21st century, and have more consequence, more impact than anything that the CCP could do, coming from their perspective. And I believe that there is great, untapped potential there in terms of developing that partnership for the good of all.

And I would look forward to hearing your views in terms of what concrete steps the United States and India could take together to deepen our strategic alliance.

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I very much share your perspective. I think this partnership has the potential to be one of the most important and foundational partnerships that we have going forward, over the next decades. This has actually been, I think, a success story over multiple administrations, going back to the end of the Clinton administration, through the Bush administration, particularly with the Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreement that, by the way, now President then Senator Biden helped shepherd through this institution; through the Trump administration as well, and prior to that, the Obama administration; and now through ours.

President Biden spent a lot of time directly engaged with Prime Minister Modi and India's leadership. Of course, as you know very well, we have energized the Quad that brings India together with Australia, and Japan, and us. This has been a very important vehicle for strengthening our collaboration across a whole variety of fronts with India, I have spent a lot of time with my Indian counterpart, and very much agree with you.

What is interesting, and we talked about this a little bit yesterday at the Foreign Relations Committee is, this is a moment of, I think, strategic inflection, by which I mean this: A number of countries are now re-looking at some of their relationships, and some of their interests, particularly when it comes to their relationships with Russia.

And of course in the case of India, there is a relationship that goes back decades, and Russia for India was out of necessity, a

partner of choice when we were not in a position to be a partner. Now, we are. And we are investing in that effort. I think there is a growing strategic convergence between the United States and India, and of course China is a big part of that.

Senator HAGERTY. Yes.

Secretary BLINKEN. But I very much share your perspective, and this is a major area of focus for the administration, and for me, to make sure that we are doing everything we can to strengthen and to build on that partnership going forward.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate that very much, Mr. Secretary. And I would just add one more point of encouragement. On my recent trip to Japan I spoke with Prime Minister Abe, who developed a very good relationship with Prime Minister Modi, and I know you know Prime Minister Abe as well. And I would encourage you, as you talk with your Japanese counterparts, to engage them in finding good ways to work together with India, because they seem to be on the same track and the same mindset as we are. Thank you very much for your comments today.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Appreciate your testimony.

Senator COONS. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me start by congratulating you on assuming the chairmanship of the subcommittee first hearing. And look forward to working with you, and the Ranking Member.

And I also want to commend the Chairman of the Full Committee, Senator Leahy, as others have done, for his incredible service.

Mr. Secretary, good to see you. We had a chance to talk yesterday in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, so I am not going to retread that ground. But I do want to circle back on the sanctions issue now, because I think you, and the President, and the Secretary of Defense, the whole team have done a really good job in accelerating now the deployment of weapons. And also isolating Russia to the extent we can, at the UN and other places, and moving forward on sanctions.

But as the sanctions go on, sustaining them is going to be key, and expanding them is going to be key. And leakage in the sanctions only helps Putin. And there are countries that right now, and other entities, that are violating the sanctions. As you indicated yesterday when I asked, we have not applied any secondary sanctions, so far. I think we have got to use the secondary sanctions authority the administration has, including against countries, and entities and countries that are not simply maintaining their current or pre-war imports of Russian oil and gas, and other commodities, but have increased them.

And I would just urge you to do it, because I think you are going to see growing movement for mandatory sanctions in the Senate and the House if you don't use the existing authorities that you have got within the administration. I just want to make that really clear.

Let me say something about the Czech Republic, and you and I, and others, just came from a beautiful memorial service for Secretary Albright. Of course she and her family came the United

States from then Czechoslovakia when I think she was about 11 years old.

I had a meeting with the Czech Foreign Minister yesterday and, yes, he indicated that they were willing and wanting to provide some of their Soviet-era helicopters Mi-24s to Ukraine, but wanted sort of a swift agreement for us to replace those with Vipers, and if not new Vipers, with some of the Vipers out of our inventory now. So I just want to encourage you to move forward on that as fast as possible.

Secretary BLINKEN. And Senator, just on that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes.

Secretary BLINKEN. The Defense Department is looking at that right now.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes.

Secretary BLINKEN. This is something that I think is very important across the board, which is a number of allies and partners have provided weapons from their stocks to the Ukrainians, in some cases that leaves a void that understandably they want to fill. One of the things that we will be coming forward with in the supplemental, are funds to help provide additional foreign military financing to partners, and allies. That is one vehicle by which they can make up any of the systems that they have shared with the Ukrainians that leave a void with them.

At the same time, of course, we are looking at what we have on hand. The Pentagon is focused on this particular case, as well as a number of others.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Great. No, I appreciate that. No, I know you are trying to overturn every stone, but anything we can do to accelerate that effort.

Of course something else Secretary Albright was very involved in was trying to stop the bloodshed and atrocities in the Balkans at the time, and I also had a chance to meet with the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina yesterday, and I think Senator Shaheen raised this issue, and I just want to underscore it. I think we are worried about what will happen in November when, as I understand the process, the UN Security Council has to continue to authorize the presence of international forces, and if Putin exercises that sanction—that veto it is a real problem.

I know it is on your radar screen I think. I am pleased to see the actions the United States has taken with respect to a DODIC in the IRS, I hope we will encourage our European allies to work in that direction. As you said yesterday to try to accelerate the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European family.

A couple other issues; Senator Menendez raised yesterday, the fact that Turkey had now, essentially, convicted Osman Kavala to a life sentence; you know, clearly a political prosecution, no legitimate basis for it, the administration did make a sort of a tepid statement, you know, showing unhappiness. But this combined with the fact that Turkey is continuing to move forward in their effort to ban the main Kurdish Party in Turkey from participating in the elections, seems to me something that the administration really needs to press hard on.

In the case of the HDP you have got, just last Tuesday, April 19th, you know, they were challenging it in the court, this effort

to ban them, but Turkey's top court accepted an indictment filed by the prosecutor seeking closure of the HDP. I mean this is just a blatant disregard for any standards of democracy. And so I just hope we will be very strong on it, and obviously we have a complicated relationship with Turkey, there are lots of pieces. But this, something you have been involved in for years trying to support our allies, the Syrian Kurds that, you know, Turkey continues to try to take them out whenever they can, so I think we have a lot of work to do on that front.

Let me just close by asking you about the President's pledge during the campaign. And I think you reemphasized again when you were asked last October, about the Consulate in Jerusalem, to establish, you know, greater—reestablish that Consulate for our relations with the Palestinians. Can you give us an update on where that stands?

Secretary BLINKEN. We are committed to reopening the consulate in Jerusalem for the Palestinians. It is something that we are working on with the Israeli Government. I was in Ramallah just a few weeks ago, and saw President Abbas. We talked about that, among other things.

As you know, we reestablished support for the Palestinians a year ago, January, including significant humanitarian and economic assistance that had been previously held back. We have re-engaged them across the board, and the consulate is a piece of that.

It does, of course, require coordination with and support from Israel including, for example, providing privileges and immunities for the staff of the Consulate to be. So it is a work in progress, but it is something that we continue to work on.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I appreciate your efforts. And thank you for going through a whole lot of issues very quickly.

Secretary BLINKEN. All right.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have got to go vote I think.

Senator COONS. Thank you. And Mr. Secretary, it is my understanding we have no other members seeking recognition.

If I might; I just have two or three quick questions on some very specific programs that Senator Graham and I have worked together on over a number of years, both to get them authorized in law, and then to fund them. I have a lot of other questions I would be happy to ask, but we both have other things we need to get to.

The Global Fragility Act, as you know, one of the things that Secretary Albright contributed to was the development of Plan Colombia. And the whole concept of a coordinated plan between diplomacy, development, and security came out of Plan Colombia. Senator Graham and I worked over several Congresses to, ultimately to get the Global Fragility Act signed into law. And I would welcome a chance to talk in more detail about the selection process, the path forward, the strategy to prevent conflict, and promote stability.

I would be interested just in hearing briefly now from you, a timeline for the development of implementation plans, and the requests for funding were very modest relative to the scale of the problems. We have many other areas where we have requests that outstrip the budget of this Committee, I would just be interested

in your view on the timeline for implementing these strategies, and what we might be able to do together to improve the focus, and investment in this area?

Secretary BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, the timeline for implementation of that is now, because just a few weeks ago the President signed off on our proposed focus, including the countries in question that we would focus on, and so this is something we are moving out on, and very much welcome working with you on, as we move forward in actually implementing it. But it is right on the—right on the front burner.

Senator COONS. Thank you. The Development Finance Corporation, I am planning to have a hearing with Scott Nathan, the CEO, to discuss their fiscal request. But I just wanted your view of their performance to date, and their role in supporting the administration's priorities.

Senator Graham asked about China, there are a number of other members that see its significant potential, whether it is in climate resiliency, and combating climate change, whether it is in the West Bank, or in developing better opportunities for economic development that might promote stability in other areas. What is your view of how they have performed?

Secretary BLINKEN. And I am sorry could you just repeat that the last part of that?

Senator COONS. Well, the Development Finance Corporation—

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator COONS [continuing]. Has a, potentially, very broad range of areas of activity, each senator has their own view as to whether it should be principally countering China, or dealing with climate, or working in the Middle East, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or elsewhere. I would just be interested in your overall view as to whether they have achieved the potential that the Act that created the Development Finance Corporation imagined for.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. First, I am a very strong supporter of the DFC. I think it is a very important and powerful tool, one that that I appreciate. And it gives us the ability to do a number of things. One of the things it gives us the ability to do is to more effectively offer an affirmative, positive alternative to China's development programs, including Belt and Road.

We can make this a race to the top, not a race to the bottom, including by using DFC, not only of course with its own resources, but the fact that it has the ability to leverage significant private-sector resources.

And so that is one area of focus for me, is making sure that we use this effectively as a way of actually advancing concrete projects that are, again, attractive and affirmative, and don't bring with them, for example, many of the burdens that we see countries take on when they are, for example, working with China. Debt, workers brought into—from China to actually build the projects instead of using local workers, no respect for the environment, for worker rights, corruption, et cetera. But we needed the tools to do that, the DFC is one of them.

We also have to make sure, and this is an area of real focus, that we have, and the DFC can be engaged in viable projects. So the money may be there, we have got to make sure that the projects

are there, and in a way that really brings the private sector in, so we are very focused on that.

It also joins up with a couple of things. It joins up with Build Back Better World, which I think is a very important initiative that the President has undertaken. Again, to make sure that in critical areas, including energy, and climate, health, and technology we are investing in, engaged in projects that will be a race to the top for the countries that are—that we are doing them with.

And DFC is one of the tools that we can bring to bear on making Build Back Better World effective. We have been identifying projects in different parts of the world that makes sense. I think we will be moving out on a number of them shortly.

Now, having said that, I think we need to look at ways to maximize the potential of DFC. I am not convinced that we have gotten to that point yet. So we have a lot of focus on it. I actually, by statute, chair of the Board. The Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, Brian McKeon, is intimately involved with DFC, and working on that on a regular basis.

I would welcome, actually, sharing ideas with you about how we can use it even more effectively going forward.

Senator COONS. Thank you. As of right now, the way that the equity provisions of it are scored, is causing me some—I respect and understand the concerns of long-standing staff on the Appropriations Committee about the secondary or follow-on consequences it might have if we were to change the treatment of the DFC Equity Authority.

But I think we are under utilizing a very powerful tool, and I would welcome interacting with you, and with my other colleagues on this Committee, and the administration, on how we can make sure that the DFC and Build Back Better World fund together, are allowing us to really combat China's pernicious influence.

In my first 6 years here as Chair of the Africa subcommittee, I saw it in country after country, all over the Continent. I was with former President Sirleaf of Liberia last night, and was reminded of my very first conversation with her a dozen years ago now, where she was asking for U.S. help rebuilding the Mount Coffee dam that had been destroyed in their civil war.

And after several meetings she basically said, well, I guess the United States doesn't do this anymore, we will have to take Chinese funding. Ultimately our partners in Europe were able to provide funding for the restoration of that critical source of clean energy, and stability for Liberia. But there are dozens of countries around the world that would rather work with the United States than work with China, if we can just provide them with the source of funding. And I think DFC could be a critical part of the answer, to that, Secretary.

Secretary BLINKEN. I couldn't agree with you more. And I think one of the things that we really have to work on with DFC and other vehicles is the speed with which we are able to engage on things, because what exactly what you described, I have heard again and again, that the process across different agencies, I am not—I am not just talking about DFC, is slow, laborious.

Now, we have to do the right due diligence. That is vital. But I think there are ways to make what we do more efficient, quicker,

more responsive to needs. And I agree with you the DFC is a major—can be a major part of that so we should work on making it work even more effectively.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your testimony before the subcommittee today. I think the conflict in Ukraine, Russia's completely unjustified and unacceptable brutality against the civilians of Ukraine, its attempt to rebuild the Russian Empire, and the ways in which it is shaking the very foundations of peace in Europe, the rules-based international order, is the most pressing issue of the day.

I am grateful that you and Secretary Austin have taken the initiative to engage with our allies, to deploy resources, to travel to Kyiv, personally, and to testify before this Committee today when you have just returned, at a moment when it is so critical. That we continue to work in close partnership to show the impact of American diplomacy, and to show the impact of the resources that we can and should provide to support our critical NATO allies, to support the Ukrainian people and their resistance, and to meet the pressing humanitarian needs of all impacted by this conflict.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senator COONS. Questions for the record will remain open—they need to be submitted—excuse me—by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 3. So the hearing record will remain open until that point.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Department for response subsequent to the hearing:]

No questions were submitted for the record.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator COONS. And again, Mr. Secretary, thank you for your testimony.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:15 p.m., Wednesday, April 27, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

**STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED
PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2023**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 2:35 p.m., in room S-124, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher A. Coons (Chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Coons, Leahy, Durbin, Shaheen, and Graham.

**UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Senator COONS. I call this hearing of the Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs to order.

Good afternoon. The subcommittee is meeting today to review the fiscal year 2023 budget request for the United States Agency for International Development, and it is our honor to have Administrator Samantha Power before us. She is a champion for global development and democracy. She's engaged in critical efforts for America's leadership and our role in the world and is today, along with thousands of people who serve as part of USAID around the world, making big headway against a whole wide panoply of critical changes.

So I am going to wait for a few minutes for the arrival of the Full Committee Chairman before making broader remarks, but I've just returned from Europe on a codel led by Chairman Leahy and was reminded of just how much of an impact he's had in his service as Chairman of this subcommittee and of now the Full Committee.

Let me just briefly review the scope of challenges that we face. An unprovoked and unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine which is creating not only a vast refugee crisis into Central and Eastern Europe but also a hunger crisis, a humanitarian crisis across more than a dozen other countries, an ongoing global pandemic which, although many of us would like to be done with it, it is not done with us, and we continue to see variants emerge around the world and greater risk to our country and to many others, a warming climate and an increasing number and severity of climate shocks that affect vulnerable communities here and around the world, and a

whole series of humanitarian crises that predate the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

So countries from Ethiopia to Yemen, Afghanistan to Syria to Venezuela have domestic and regional challenges. We've seen democratic backsliding, the challenges of corruption and development, human rights, Rule of Law, all around the world, and as a backdrop to much of this, competition to the United States and our role in the world and our way of life from China and other authoritarian actors.

But I'll say just by way of opening framing that I see these challenges as also being opportunities, opportunities to demonstrate American leadership, to recommit to advancing democracy and human rights in the world, to diversify our partnerships with other development partners in other countries, to increase locally-led development, and to work to make our aid more effective and responsive.

I commend President Biden for proposing strong investments to address the challenges I just laid out and to seize opportunities this coming fiscal year for us to demonstrate our role in the world.

I am concerned that our needs are far outweighing our ability to respond, given what has been the allocation to this subcommittee over the last couple of years.

The President's budget request is 14 percent above the previous year-enacted level. That increase, just by way of comparison, in absolute terms would be just 1 percent of our total Defense budget, and I think it would be an important head start on meeting our actual needs to address these crises.

The budget requests increase for humanitarian assistance, pandemic preparedness, climate adaptation and mitigation, democracy programs, and locally-led development.

I look forward to discussing these and other elements of this budget request with you, Administrator.

We also have to recognize the challenge of getting to a fiscal year 2023 SFOPS bill. If we are to fail and instead have a full year continuing resolution, U.S. foreign assistance would be on autopilot. We would fail in our challenge of making strategic updates and would not be delivering on good foreign policy and responsible budgeting.

So I also think it's urgent we pass the COVID-19 Supplemental for both domestic and foreign needs that was debated, considered, but not ultimately enacted. We continue to face the challenge of billions of unvaccinated people and in countries where the vaccination rate is below 10 percent and where we face the risk of possible new variants developing there.

So the pandemic, climate change, the war in Ukraine, Madam Administrator, I very much look forward to your testimony today, and I'll hand this over to Senator Graham.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LINDSAY GRAHAM

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Number 1, the increase in funding is something all of us should consider given the problems that we have in the world. USAID is a very valuable part of our national security strategy. I see it as part of our national security in another form.

Your agency is present in some of the most dangerous places in the world. People working for you directly and USAID contractors put their lives at risk working overseas, and that is very much appreciated.

We have some differences on family planning, climate change, mandatory spending, and the global pandemic but, generally speaking, the subcommittee with Senator Coons and Senator Leahy has been able to pound out, I think, a good budget and I hope we do so this time.

The supplemental appropriations bill had \$18.9 billion for assistance for Ukraine, \$5.458 billion went to food and humanitarian assistance, and I'm very interested in hearing about how this money gets out the door and on the ground to people who need it as soon as possible, so that we can head off a lot of problems.

One of the things I think is missing and not a particularly Republican-Democrat problem is: what is the strategy concerning the international affairs part of our budget and what is the role of the United States in the world? What do we get out of Ukraine? Why are we helping Ukraine but get out of Afghanistan? I'd like to help both.

From the national security perspective, the international affairs budget is 1 percent of spending. Is it being coordinated in a fashion to get the best results when it comes to our national security?

China, we all see China as a rising threat to democracy. What should we do in Asia? The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), how does it interact with the USAID? Half of our problem in Asia is not showing up. The Solomon Islands is a good example of where China has filled a vacuum.

So, you can count me in for spending more in this space if it's part of an overall plan and part of showing up in Africa and Asia and not through military uniforms as much as through economic assistance and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The DFC is a good concept. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is a good concept. USAID. How do all these agencies work together to get an outcome?

So, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to trying to not only do a fiscal year 2023 budget, but to make sure that if we do another supplemental, the money's well spent. To the American people, the combination of wars and famine and climate change, you name it, has led to a historic number of people without food who are going to move to a place where there is food if somebody doesn't come in and find a way to keep them where they live. This \$5 billion in supplemental funding is a generous allocation by the American people.

I just want to let my colleagues on this Committee on both sides of the aisle know it's not enough. We'll be doing this again because I don't see anything getting better any time soon.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I enjoy the Committee. I love the work we do, and it's one area in the Congress where I think we tend to come together, and I want to keep it that way.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Madam Administrator.

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, Senator Durbin, good to see you, incoming Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee.

I am grateful above all for your leadership as Chair and Ranking, that of your teams. You know, you have an oversight role but honestly you have a brainstorming, a collaboration, a how do we stare at the puzzle and the predicament of a confluence of crises together and come up with tools that are fit for purpose in the here and now. I really feel like we are one team.

I'm grateful for the chance to discuss the fiscal year 2023 President's budget request for USAID, and I look forward to having the chance to wade into some of the issues that you've touched upon in your opening statements, but I think echoing a couple of the points that have been made, I'd like to just step back and try to frame the discussion ahead by starting with the idea that I think it is no overstatement that right now right here we are gathering at a juncture in our history at an inflection point.

For 16 straight years we've seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline. The world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the end of the Cold War, and for several years, as we have seen vividly, graphically, horrifically in recent days in Ukraine, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen, claiming that they can get done for their people things with a speed and an efficiency that they claim democracies lack, taking advantage of our open systems also to meddle and that's true of countries with democratic environments all around the world.

We see with what Putin is doing in Ukraine just how empty that rhetoric is, just how dark the road to and from autocracy is, Putin's brutal war on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine, the People's Republic of China's campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinsheng.

Now with autocracies on their back heel, now is the moment for the world's democracies to unite and to take a big step forward after so many years of losing ground.

If the world's free nations with the United States in the lead are able to unite and catalyze the efforts of our allies, the private sector and our multilateral institutions, if we can marshal the resources necessary to help partner nations and freedom-loving, freedom-coveting populations, we have a chance to extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to billions more people.

This has been USAID's mission since its inception more than six decades ago and to reiterate, I am so truly grateful to you for your continued bipartisan support of our efforts to save lives, to strengthen economies, to prevent fragility and conflict, and to promote resilience to all of the shocks that we have been discussing already here today, as well as your support in helping bolster freedom and the cause of freedom around the world.

USAID's work is a testament to the fact that America and the American people care about the plight of others, that we can competently accomplish mammoth goals that no other country can, and that the work we do abroad also matters to the American people here at home. It makes us safer. It makes us more prosperous. It engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation.

Thanks to your past support, the U.S. has helped get more than a half a billion COVID-19 vaccines to people in 115 countries. We've led life-saving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine, of course. We've helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the U.S. while working to strengthen worker protections, and we've assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We're also making strides to become a much more nimble agency at a time of immense demands that you've alluded to, shoring up a depleted workforce by welcoming new recruits and operating with greater flexibility, including some that you have afforded us in the recent appropriations cycle.

The Biden-Harris Administration's fiscal year 2023 discretionary request of \$29.4 billion will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and the systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so that the United States can seize this moment.

Last week with bipartisan support you passed a nearly \$40 billion package for Ukraine that will provide vital assistance to our support of displaced peoples, to the country's recovery, and to the secondary effects on food, fuel, and fertilizer that we're witnessing as a result of the Russian Federation's belligerence.

Your bipartisan support for a robust fiscal year 2023 top line for the State, Foreign Operations Senate bill will help us meet this moment and advance American interests and the critical foreign policy and development priorities before us.

The challenges, of course, in Ukraine and beyond are significant. Putin's war has displaced more than 14 million people, including two-thirds of Ukraine's children. It has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies around the world, further taxing an already overwhelmed international system.

Up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity in 2022 due to Putin's war.

Two difficult years of the COVID-19 pandemic have set back development gains and despite the U.S. leadership in vaccinating the world, leadership which has accrued such benefit to the health of citizens in the countries in which we work but also indirect benefit to the American people, that job remains unfinished.

Multibillion dollar climate shocks appear each year with more frequency and these challenges only compound suffering in places where there are already humanitarian crises, like Ethiopia, Syria, and Yemen. Yet as grave as these challenges are, I sincerely believe that this opportunity, this moment, this point of inflection provides us a huge opportunity to meet the moment and meet the needs to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

By providing the resources necessary to seize this moment, the United States can galvanize commitments from our allies and our private sector partners. We can help reserve years of democratic decline and we can demonstrate to the world that democracies can

deliver in a way that autocracies certainly cannot. With your support USAID will move aggressively to seize this opportunity.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR SAMANTHA POWER

Thank you Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the fiscal year 2023 President's Budget Request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

It is no overstatement to say we gather at a profound juncture in history.

For 16 straight years, we've seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline—the world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the Cold War. And for several years, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen on the world stage, claiming that they can get things done for the people with a speed and effectiveness that democracies cannot match.

Today, we see just how empty that rhetoric is, and just how dark the road to autocracy can be. Vladimir Putin's brutal war on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine has shown a callous disregard for human life, global stability, and the very idea of truth itself. The courage of the people of Ukraine and the stalwart support of the United States and our allies and partners has unified and inspired people around the world striving for peace, democracy, human rights and freedom. Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China continues its campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, forcibly detaining more than one million Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups.

If the world's free nations, with the United States in the lead, are able to unite the efforts of our allies, the private sector, and our multilateral institutions, and marshal the resources necessary to help partner nations stand up to autocracies, manage the aftershocks of Putin's war against Ukraine, end the pandemic, fight climate change, prevent conflict and promote stability, and safeguard democratic reforms, we have a chance extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to billions.

This has been USAID's mission since its inception six decades ago, and I am immensely grateful to you for your continued bipartisan support of our efforts to save lives, strengthen economies, prevent fragility, promote resilience, and bolster freedom around the world. USAID's work is a demonstration to the world that America cares about the plight of others, and that we can competently accomplish mammoth goals that no other country can. But the work we do abroad also matters to Americans here at home—it makes us safer, more prosperous, engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation, and creates a better future for the generations to come. Your bipartisan support for a robust fiscal year 23 topline for the State Foreign Operations Senate bill will help us meet this moment and advance American interests and the critical foreign policy and development priorities before us.

The Biden-Harris Administration's fiscal year 2023 request of \$29.4 billion fully funding foreign assistance that is partially implemented by USAID is a reflection of the critical importance of development and humanitarian assistance in advancing U.S. interests around the world. The fiscal year 2023 request also includes vital assistance to respond to the growing number of development priorities and global humanitarian crises. The request additionally includes \$6.5 billion in mandatory funding for the State Department and USAID to make transformative investments in pandemic and other biological threat preparedness globally, including financing for the new pandemic preparedness and global health security fund being established this summer, with leadership by the Indonesian G20 presidency and other partners around the world.

We know, though, that the mammoth needs around the world—from the COVID-19 pandemic's continued effects to multi-billion dollar climate shocks to a spike in global food, energy, and fertilizer prices due to the Russian Federation's belligerence—are far larger than any single nation's ability to meet them. The request will allow the United States to lead, and in leading, allow us to mobilize allies, organizations, and private sector partners to contribute more to the causes critical to our nation's interests.

Thanks to your past support, the United States has helped get more than half a billion COVID-19 vaccines to people in 115 countries; led life-saving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine; helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the U.S. while working to strength-

en worker protections; and assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances, while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs, and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We are also making strides to become a much more nimble Agency at a time of immense demands, shoring up a depleted Agency by welcoming new recruits, and operating with greater flexibility. The fiscal year 2023 Request will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so the United States can seize this moment in history.

Supporting the people of Ukraine and managing the global food crisis stemming from the Kremlin's war of aggression

As we enter the third month of the Russian Federation's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, the humanitarian situation has grown dire, especially in the country's east, even as Ukraine continues to put up stiff resistance on the battlefield. We are actively programming resources passed in the March 15th Ukraine Supplemental Act and seeking additional supplemental resources to continue supporting the people of Ukraine and address rising global food insecurity as they continue to defend their sovereignty and their country. These resources are critical to making sure that Russia's war against Ukraine is a strategic failure for the Kremlin, while easing the global suffering their actions have caused.

Since the war began, more than 13 million people have been displaced—over a quarter of Ukraine's population including two-thirds of the country's children. That includes 5.7 million refugees, 90 percent of whom are women and children. An estimated 7.7 million more people are internally displaced inside Ukraine. An estimated 15.7 million people inside Ukraine will need humanitarian assistance over the next 4 months.

These supplemental resources that Congress provided have been instrumental in surging critically-needed assistance to those in need in the country, and to mobilizing the humanitarian systems required to coordinate a significant response. To date, our implementing partner, the World Food Program—which was not present on the ground in Ukraine when the conflict broke out—has scaled up its presence, and has now provided nearly 3.5 million people with rapid response rations, bread distributions, and cash-based transfers, with plans to increase distribution to reach 6 million people by June. With support from the United States and other donors, UNICEF and its local partners have provided critical health supplies to support access to primary healthcare for over 1.5 million children and women and ensured access to safe water for nearly 1.3 million people in affected areas as of May 3. While much has been accomplished, we recognize that more must be done, particularly in securing humanitarian access to reach those in active conflict zones with the assistance they urgently need.

To support the Ukrainian government's ability to administer services and manage its budgetary needs, USAID has contributed \$500 million to the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Ukraine (MDTF), and as President Biden announced recently, we plan to transfer an additional \$500 million from the fiscal year 2022 Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, for a total of \$1 billion. The supplemental funding will also enable us to provide assistance to Ukraine and neighboring frontline states like Moldova. This plan focuses on economic stabilization, countering disinformation, and promoting energy independence.

Of course, Putin's war has effects beyond Ukraine's borders. The Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies, while also denting crop production and household incomes, and causing already high food prices to rise further, thereby taxing the international humanitarian system. USAID is coordinating with other U.S. Departments and Agencies to respond to immediate, medium-, and long-term impacts on global food security and nutrition. Estimates suggest that up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity over the coming year—in addition to the over 800 million people around the world who already face hunger. These populations are mostly focused in the Middle East, and West and East Africa, where higher fertilizer prices today threaten crop yields and harvests tomorrow. With the main planting season about to begin, countries like Ethiopia and South Sudan face the possibility of significant reductions to projected crop yields, food accessibility, and household incomes.

Putin's attack and its devastating effects on global food security comes on top of 2 years of record food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. In fiscal year 2022, nearly two thirds of our Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's programming was to address food insecurity and prevent famine through

emergency food assistance and related programming. This year, a similar proportion of funding will go to address growing food insecurity, however, due to the skyrocketing costs of food and fuel, the same amount of funding will reach 10 million fewer people.

In light of the food crisis, USAID, together with our partners at USDA, have made the exceptional decision to draw down the full balance of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust—\$282 million—which will be used to procure U.S. food commodities to bolster existing emergency food operations in six countries facing severe food insecurity: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen. We are immensely grateful to USDA, which will provide \$388 million in additional funding through the Commodity Credit Corporation to cover transportation and other associated costs so that food can get to places around the globe where it is needed most.

Yet even as we meet short-term food assistance needs, we must continue to invest in long-term food security and build resilient food systems so that countries have the ability to feed themselves, lower their dependence on Russian wheat and agriculture, and manage future food shocks.

The United States Government has long been a global leader in addressing global food insecurity. In the first 7 years since the launch of the U.S. Feed the Future Initiative, the program is estimated to have lifted 23.4 million people out of poverty, 5.2 million households out of hunger, and 3.4 million children from risk of stunting. That's in addition to the program's measurable benefits for farmers and agribusinesses here in the U.S. and around the world, due to increased agricultural productivity, trade, jobs and income, and U.S. exports.

And yet, new disruptions to food security around the world indicate that our need for funding will continue to be significant. That's why the fiscal year 2023 request includes over \$1 billion in State and USAID economic and development funding for global food security. This money will go towards bolstering Feed the Future initiatives around the world, strengthening food systems, supporting farmers, and building community resilience.

CONTROLLING COVID-19 AND STRENGTHENING GLOBAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Much has changed from the haunting early days in March 2020. Thanks to funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and additional supplemental appropriations, the United States has been the clear leader in the international response to COVID-19, and our Agency has already invested over 95 percent of the funding Congress has generously provided to us, and we expect to obligate virtually all of the remaining funds by July.

We have expanded testing, treatment, and surveillance in countries around the world. In hotspots in Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, we have provided rapid responses for urgent healthcare needs, critical commodities, and technical assistance. And we have helped support developing countries in mitigating the transmission and morbidity of COVID-19, while also helping those countries prevent and mitigate food insecurity, gender-based violence, and other secondary effects of COVID-19.

Our Agency has also helped lead the effort to vaccinate the world. In partnership with the Department of Defense, we have procured 1 billion Pfizer vaccine doses for up to 100 countries around the world, free of charge and with no strings attached. We are addressing the most urgent vaccine delivery and country readiness needs in more than 100 countries, including surge support to 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, under the U.S. government's Global VAX initiative. We are leading Global VAX as a whole-of-government effort in close partnership with the Centers for Disease Control—and we are already seeing significant vaccination progress in these countries such as Uganda, where vaccination coverage increased fivefold between January and May, and Nigeria, where vaccination rates increased nearly threefold during that same time period.

And yet, our job remains unfinished. Many countries are still off track to hit their vaccination coverage targets this year. Global testing, treatment, and health services still lag. Without additional resources, many of our programs will begin wrapping up activities and closing down this fall. And we risk a significant loss of progress in our other global health programs if we cannot secure needed emergency funds. That's why President Biden requested \$22.5 billion in supplemental funding to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, \$5 billion of which would be dedicated to global efforts.

Additional supplemental funding would enable a significant expansion of our international vaccination drive, provide surge support to an additional 20-to-25 undervaccinated countries in significant need, countries like Liberia, where 24 percent of the population is vaccinated, and Haiti, where less than 2 percent of the pop-

ulation is fully vaccinated. It would also support other international COVID-19 response priorities like providing boosters and pediatric vaccinations, testing, treatments—including the newest, high-impact antivirals—as well as additional health services that would reach an additional 100 million people.

Such funding is essential if we are ever to turn COVID-19 from a damaging global pandemic into a manageable respiratory disease.

Barring additional funding, the United States will have to turn its back on the countries that need urgent help to boost their vaccination rates and access lifesaving treatments. Failing to help these countries get shots into arms and reduce severe disease means we will leave their populations unprotected and allow the virus to continue mutating into new, potentially more dangerous variants. Scientific research has established that new variants are more likely to emerge from a long-term infection in immuno-compromised individuals who lack access to vaccination or treatment. These variants will inevitably make their way onto American soil, close down American cities, and infect and cost American lives.

On May 12, the United States, Belize, Germany, Indonesia, and Senegal co-hosted the second Global COVID-19 Summit. Summit participants made major new policy and financial commitments to make vaccines available to those at highest risk, to expand access to tests and treatments, and to prevent future health crises. Specifically, leaders from governments and other key partners, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and philanthropies committed to provide \$3.2 billion in new funding, in addition to previous 2022 pledges. This includes nearly \$2.5 billion for COVID-19 and related response activities and \$712 million in new commitments toward a new pandemic preparedness and global health security fund at the World Bank. This funding will be complemented by significant policy commitments from lower-income countries to accelerate their domestic responses to COVID-19 and enhance their global health security capabilities. These commitments are critical, and show that others have been inspired to step up to fund this response and future pandemic preparedness. However, significant financing gaps remain, and they are no substitute for sustained leadership and significant investment from the United States to control what continues to be a deadly pandemic and prevent the emergence of new variants.

As we race to end the pandemic, USAID continues to push ahead on our broader global health efforts. The fiscal year 2023 Request for USAID includes \$3.96 billion to advance American leadership in Global Health and Global Health Security. These funds will help to prevent child and maternal deaths, bolster nutrition, control the HIV/AIDS epidemic, expand the global health workforce, and combat infectious diseases. Funding in USAID-managed assistance will respond to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global health programs including tuberculosis and malaria, as well as strengthening health systems and global health security to better prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.

In addition, the fiscal year 2023 request includes \$6.5 billion in mandatory funding for the Department of State and USAID for critical pandemic preparedness activities. These funds will make transformative investments in pandemic and other biological threat preparedness globally by strengthening the global health workforce, advancing pandemic vaccine development, replenishing emergency response capacity, and providing health security financing to prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.

BOLSTERING DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE AND FIGHTING CORRUPTION

As the pandemic stretched into a second year, pro-democracy movements in many countries faltered, while governments, under guise of ending the pandemic, enacted new restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms. Disinformation ran rampant and sowed division within and between free nations. And the Chinese and Russian governments have worsened these trends by supporting authoritarian actors all over the world.

At the same time, corruption has increased in scale and scope. Today's corrupt actors are highly networked, agile, and resourced—and for the most part, they outmatch those who stand against them. USAID's Anti-Corruption Task Force found that USAID Missions have extremely limited—and in some cases, no—resources to defend against corruption. While this is incredibly concerning, it's also a historic window of opportunity for reform.

This opportunity, combined with the increased threats of corruption and democratic backsliding, is why the fiscal year 2023 Request includes over \$2.94 billion to revitalize global democracy. These funds will empower local partners, provide transparency in political systems, and address authoritarianism and disinformation.

Of this foreign assistance request for democracy, roughly \$2.6 billion is in accounts that USAID will fully or partially manage. The request will advance the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal introduced at the Summit for Democracy, a landmark set of policy and foreign assistance initiatives that support free and independent media, empower historically marginalized groups and democratic reformers, and help develop open, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystems.

Traditionally, our democracy assistance has emphasized media training, election monitoring, and human rights advocacy. But as we've seen, countries in the midst of a civilian transition or with a newly elected leader who rose to power on the back of a campaign to fight corruption or expand the rule of law, need not only traditional democracy assistance and investments in civil society to hold governments accountable, but resources that can immediately deliver a democratic dividend that demonstrate the value of good governance and strong institutions and services for citizens. That might include support to acquire vaccines, establish a social safety net, or invest in a power utility to keep the lights on. This funding will give us the flexibility to support countries in the event of a democratic opening—so-called democratic “bright spots”—with the resources they need to demonstrate that democracies can deliver for their people. This amount also includes \$100 million to fight transnational corruption by empowering anti-corruption champions, strengthening partner countries' ability to detect and prevent corruption, and exposing and disrupting the flow of illicit money, goods, and natural resources.

The President's fiscal year 2023 request includes \$2.6 billion for USAID and the Department of State to promote gender equality and the political, economic, and social empowerment of women and girls; prevent and respond to gender-based violence; expand access to child, elder, and home care services and address gender discrimination and systemic inequities blocking the full participation of women and girls, men and boys, and individuals of other gender identities— all by integrating gender equality across a range of development, humanitarian and security assistance. This historic request would more than double our commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality.

Advancing gender equality reduces poverty, promotes economic growth, increases access to education, improves health outcomes, advances political stability, and fosters democracy. The full participation of all people is essential to economic well-being, health, and security.

RESTORING U.S. CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Recently, USAID launched a new Climate Strategy that will guide our efforts to tackle the existential threat of climate change over this decade in a way that is truly transformational.

Our Climate Strategy lays out six ambitious targets to be achieved between 2022–2030, which together would represent a dramatic increase in our Agency's efforts to stem the climate crisis. These targets include preventing six billion metric tons of global greenhouse gas emissions—the equivalent of taking 100 million cars off the road for a decade—and conserving 100 million hectares of critical landscapes, an area more than twice the size of California. We would also support 500 million people to better prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already wreaking havoc on marginalized communities.

The President's fiscal year 2023 request includes \$2.3 billion in international climate financing, and given the substantial gap in climate financing globally, USAID's Climate Strategy places a special emphasis on catalyzing substantial new private investment for climate mitigation and adaptation; our goal is to kickstart \$150 billion in new public and private climate finance by 2030. We are also focused on the conservation, restoration and management of 100 million hectares of carbon critical landscapes by 2039—land that captures and stores carbon while preserving biodiversity and helping to prevent zoonotic transfer of diseases driven by habitat destruction.

We also continue to work closely with the Government of India through the support of their global climate initiative, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The United States is a founding member of the coalition, and we have invested in supporting its technical leadership and formalization, with a goal of creating a global body that will advocate for the creation of infrastructure that can withstand climate and disaster risks and disseminate best practices. Since its founding in 2019, the Coalition now has 35 global members and over 400 companies, all working to share expertise and strengthen resilient infrastructure development across the globe.

ADDRESSING IRREGULAR MIGRATION FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

In the past 6 months alone, USAID programming in Central America has created more than 40,000 jobs, provided life-saving humanitarian assistance to 1.8 million people, supported distribution of more than 10 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, and helped mobilize \$1.2 billion in private investment. Because one of the most effective ways to counter irregular migration is to provide legal means for securing seasonal or temporary migration, we have helped expand labor migration pathways from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras through the H-2B seasonal visa program. And we have used policy, development, and diplomatic tools to pressure leaders in the region to govern democratically and transparently.

But as demonstrated by the continued arrival of migrants at American borders, much more work is needed. Individual migration decisions are complex, but they are rarely made on a whim, and we use data from multiple sources to understand their root causes and target our programs accordingly. As documented by the Government Accountability Office, the decision to suspend most assistance to Northern Central America in 2019 adversely impacted over 80 percent of USAID projects, and we continue to work aggressively to restart, optimize and scale our programs. For fiscal year 2023, USAID and the Department of State are requesting \$986.8 million to support the second year of implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Address the Root Causes of Migration in Central America.

Using this money, we will continue working with partners in civil society, government, and the private sector to address the drivers of migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—drivers like lack of economic opportunity, corruption, violence, human rights abuses, absence of quality public services, and declining trust in government. We will continue building and implementing a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan designed to track progress under the Strategy. And we will defend democracy, human rights, and civic space throughout Central America so that citizens believe they have a voice and a future in their countries of origin. Nicaragua is a case in point. The Ortega regime's gravely concerning wide-scale crackdown on civil society and rejection of democratic norms and processes in Nicaragua has coincided with a major rise in out migration of Nicaraguans fleeing political repression and economic stagnation under Ortega.

RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN PLACES LIKE ETHIOPIA AND AFGHANISTAN

Stopping the threat of famine and addressing atrocities in Ethiopia is a top priority for the Biden Administration and for USAID. Fighting has left as many as 9 million people in northern Ethiopia in desperate need of food and forced more than 2 million people to flee their homes. Food insecurity projections from February 2022 to May 2022 show that up to a million people will face famine-like conditions in northern Ethiopia by June—700,000 of those in the Tigray Region. In the Tigray Region alone, more than 90 percent of people depend on assistance.

At the same time, there have been multiple, credible reports of gross violations of human rights related to the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Since last appearing before this committee, I visited the Um Rakuba refugee camp in Sudan, where I met with victims of the conflict in Tigray and heard their heartbreaking stories of abuse and violence.

Recently, the Government of Ethiopia and Tigray regional authorities reached a truce in their fighting—the source of so much of this human misery. And since the truce on March 24, over 200 trucks have arrived in Tigray in April alone, with the number of trucks slowly increasing. But to meet the immense humanitarian needs in Tigray, more than 500 trucks carrying tons of food and life-saving supplies need to arrive each week. The current flow is woefully insufficient.

We will continue to push for significant, sustained, unconditional, and unhindered delivery of much-needed aid to all those in need. We will also continue working with interagency partners to address and mitigate ongoing human rights violations and credible reports of atrocities by countering hate speech and mis- and disinformation, strengthening protection of freedom of expression and peaceful protest, supporting independent media outlets and watchdog organizations, strengthening local conflict mitigation, supporting the rule of law, building an enabling environment for national dialogue, and monitoring and documenting human rights abuses.

In Afghanistan, an estimated 22.8 million Afghans face food insecurity following the Taliban's seized power in August 2021. Currently, the United Nations estimates that 95 percent of the Afghan population is in need of assistance. And to truly end the humanitarian crisis, we must also address the roots of Afghanistan's economic and development crises as well as advocate for the promotion of human rights for all Afghans. On March 23, the Taliban abruptly reversed its decision to allow girls to attend school past the sixth grade. On May 7, the Taliban imposed additional re-

strictions on Afghan women and girls freedom of movement, employment, and access to society, all of which jeopardize the human rights and agency of Afghan women. The Taliban have also threatened civil society organizations through media crackdowns, intimidation, unjust detentions, and assaults of journalists.

While we continue to work through diplomatic channels and likeminded donors to press the Taliban to reverse course and allow all girls to go to school, women to work and participate in the economy and protect the rights of minorities and civil society; we remain committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan. The United States has been the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance since the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Since then, the U.S. Government has contributed \$719 million. Alongside us, the humanitarian community provided another \$1.82 billion towards the humanitarian response in 2021. And we are working with our partners to support basic needs like health, livelihoods, agriculture, and education.

We will continue programs to enable the direct delivery of humanitarian assistance. Our aid helps support rural livelihoods, improve food security and develop resilience in food systems in Afghanistan, enable women and girls to access quality healthcare, education, support for gender-based violence, civil society organizations, and training and livelihood programs. And we support journalists and media organizations, while also working to counter human trafficking.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Across all our efforts, it is crucial that we engage more frequently and more intensely and sustainably with a broader range of partners. That's especially true of the community-led organizations and companies based in the countries in which we work. When we partner with these local NGOs and businesses, we have an opportunity to double our impact—to not just manage a project and deliver results, but to grow the local capacity of that business or organization so its impact will be sustained long after its relationship with USAID ends.

Our current approach to community-led development draws upon more than a decade of the Agency's prior experience. It aims to devolve more power and leadership to local actors, elevate diversity and equity in our partnerships, and address some of the systemic and operational constraints at USAID. We have to approach localization as a shift in not just with whom we work, but also in how we work: creating intentional shifts in the way we design and implement our programs so that we are putting local communities and stakeholders in the lead. This is about deeper, more systemic change.

Our efforts to advance community-led development have been warmly embraced by more than 1,000 local development organizations, as well as by many of our implementing partners and some of the largest international non-governmental organizations. Thanks to your support, the fiscal year 2022 appropriations bill provided an initial \$100 million in the fiscal year 2022 appropriations bill to support our Centroamérica Local initiative, along with the authority, flexibility, and staff resources to prioritize working with local organizations in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

With more support from Congress, we can deepen this approach across our Agency and our Missions. The fiscal year 2023 request includes \$47.6 million for the Centroamérica Local initiative—\$40 million for direct awards to local organizations and \$7.6 million to help staff this effort.

INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE AND BUILDING A STRONGER CULTURE

Of course, none of what we set out to achieve would be possible without USAID's dedicated team of development professionals serving our nation throughout the world. Many of our staff are still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic, having lost loved ones even as they sought to protect others in their community from the virus.

With your support, we are also increasing the size and agility of the career workforce to better advance U.S. national security priorities. Since last year, we have hired approximately 500 career employees and are working to reach our target levels of 1,850 Foreign Service and 1,600 Civil Service employees this year.

The fiscal year 2023 request includes \$1.7 billion to continue these efforts to invest in our people and build our institutional capacity, increasing the number of U.S. direct-hire positions that advance our most critical and effective foreign assistance program. This funding covers salaries and benefits of our direct hire Foreign Service and Civil Service workforce, overseas and Washington operations, and central support, including human capital initiatives, security, and information technology. The fiscal year 2023 Request also includes resources for the launch of the Global Development Partnership initiative, a workforce expansion program, that will focus on democracy and anti-corruption, global health security, national secu-

rity, climate change, operational management, and a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce.

But in reconstituting our workforce, we want to recruit and retain talent differently than we have before, with an emphasis on hiring and nurturing a workforce that truly represents America. Thanks to the sustained leadership of our staff, we've taken several steps toward these aims. Their work and advocacy over many years enabled one of my first acts as Administrator, which was signing the USAID Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan—a framework document to guide the Agency's efforts to integrate DEIA into every aspect of our work.

Since signing this document, we've taken concrete steps to advance our DEIA goals. We have conducted assessments that provided us with data and employee experiences to help us decide how to prioritize our efforts and resources. We onboarded five DEIA Advisors in Washington operating units and are actively recruiting more. And we have established the Office of the Chief DEIA Officer and welcomed our Agency's first-ever Chief Diversity Officer. We also launched our first recruitment conferences for students at both Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, with another planned for Arab American students later this year.

Since appearing before you last year, I have had the chance to travel to three HBCUs—Delaware State, Tuskegee University, and Alcorn State—as well as Florida International University, the largest Hispanic-Serving Institution in the U.S., to sign new agreements that will help expand our recruitment and research partnerships.

Additionally, we are addressing current DEIA data gaps by making our data collection process more inclusive. We're expanding our talent recruitment pipelines and lowering barriers to entry for development partnership opportunities by collaborating with minority-serving institutions, increasing engagement and career development opportunities for underrepresented students, and establishing hiring goals to increase the number of employees who are persons with disabilities.

However, it is not enough just to recruit talent, we must nurture and develop it. We will expand access to professional development and learning opportunities and equip our managers with the tools to lead talented and diverse teams. We are also developing commitments to our locally-employed colleagues to codify entitlements, benefits, and career advancement and professional development opportunities for our Foreign Service Nationals, who constitute 70 percent of our overseas workforce.

CONCLUSION

The challenges we have encountered in the past year are grave and loom large, but I sincerely believe the opportunity before us is even larger. By providing the resources necessary to seize this moment, the United States can galvanize commitments from our allies and our private sector partners; support the people of Ukraine in their moment of need and help manage the impact the Kremlin's war is having on the world's food supply; control the COVID-19 pandemic while laying the groundwork to detect and prevent future pandemics, strengthen health systems, and quickly rollout future vaccines; help countries adapt to the worst effects of climate change while embracing new renewable technologies and green jobs; and demonstrate to the world that democracies can deliver in a way no autocracy can.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to grasp this opportunity. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ACTING INSPECTOR, GENERAL THOMAS J. ULLOM, U.S.
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written statement for the subcommittee's hearing on the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID's) fiscal year 2023 budget request. The USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG) provides independent, objective oversight to safeguard and strengthen U.S. foreign assistance. We appreciate your continued support of our office as we work across USAID as well as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. African Development Foundation, and the Inter-American Foundation to promote effectiveness and efficiency in foreign assistance programs and identify and deter the fraud, waste, and abuse that can jeopardize those programs' success.

USAID's mission is to advance a peaceful and prosperous world through its development and humanitarian assistance activities, and in doing so advance U.S. national security and economic priorities. The Agency's budget request speaks to ongoing

ing and planned development and humanitarian work around the globe with ambitious aims—from saving lives to fighting transnational corruption to tackling root causes of irregular migration. It also includes elements intended to provide for a secure and skilled workforce to enable USAID's success. As in prior years, supplemental funding to address new crises may augment USAID's responsibility on the world stage and increase demands on the Agency's capability to act.

USAID must overcome complex challenges while executing its mission across over 100 countries. It often works in close coordination with other U.S. government agencies and international donors while overseeing an array of contractors, grantees, and other recipients of U.S. funds worldwide. Our work highlights the importance of implementing controls and building partnerships in even the most difficult settings to manage, monitor, and sustain results. The U.S. government's response to the conflict in Ukraine illustrates the multifaceted risks. There, USAID is called to overcome supply chain constraints to support the Ukrainian people's most critical needs, coordinate with domestic and international partners to advance objectives, and support the safety of its own staff.

This statement draws upon our annual report on the top management challenges facing USAID and aligns with our five priority oversight areas:¹

- Advancing global health outcomes
- Managing aid in emerging and protracted crises
- Leveraging local strengths for sustainable development
- Advancing foreign assistance priorities through coordinated efforts
- Strengthening core management functions

As discussed below, our work points to key lessons for USAID and other stakeholders to both amplify strengths and address potential risks in U.S. humanitarian and development programs. This is especially critical with respect to managing urgent and ongoing crises and addressing emerging priorities of the administration. Overall, amid long-standing development challenges and an ever-changing geopolitical landscape, our work underscores the constant need for responsible stewardship among agencies and implementers alike.

ADVANCING GLOBAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose an unprecedented global public health crisis with more than 500 million confirmed cases and 6.2 million deaths as of April 2022. USAID contributed to the U.S. government's international pandemic response to combat the virus and prevent decades of development gains from being lost due to the resulting economic, democratic, and social backsliding effects. In addition, USAID has committed to reinforcing U.S. global health leadership in pandemic preparedness and decades-long advances in responses to HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, and infectious diseases like malaria.

Our oversight of USAID's COVID-19 response and broader global health portfolio identifies specific challenges planning, implementing, and monitoring activities:

- USAID had limited control over some key decisions. Starting in April 2020, the National Security Council (NSC) made key decisions for USAID's COVID-19 ventilator donation program of over \$200 million, including which ventilator models to send and where to send them.² This marked a significant departure from USAID's customary practice for responding to public health emergencies, and the NSC's decisions did not align with USAID's planned pandemic response. For example, most of the countries that USAID had proposed to support were categorized as low- or lower-middle income by the World Bank, but well over half of all ventilator donations were made to upper-middle- or high-income countries, as directed by the NSC. The Government Accountability Office further reported that USAID had limited information on the location or use of the ventilators once delivered.
- Procurement and delivery challenges could affect COVID-19 vaccine donation effectiveness. We reported that USAID may need to adapt oversight to mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse for USAID's \$4 billion contribution to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.³ We also reported that USAID, in finalizing its vaccine

¹As required by statute, we annually identify and report the top challenges facing the agencies we oversee and the progress made in managing them.

²USAID OIG, *USAID Had Limited Control Over COVID-19 Ventilator Donations, Differing From Its Customary Response to Public Health Emergencies* (4-936-21-002-P), February 24, 2021.

³USAID OIG, *U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Contributions: USAID Should Consider Enhancing Oversight to Mitigate Risk of Fraud, Waste, and Abuse* (E-000-21-002-M), September 1, 2021.

strategy, was working through constraints with human resources, supply chains, and public trust in countries receiving donated vaccines. By March 2022, USAID had delivered half a billion vaccines to more than 110 countries but noted that in-country constraints as well as funding shortfalls could keep vaccines from reaching those who need them.

- Stronger planning and evaluation processes are needed for global health supply chain awards. Weaknesses hindered USAID's ability to support key design and award decisions for its \$9.5 billion global health supply chain contract issued to Chemonics International in 2015.⁴ In addition, while Chemonics International generally delivered health commodities in the right quantities, more oversight was needed to improve timeliness and performance. USAID still has work to do to address open recommendations on procurement, oversight, and risk mitigation, including improving guidance for evaluating a bidder's management information systems—a critical component of a global health supply chain—prior to making a future award. These improvements are key for USAID to make as it prepares to award its \$17 billion NextGen global health supply chain contracts.

USAID continues to make progress addressing challenges and strengthening its global health approach. For example, in April 2022, the Agency revised its Framework for USAID's Response to Infectious Disease Outbreaks, which it first developed in July 2018 in response to our oversight work on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. However, continued diligence is imperative as global conditions evolve. We will keep strategic focus on USAID's global health portfolio, including the COVID-19 response and programming for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In the coming year, our planned oversight activities include a series of COVID-19 audits covering topics to include USAID's coordination of related efforts, rapid response, and vaccine readiness activities.

MANAGING AID IN EMERGING AND PROTRACTED CRISES

USAID responded to over 80 crises worldwide in fiscal year 2021 to provide life-saving support in dire situations, whether brought on by conflict, natural disaster, or a combination of factors. Over the past 5 years, assistance for humanitarian needs as a portion of USAID's budget has doubled, reaching nearly 40 percent of USAID's net costs in fiscal year 2021. As needs grow and crises expand due to worsening weather events and prolonged pandemic effects, rigorous planning, monitoring, and risk mitigation are critical to safeguard U.S. assistance.

Our work highlights some of the difficulties conducting sound planning, monitoring, and risk mitigation in humanitarian settings:

- Fraud risk mitigation strategies must include the right actors and level of detail for accountability. Otherwise, USAID faces increased risks of fraud and diversion, as we found in our oversight of USAID's humanitarian responses in Syria⁵ and the Venezuela regional crisis.⁶ USAID recently developed a new framework for managing fraud risk in response to our oversight that includes defined roles and responsibilities and requirements for risk assessments, control activities, and monitoring. Assessing, mitigating, and monitoring fraud risks remains critical for USAID in the coming year as crises unfold. We have received dozens of reports of diversion and loss of assistance intended for beneficiaries in Northern Ethiopia and alerted USAID to instances when intimidation and demands from the Taliban compromised humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.
- While USAID aims to bolster oversight with third-party monitoring, doing so effectively has been a challenge. The extreme poverty and chronic food insecurity of Africa's Sahel region draw reoccurring emergency interventions, but the monitoring efforts USAID relied on to track progress and make course corrections fell short, which we found could affect its follow-on programming.⁷ In Afghanistan, USAID reported that while the end of armed conflict has improved hu-

⁴USAID OIG, *Award Planning and Oversight Weaknesses Impeded Performance of USAID's Largest Global Health Supply Chain Project* (9-000-21-004-P), March 25, 2021.

⁵USAID OIG, *Weaknesses in Oversight of USAID's Syria Response Point To the Need for Enhanced Management of Fraud Risks in Humanitarian Assistance* (8-000-21-001-P), March 4, 2021.

⁶USAID OIG, *Enhanced Processes and Implementer Requirements Are Needed To Address Challenges and Fraud Risks in USAID's Venezuela Response* (9-000-21-005-P), April 16, 2021.

⁷USAID OIG, *USAID's RISE Program in the Sahel Aligned With Resilience Policies but Lacked Robust Monitoring* (4-000-21-003-P), September 25, 2021.

humanitarian access, USAID-funded organizations continue to face access restrictions affecting their female aid workers.⁸

- With lives and livelihoods at stake, looking beyond immediate need is daunting but essential for a more stable future. This was the case with the Venezuela regional crisis, where we found USAID had not prepared strategies to guide in-country development efforts or programs to manage Venezuelan migration in neighboring countries. In Iraq, we found that USAID's guidance and practices did not encourage transitioning from more immediate humanitarian assistance to longer term solutions.⁹ While USAID has taken steps to address related recommendations, the importance of deliberate planning remains paramount for protracted and evolving scenarios, like in Syria and Iraq, where drought now threatens food insecurity and destabilizes the transition from humanitarian assistance.¹⁰

We continue to examine humanitarian oversight and fraud risks in priority areas, including the Northern Triangle, Burma, and Yemen, and are planning new work on USAID's response to the circumstances in Ukraine and Afghanistan. We are also engaging directly with USAID's teams, program implementers, and our oversight partners on the ground to enhance awareness for preventing fraud, diversions, and losses that threaten the integrity of U.S. foreign assistance.

LEVERAGING LOCAL STRENGTHS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

USAID has long encouraged locally led development to achieve enduring results. In its fiscal year 2023 budget request, USAID reiterated its commitment to local investments by partnering with new, nontraditional, and diverse actors; empowering local organizations; and promoting transparent investments. Under this strategy, broad goals for sustained economic growth, gender equity, climate change, and more depend on leveraging the skills and interests of local partners, governments, and private sector entities.

Yet, locally led development brings certain risks that USAID must accept or work to mitigate:

- The quantity and capability of local partners may be insufficient to lead some development efforts. When we looked at PEPFAR programs in Africa, we found USAID was not on track to meet the goal of channeling 70 percent of PEPFAR budgets through local partners by September 2020 due to low baselines and challenges identifying and developing capable local organizations.¹¹ Thus, some missions focused on programmatic rather than budgetary goals. USAID faced similar issues with supply chains in some countries and balanced risks by doing work on behalf of local officials or by operating parallel supply chains.¹²
- Local internal control and compliance systems may be weak. In the past 10 years, we have made over 3,500 recommendations to USAID citing internal control and compliance issues and questioned over \$1.1 billion through our reviews of local partner financial audits. In the last 2 years, these financial audits found over 20 instances in Africa where USAID's local partners did not perform required due diligence checks, including verifying whether potential employees and suppliers were restricted from receiving U.S. government funds.
- To optimize private sector engagement, USAID needs more guidance, data, and dedicated staff.¹³ Otherwise, USAID risks falling short of its private sector goals. We also found USAID needs more guidance for monitoring cost-share contributions for building local commitment.¹⁴
- Weaknesses in controls and oversight can have undercutting effects. One example is evidence suggesting corruption at a Kenyan state-run corporation and recipient of a \$650 million award with USAID to store and distribute donated medical commodities. The situation compromised the provision of goods to vul-

⁸ USAID OIG, *Operation Freedom's Sentinel Lead Inspector General Quarterly Report to Congress October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021*, February 11, 2022.

⁹ USAID OIG, *Enhanced Guidance and Practices Would Improve USAID's Transition Planning and Third-Party Monitoring in Iraq* (9-266-21-003-P), February 19, 2021.

¹⁰ USAID OIG, *Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve Quarterly Report to the United States Congress | October 1, 2021–December 31, 2021*, February 7, 2022.

¹¹ USAID OIG, *PEPFAR in Africa: USAID Expanded the Use of Local Partners but Should Reassess Local Partner Capacity to Meet Funding Goals* (4-936-22-001-P), December 13, 2021.

¹² USAID OIG, *USAID's Global Health Supply Chain Would Benefit From More Rigorous Risk Management and Actions To Enhance Local Ownership* (4-936-20-002-P), July 10, 2020.

¹³ USAID OIG, *Improved Guidance, Data, and Metrics Would Help Optimize USAID's Private Sector Engagement* (5-000-21-001-P), December 9, 2020.

¹⁴ USAID OIG, *Cost Sharing: USAID's Asia Bureau Should Enhance Guidance and Training to Ensure Missions Verify Awardees' Contributions* (5-000-22-002-P), November 26, 2021.

nerable Kenyans and complicated USAID's ability to manage its investment. Other examples from recent investigations include the theft and resale of equipment intended for Jordanian project beneficiaries and substandard construction of USAID-funded projects in West Bank.

Whereas USAID looks to local organizations to bring both tailored solutions and have the capacity to implement them, our oversight examines how USAID executes its role to ensure that its local partners are equipped to responsibly implement and account for U.S. foreign assistance. In addition to investigations and financial audits, our ongoing work includes a performance audit of USAID's New Partnerships Initiative, a performance audit of USAID's approach to reviewing and vetting Northern Triangle program implementers, and a performance audit of USAID's \$845 million cash transfer to the Jordanian government.

ADVANCING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PRIORITIES THROUGH COORDINATED EFFORTS

Achievement of U.S. foreign assistance aims often depends on effective coordination between USAID, other Federal agencies, bilateral donors and host nations, private and public sector organizations, and multilateral institutions. This coordination takes place at both strategic and operational levels and in a wide variety of forums as USAID delivers aid and assistance alongside other donors working in the same areas. USAID must also balance executive and legislative branch mandates and priorities, align efforts to counteract malign actors, and deconflict activities to avoid internal and external duplication.

Our work highlights some of the challenges USAID faces when coordinating on key decisions and strategic priorities with other stakeholders:

- Funding decisions by other actors can take USAID's programs in a different direction than planned, as occurred with donated ventilators early in the COVID-19 response.¹⁵ Similarly, the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014 directed USAID to prioritize countries based on needs-based criteria and opportunity indicators.¹⁶ However, we found USAID lacked final authority for funding decisions and, at the State Department's direction, ended up providing funds to some countries that had low demonstrated needs.
- To increase resilience against Russian aggression, USAID produced the Countering Malign Kremlin Influence (CMKI) Development Framework. However, in developing the framework, USAID did not engage all internal and external stakeholders, including other regional bureaus within the Agency and external donors such as the European Union's Eastern Partnership Program.¹⁷
- In response to statutory requirements over concerns that resources were not reaching persecuted communities in Iraq, USAID took efforts to channel more funds through religious and ethnic minority groups. Due to a State Department-led staffing reduction in Iraq, USAID faced obstacles managing the increasingly complex Iraq award portfolio. While the Agency sought to increase staffing levels in Iraq, these attempts were unsuccessful.¹⁸
- A concern affecting global development and humanitarian assistance is sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), a topic we have worked ardently with USAID and oversight partners to address since 2019. In August 2021, we alerted USAID to concerns about the World Health Organization's lack of cooperation with our investigative inquiry into SEA allegations against its aid workers. USAID is also still working to close our audit recommendations to strengthen guidance and controls and improve incident reporting and tracking in an effort to prevent and respond to SEA against beneficiaries.¹⁹

We continue to examine opportunities to enhance coordination with existing and potential stakeholders through our oversight and other outreach efforts. This includes leveraging information-sharing relationships through collaboration with 12 international oversight counterparts, including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the World Health Organization; and other U.N. agency oversight counterparts enabling

¹⁵ USAID OIG, *USAID Had Limited Control Over COVID-19 Ventilator Donations, Differing From Its Customary Response to Public Health Emergencies* (4-936-21-002-P), February 24, 2021.

¹⁶ USAID OIG, *Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Programming: USAID Faced Challenges Providing Assistance to Countries with Greatest Need* (8-000-22-001-P), January 3, 2022.

¹⁷ USAID OIG, *Countering Malign Kremlin Influence: USAID Can Do More to Strengthen Its CMKI Development Framework* (8-199-22-002-P), January 26, 2022.

¹⁸ USAID OIG, *Significant Events Surrounding USAID's Iraq Religious and Ethnic Minority Portfolio and Award Management Challenges* (E-000-22-001-M), November 1, 2021.

¹⁹ USAID OIG, *USAID Should Implement Additional Controls To Prevent and Respond To Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Beneficiaries* (9-000-21-006-P), May 12, 2021.

us to cast a wide net to confront corruption allegations affecting programs across the aid sector.

STRENGTHENING CORE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

In executing its annual budget, USAID relies on support functions for managing finances, awards, information, and human capital. The fiscal year 2023 budget request ties these core management functions to a revitalized workforce that advances critical foreign assistance programs and ensures prudent accountability of taxpayer dollars.

USAID shows continued diligence in strengthening related controls. For example, just over 7 years ago, a material weakness with USAID's reconciliations with the U.S. Treasury kept us from providing an opinion on the Agency's financial statements.²⁰ Since then, USAID has worked to fix the gap, so that its financial statements are presented fairly and in conformance with applicable principles. However, as USAID adapts its development and humanitarian assistance programs for emerging priorities, attention to core management functions remains critical:

- Challenges in the areas of award design and monitoring can lead to opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse. For example, after confirming a Jordanian firm engaged in a pass-through scheme to obtain an award for which it was ineligible, we issued a fraud alert flagging that USAID small business set-aside awards were susceptible to being awarded to pass-through or shell companies with no actual presence in the United States, contrary to the Small Business Act.
- The increasing threat and number of cyberattacks on government agencies demands effective protection of personally identifiable information. We determined that USAID needs additional controls to protect personally identifiable information.²¹ Moreover, our annual audit mandated by the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA) identified weaknesses in four of nine FISMA reporting metric domains—including identity and access management and supply chain management—for USAID's information security program in fiscal year 2021.²²
- Nearly one-third of our performance audits issued in the last decade identified staffing or training gaps as the root cause of programmatic shortfalls. We are concluding an audit examining the extent to which USAID met congressionally mandated staffing goals, identified skills gaps, and measured progress toward assessing those gaps. We are also concluding an evaluation of USAID's prolific use of personal services contractors in humanitarian settings and an evaluation of the Africa Bureau's human capital management practices.

We will maintain focus on core management functions through mandated and discretionary oversight activities. We will also continue to raise awareness for strengthening controls and accountability, including identifying loopholes that hinder the government's ability to enforce civil fraud remedies against USAID-funded organizations based outside of the United States.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ABOUT CONTINUED OVERSIGHT

We appreciate the subcommittee's enduring support for our office's independent oversight mandate and the resources to meet current and emerging requirements. The fiscal year 2023 request seeks \$80.5 million for USAID OIG. These funds will support audit, evaluation, inspection, investigative, and other oversight work to promote positive change in the delivery of U.S. foreign assistance and help ensure that USAID prudently uses every dollar it receives.

Our fiscal year 2021 audit and investigative returns amounted to \$1.75 for each dollar we received to support our operations. In addition, our recommendations have triggered foundational changes in policy and programming around global health and humanitarian assistance, Agency procurements, and accountability related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. We will build on these accomplishments, utilizing recent funding for oversight of programs responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, and continue to provide timely, relevant, and impactful oversight of U.S. foreign assistance.

²⁰ USAID OIG, *Audit of USAID's Financial Statements for fiscal years 2014 and 2013* (0-000-15-001-C), November 17, 2014.

²¹ USAID OIG, *USAID Needs to Improve Its Privacy Program to Better Ensure Protection of Personally Identifiable Information* (A-000-21-001-P), August 11, 2021.

²² USAID OIG, *USAID Implemented an Effective Information Security Program for fiscal year 2021 in Support of FISMA* (A-000-22-005-C), December 7, 2021.

We stand ready to execute our priorities and plans for ensuring effective oversight of U.S. foreign assistance in fiscal year 2023. This includes a special focus on addressing pressing oversight requirements related to COVID-19 as well as programming in the Northern Triangle, the West Bank, and Gaza; expanding our inspections and evaluation capability; and advancing adaptations to a hybrid work environment. We will continue to maximize our impact by taking a strategic approach to oversight; leveraging key partnerships within the oversight community and with the agencies we oversee; and keeping agency leaders, Congress, and other stakeholders informed of the results of our work.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Administrator, and if I might, before I proceed to my questions, since this is likely to be the last of the budget hearings for this subcommittee, I just wanted to recognize my friend and colleague and our Full Committee Chairman who for decades has served as either the Chair or Ranking of this subcommittee.

I've just returned from a wonderful trip to NATO Headquarters in Brussels and to Davos, to the World Economic Forum conference, and was just reminded of the dramatic and lasting impact that Chairman Leahy has had in his role over decades, the high regard in which he's held by our leaders around Europe and around the world and wanted to thank him for his leadership of this subcommittee.

He has been inseparable from Tim Rieser for 33, I think, years on this subcommittee, as well, and Tim, from the very first trip I got to take with both of you to Colombia and Haiti and Cuba, I have been moved and impressed by the impact that you've had.

So please know how grateful all of us are to your dedication of a lifetime of service to making a difference in the world.

Senator GRAHAM. May I add a few comments?

Senator COONS. Please add a few comments, if you will.

Senator GRAHAM. And I compliment you. Well, I hope not to ruin your reputation in Vermont, but I consider you a friend. That probably went down 20 points there.

So what Chris said is true. I've gone all over the world and Senator Leahy's a known figure in terms of the United States Senate. When he speaks people listen. Tim Rieser and Senator Leahy have done a heck of a job affecting people's lives through this subcommittee.

Compared to our budget, a small amount of money, but I daresay I've never seen a better bang for the buck in terms of improving people's lives and making the world more stable than this subcommittee, and it's been our harbinger of bipartisanship. I know Senator McConnell worked with Senator Leahy a very long time.

I've had that pleasure and I just want to echo what Senator Coons said. This has been a delight to be part of this subcommittee. Senator Leahy, you have much to be proud of. Tim, you've worked hard for a long period of time and I'm sad to see it end. We still got months to go here, but this will probably be the last budget cycle.

As Senator Coons said, it's an appropriate time to say thank you in a bipartisan fashion for decades of service to your community and the world, and the same goes for Tim.

Senator LEAHY. Mr. Chair, if I might just take a moment, I appreciate the comments from both of you. I've worked with both of you. We have traveled around the world I think a number of times.

Senator Graham and I, whether I was Chair or he was Chair, the same with Senator McConnell, whether he was Chair or I was Chair, we passed the Foreign Ops bill virtually unanimously.

Senator Coons, who was greeted by more heads of State than I could keep track of when we were at Davos and I sat quietly holding his briefcase for him, but we'll do the same thing.

I think we're most effective in what we do if we do show the rest of the world that two parties can work together, and I especially wanted to be here, of course, with Administrator Power. I've known the Ambassador, the Administrator Power for years and years, and she forgives me for only being half Irish, but I applaud her for what she's done.

So thank you both.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator, as we talked about beforehand, unfortunately we are in a series of votes. So you will see members come and go.

Let me, if I might, just start by thanking you for your dedication over decades as a journalist, as a diplomat, as an administrator to upholding the very best of American values.

As I think was the case with my dear friend, the late Secretary Madeline Albright, it is so often those who come to America from other places in the world initially who believe in us even more than we believe in ourselves and who help the United States to live up to its greatest aspirations and standards.

As you mentioned in your comments, your opening remarks, we have an opportunity here to demonstrate to dozens of countries around the world that we're a reliable partner, but in both COVID and in hunger relief we are missing that moment as of right now.

We just delivered a \$40 billion supplemental, most of which is dedicated to Ukraine directly or indirectly.

If you would just speak for a moment to how much of that is being delivered through partnerships with local organizations in Ukraine, how much are you constrained and how much are you able to deliver sort of flexible, adaptable responses, particularly in an environment like Ukraine where there's lots of potential partners on the ground, and what mechanisms are in place in terms of auditing and tracking to ensure that aid to Ukraine is being spent effectively?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. Well, you'll forgive me if I add my voice to the voices paying tribute to Senator Leahy and Senator Rieser. The two of you are just synonymous with this Committee, with the securing of resources for things that matter out in the world for vulnerable people, just the ethic behind your respective dedication is just—it's the stuff of legend, both of you, and it's been really, really even moving to watch you over the years—sorry—because I won't get to see them again in this setting, but you just both, you care so much, you care so much.

Senator COONS. As so clearly you do.

Ms. POWER. Well, I do, but I also care about these guys.

To be very specific, and I will come and speak in my normal mile-a-minute way when it comes to the substance of what you've asked, Senator, but the legacy of the Leahy law, Senator, the people will be vetting military units in a way they never would have for the rest of time because of that law. It matters so much.

People around the world, the ability to get assistance if they have been injured because of unexploded ordnance or landmines specifically, it's because you all cared, because you invested the time, because you built the laws and the structures and those are going to be here forevermore.

I think less, you know, sort of easy to conquistize the number of NGOs that have received support, whether it's a crack, you know, anti-corruption NGO or, you know, some local media or people who are tracking civilian casualties, there's so many non-governmental actors around the world who got support because you all embedded support for those programs and mobilized bipartisan support for it, and I really again credit Senator Graham and other Republicans on the Committee for supporting that over the years.

But what's so amazing is the lasting effect of that, it's just the ripple effects because so many of the people who work for and with or are trained by those NGOs go on to serve in Parliament or to become heads of state and that legacy is going to be something again that is felt for generations to come.

So sorry to get a little extra Irish on you there, Senator, but it's extremely moving and there's no tribute that can really do justice, I think, to your impact as Chairman, your impact as a Senator, and that of Tim, who I don't know what I'm going to do when I have no one to call at 3 in the morning, you know, still working in his office, you know, other staff. Paul, I'm going to have to be able to find you. We've got to keep Rieser hours. But, anyway, very grateful to you.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you. Okay. On the substance, you put your fingers, Mr. Chairman, on a challenge and we've got to get the right balance here and the balance is between wanting to move quickly, wanting to move with proper safeguards in place, wanting to be able to scale, and so that leads you very quickly to, for example, the very large contributions we've made to the World Food Program, UNICEF, the International Organization of Migration that's working a lot of the protection issues and inside Ukraine and beyond, but we do also want to make sure that the assistance we provide puts the country in a stronger position in the medium and long term.

And so what we are seeking to do in the humanitarian domain is diversify our partner base and that is likely to include several consortia where we work through an international non-governmental organization and the first of these consortia have already been agreed upon with Mercy Corps and where they then provide sub-grants to local organizations, Ukrainian organizations that are going to be there for the test of time.

The first of those is about a \$120 billion, so again not comparable to what we're at the present funneling through World Food Program, but even World Food Program and other UN organizations are themselves working with local organizations much more than they have traditionally in the theaters in which they operate.

So that's on humanitarian. I think, though, to distinguish the other significant assistance that has been provided, there is a large sum for direct budget support, as you well know, and that is because Ukrainian authorities own burn rate in terms of keeping

their State going, keeping their country going is about \$5 billion a month.

So we've already provided \$500 million through the World Bank, the World Bank Trust Fund. There will be an additional \$500 million passing through there and then with the supplemental \$7.5 billion on top of that. It's unclear exactly what the vehicle is going to be for the second supplemental direct budget support sum which is significant but likely the World Bank or a mechanism like it and there you have the progress reports, I think it's written into law that every 90 days the Secretary or I need to be reporting on how the Ukrainians are spending that money.

The capacity to audit is, of course, there and will need to be done vigilantly. The World Bank is used to operating in environments like this, and then we have our developing programming which is also going to be in part to strengthen Ukrainian actors to do anti-corruption work so that they can monitor our assistance.

So again I think across the board we have to be thinking in the short term how do we meet the needs in the here and now, but how do we leave Ukrainian civil society, the Ukrainian Government, and the country stronger by virtue of the assistance that's flowing in, not something that vacates when, for example, an international organization departs which we hope Ukraine is in a position to have that happen sooner rather than later with the onset of eventual peace.

Senator COONS. It does seem, to your last comment there, it does seem premature now to be talking about reconstruction, but at the conference the Chairman and I were just at, there was repeated talk by Swiss leaders about their hosting of a conference later this summer, I think in Lugano, if I'm not mistaken, to begin planning for rebuilding and reconstruction. Virtually every European leader, head of state that we talked to made some reference to the Marshall Plan which is, you know, a generation where even two generations later still remember it as a landmark investment by the United States in stability and security.

What sort of planning is underway for reconstruction hopefully after this war concludes successfully with victory, and what role would USAID play in planning or executing that reconstruction, and what kind of budget planning should we be doing around the scale of the need for reconstruction?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. First, let me say that USAID just in the last week has been able to deploy our Mission Director back in Kyiv at the newly-opened Embassy and why do I mention that in the context of your question? Because it's going to be incredibly important as the Ukrainians transition from humanitarian emergency to development, which will include reconstruction but also reconstruction will happen alongside development, that we have a presence there to be working hand-in-glove with the Ukrainians and so we have our local staff, of course, our Ukrainian staff, many of whom never left Ukraine, but those who left Kyiv, many have returned, but that presence is going to be a very important piece of thinking through what the appropriate structure for the U.S. Government is going to be as it relates to the massive reconstruction task ahead.

Second, this is going to be Ukrainian-led, Ukrainian-scoped, and right now USAID's role both in presence and virtually has been to support the Ukrainian Prime Minister's Office and the variety of Ministries that have themselves been tasked to develop reconstruction plans alongside their current programming plans.

So, for example, I spoke a couple weeks ago to the Health Minister who is simultaneously dealing with the fact that hundreds of health facilities have either been destroyed or damaged and how do you provide medical care in such circumstances. How do you now train your physicians in trauma and your psychologists and psychiatrists in, you know, PTSD associated with conflict, and so the real-time medical and psychological, psychosocial needs and then also developing a plan to be able to present to donors about what the reconstruction of those medical facilities and how do you, to coin a phrase, build back better, you know, how can the medical facilities brought back online, you know, take advantage of advances in medicine and in energy efficiency and everything.

So each of the Ministries is itself embarked upon that process and our mission right now is to support them and to scope.

I think the third point I'd make is just the centrality of the international financial institutions because, you know, I don't think USAID would be budgeted, you know, to manage what could be eventually a trillion dollar reconstruction task, but what you'll have are the European Bank for Reconstruction Development has already announced its intention, I think, to lead on this and the World Bank and other international financial institutions, of course,——

Senator COONS. I'm almost out of time. Before I yield to the Full Committee Chairman, if I might, and, by the way, on that last point, the IMF, the Head of the IMF and I spoke repeatedly about SDRs and their potential as a way to help rebuild the financial capabilities of the Ukrainian state.

Senator Graham and I are continuing to work to get through the Foreign Relations Committee an authorizing bill, the Democracy in the 21st Century Act, that creates a framework and authorizes new resources to counter authoritarian tactics, particularly disinformation, election interference, digital authoritarianism.

Have you had any chance to review that? Do you have any input for me on that and its potential constructive role in modernizing the democracy toolkit for AID?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. First of all, I think that the President's Democracy Summit and the initiatives that President Biden rolled out in December, the summit that is to be followed a year hence with a second summit so we can drive action in between, I think a lot of the ideas that you saw rolled out there again grew out of the collaboration that I referred to earlier where our teams were in touch trying to take a fresh look at the Democracy Promotion Portfolio that, you know, had adapted over time here and there but maybe wasn't as fit for purpose as I think we need right now and so I think that's reflected both in your bill, in the emphasis on everything from election security and the fight against disinformation and the importance of having open digital infrastructure to the emphasis on corruption programming, anti-corruption programming,

which is the Achilles heel of the undemocratic forces for sure globally.

You will see reflected in our budget sort of in parallel I think to your bill requests for stand-alone resources for anti-corruption programming which I think again is a central pillar of this effort.

But, you know, again, the democracy promotion community, you know, the efforts that we have made, I think, definitely need to pivot and recognize the gravity and the modern nature of the threats to democracy, and I think that's what your bill attempts to do. That's what the President's Democratic Renewal Initiative does, as well.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I look forward to working with you more closely on that.

My understanding is I'm going to depart to vote. The Ranking Member will return. Staff tells me that Senator Durbin will act as the Chair in my brief absence and is going to question next. Is that our understanding?

Senator DURBIN. Sure. Why not?

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Senator DURBIN. Welcome. I'm concerned about Haiti. We've spoken about it before. I don't know if you've had time to read that lengthy series in the New York Times about the legacy of death and ransom and the treatment of the West in Haiti, but it's a heartbreaking history of the country which tried to emerge out of slavery and still is burdened by it.

It appears that developing a functioning government in that country is a challenge. How do you see it?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator, and thanks for always caring about Haiti, and it does feel like the world's attention kind of flows in when there's some big event, like an earthquake or the recent case of the assassination of the President.

USAID is there day-in/day-out, but I have to say that the political stalemate coupled with the spiraling violence, kidnappings, the gains that the gangs have made has made it increasingly difficult for us to do our work. I think we still have partners who are out and about who are willing every day to brave those risks, whether in the health space, in education, or in, you know, attempting to do youth programming, to attract people so that they aren't drawn to gangs, but it is increasingly challenging.

I think with an emphasis on security as foundational for development with our State Department colleagues increasing their support for the Haitian National Police, we are trying to help young people with new citizen security programming. You'll see that reflected I think in our—I think it's a \$245 million budget request for USAID-managed resources in Haiti, and trying to apply lessons in the violence reduction space from Central American countries and elsewhere in the Caribbean to Haiti.

I think the biggest challenge, as you know, on the political front is how can a broad and inclusive dialogue actually give rise to elections that are deemed broadly free and fair and there again the political process does not seem to be advancing in the way that we seek.

Senator DURBIN. I say it in the most complimentary terms, but NGO assistance in that country seems like a free-for-all. There

doesn't seem to be any governmental coordination, country-wide coordination. Tell me I'm wrong.

Ms. POWER. Well, I think the development gains in Haiti are significant, for example, in the health space. So, you know, think of Paul Farmer and Partners in Health, right. That's an NGO. That is an incredibly effective investment in resources for just every individual who is touched by being provided with quality health care but also the investments made in training, you know, of Haitian medical students and physicians so they go on to provide support elsewhere.

So, you know, I think that the challenge is that whether it's an NGO or an international organization, like a UN partner and they're, of course, very active in Haiti, as well, having drawn down the large peacekeeping presence that you and I know well from a decade ago, if you don't have political leadership willing to come together to forge compromise, to get the country back in a cycle in which people get to hold their leaders accountable at the ballot box and can't get a grip on the security situation in part because of rivalries among politicians, you know, it's very, very challenging, but again I think we're not asking for resources that are going to be, you know, thrown into the wind. I think sector by sector, we are showing a return on the investment in the socioeconomic realm but meanwhile again these broader structural dynamics have to be addressed by the leadership.

Senator DURBIN. Are you familiar with Philippine Senator Leila de Lima?

Ms. POWER. I am. I wrote something about her in Time Magazine. She was one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People a few years ago.

Senator DURBIN. Been in prison 5 years. Duarte's' vengeance against her politically, now a new regime on the way. Is there anything more we can be doing to help her?

Ms. POWER. Well, I hesitate to give you advice on political prisoners, Senator, since you and your team have gotten, you know, innumerable people out of jail just by your relentlessness.

I think with the new government that itself, you know, isn't/wasn't invested in the prior decision to arrest Madam de Lima. You know, it seems like a very good occasion to make a diplomatic push and I think the ones that are the most effective are Executive and Legislative Branches together operating in unison. So we can follow up on that.

Senator DURBIN. Can I close by telling you that I succeeded a man you knew, Paul Simon, and he made it clear throughout his life and his political life he didn't want anything named after him. He thought that was just an exercise in vanity and so the only thing I could think to do in his name was Water for the World, Water for the Poor, and we have, we think, through USAID and the leadership under many Presidents since he's been gone really established not only water but sanitation in some of the areas of the world that desperately needed it the most.

USAID has been a fabulous partner in that effort. I thank you for that.

I also say there's a little project that is emanating from a town that I'm honored to present called Chicago providing bicycles to Af-

rica, mobility opportunities that change, transform lives, and sometimes the little things are the big things, water, sanitation, basic mobility. It just gives people a chance.

USAID is the agency I look to when I think of those ideas. So thank you for your cooperation in that.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator, and just know that the Water for the World Act and our Water Strategy, all of that has to be tapped now in light of the food crisis gripping much of Africa, many parts of the world, and Feed the Future and the next incarnation of that, you know, integrates water policy, water management into USAID programming.

So there's dedicated water and sanitation programming and then there's the integration, I think, of the spirit of Paul Simon and that piece of law into a lot of our other programming.

Senator DURBIN. Thanks.

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Senator DURBIN. Pat.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you very much, and again, Administrator, I thank you for the kind words and also the kind words for my boss, Tim Rieser.

As you've probably often heard me say, we Senators are merely constitutional impediments to the staff. They do all the work.

Senator Durbin mentioned the Haiti article. I know as I read that article I was just taken with one—I mean, you know this as somebody who's written such definitive things that the amount of work that went into going back through these almost indecipherable paper records of banks and others that didn't exist and yet they did and they found them. It's amazing the complicity of the French Government and the U.S. Government.

I've been there to Haiti a number of times. Even my wife Marcelle's a medical-surgical nurse, she's gone into surgeries and other hospitals and talked with the people and in French, I might say, but I also looked at the last earthquake and went down there. We used the Leahy War Victims Fund because of the number of amputations that had to happen so that you could then give an artificial limb to a young boy who looked so much like one of our grandchildren so he could walk again.

I saw what our people did and tried to help, but, you know, the others came from around the world to help. I'll never forget the orthopedic surgeon came at his own expense from Brussels and he was going to come there for a month, it had been now several months, and he'd been helping and I was speaking with him and I told him in French how much I appreciated what he did. I'll never forget, he turned to me and just grabbed my arms, he says, "Senator, for the children, for the children, for the children."

I mean, that's the whole thing. I know people like Sean Penn who came down there as a volunteer and getting people together and cleaning up things. I did see others in the country, aid groups concerned about what kind of an issue being there, they have to get around it. I was more concerned of what they were doing to help.

But since then I've seen with all the work that AID and everybody else that I just see this getting worse and worse, the assassination of the last president obviously and now the bribes and ev-

everything else to help people. It just is so awful to see that, but you also see others around the world and now we look at COVID. It wasn't very long ago, nobody knew what COVID was. Now it's killed more than a million Americans, 15 million more around the world, going to infect another 700,000 Americans.

A few months ago almost no one believed that Russia would seek to re-establish control over the country of Ukraine, 44 million people. They've decimated whole cities, bombed hospitals and schools, markets, machine-gunned families walking down the street.

Then you have drought and other conflicts in Africa and none of these articles talk about the fact that USAID has to respond to almost every one of these because they do have direct consequences on not only the people there but the Americans there.

The President has asked for a 6 percent increase. That's billions of dollars short of what Senators of both parties are going to request from this subcommittee. I mention that because I've been urging all the subcommittee Chairs and I know Senator Coons works as hard as anybody to try to get the bills together.

I'm hoping people will move quickly to pass all our appropriations bills. You're not helped by a continuing resolution. No other part of government is.

So let me just mention a couple things that you have to do here and there where you're working, prevent famine, stop COVID from spreading, prepare for the next pandemic, create opportunities for Central Americans so they don't become migrants, help countries cope with climate change. So, you know, you've got a full day's work there on those, but do you have enough resources? Do you need more resources? Do you have the kind of partners you need in foreign governments? I mean, how do you deal with this?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. There's a lot there. The only thing worse than having to deal with that set of converging crises is to imagine doing so without you, Senator, and without Tim Rieser here to partner with. So I will say that's an additional compounding factor here in this perfect storm.

I guess I'd just say one thing. First, your point at the end about partners, do you have partners, I think that is critical. You know, we view development, we have to view it as three legs on the stool. This is the security piece, this is the security of citizens. We were just talking about Haiti and the impossibility for so many Haitians even to get from one side of town to the next or even to get to school for fear of kidnapping, even our own staff at the Embassy, you know, just gripped with this physical anxiety, and so baseline countries need to have security.

The Ukrainian people lack it because Putin's decided to wreak havoc on them and their lives.

Then there's the economic development piece which, you know, is where that's USAID's wheelhouse. You know, how do we spur economic growth? How do we provide loan guarantees to small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs? How do we provide micro finance to women, you know, which can completely transform communities and families?

But the economic and the security piece and then the third piece is governance and the Rule of Law and respect for human rights and accountability and honestly the lapse over these last years in

so many places in this third domain, as well, you know, the economics hit by COVID, hit by climate disasters and so forth, security, we see more and more State weakness, more and more State fragility.

Thanks to you all for the Global Fragility Act and the resources around conflict prevention, but this is why the emphasis on democracy and governance is so important, too, because we need to have partners with whom we can work, and we've seen unfortunately in countries like El Salvador and Guatemala where we're doing really important programming in the communities to reduce violence, to provide support for people who suffer gender-based violence, to try to spur economic growth even against the backdrop of a pandemic, but it's really challenging when we go to the private sector and want to draw investment to those countries and are reminded about, you know, how the government has, you know, appointed an attorney general that herself has shut down investigation, prosecution of corruption cases, taken away the security details of judges that are investigating really sensitive cases.

I mean, that makes it very challenging and so I just think for you as a Committee and for us as an agency to somehow be getting the right balance between our investments in economics, our investments in crime reduction and physical security, and other agencies do that in great measure, and then governance and the Rule of Law and to note that it's no coincidence that a less democratic world is a less stable world and that's what we're dealing with now.

Senator LEAHY. Let me give one example of a conundrum and I don't know what the answer is. After the Vietnam War, we kept basically a trade embargo against Vietnam for 20 years. Two of our good friends, John Kerry and John McCain, urged us to move forward and I applaud President George H.W. Bush who worked with them and we brought the Leahy War Victims Fund there and a lot of other parts of government fully opened up and, as you know, Vietnam today is a lot different than it was a generation ago.

Go to the Fulbright School and ask a sophomore, a young woman who, when she was 10 years old, did not speak English and was learning it through our educational programs. I asked her a question. She said, well, when you stop to think about it, that would be indicative of, and off we went.

You know, but now we've frozen billions of dollars for many good reasons in Afghanistan but the economy is collapsing there. Famine's a possibility. Contrary to what the Taliban says, girls aren't allowed to go to school I think past the fifth or sixth grade, I believe.

I mean, what can we do with some of that frozen money to help stop famine and help improve the situation for women and girls and not just have it go in the hands of the Taliban or is there any way?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator. I think our emphasis so far has been very much on flood the zone with humanitarian assistance and, you know, could really still be and certainly starting about 6 months ago looked as though it really may well become the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time.

The UN Appeal for Afghanistan was the largest for any country in the entire history of UN appeals which speaks to the level of need. So we have contributed half a billion dollars since the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban. I was heartened because we really need other donors to step up and for us to be able to leverage our funding to get other donors to step up. There was a March Donors Conference where there were pledges of 2.4 billion and that'll go to organizations, like the World Food Program and others, who are meeting immediate acute food needs.

But at the same time, we are managing to do some development work. Again, the work that we do cannot benefit the Taliban. So we've needed to come up with work-arounds. I think we've been in close consultation with you and your teams about them and so, you know, our budget request is coming to you now requesting, I think, \$71 million in agricultural funding that we think we can distribute to farmers, including getting seeds and inputs to them to deal with this particularly challenging time accessing fertilizer and so forth, \$81 million in economic growth where it's again those entrepreneurs who are out and about, and then something we call have an interest in \$61 million in health and continuing vaccination drives and other health programming, you know, inside Afghanistan.

But my bigger sort of response beyond what we as a government are doing, what we can get other donors to do, given the core point that the Taliban, you know, tragically is in charge of the country, is that the economy is in free-fall, you know. It is people in charge who don't know how to manage the economy and the reserves, some portion of them, as you know, have been set aside for the people of Afghanistan. The State Department and Treasury Department are in discussions about how the Central Bank of Afghanistan can be strengthened but also how it can be ensured that it is independent of the Taliban because fundamentally what the country needs is markets. It needs liquidity. It needs those reserves to be accessed but it just needs a functioning economy or we will be in whack-a-mole, you know, the sort of stopgap humanitarian business and there's no amount of humanitarian assistance that is going to be able to meet the needs indefinitely of a people who are that vulnerable and an economy that is that broken.

Senator LEAHY. And needs to allow all their young people to have an education, men and women.

I have a vote. I'm going to leave and submit other questions for the record, if I might, but again I appreciate your kind comments and the very kind comments of Senator Coons and Senator Graham.

Senator COONS. Well deserved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much.

So let's just take a quick trip around the world. There are 27 nations in the European Union. There are 30 countries in NATO. I'm not asking for this today, but on my side, I want to make sure that the Republican Party is out there leading, working with other nations to build up systems to keep all of us safe, keep people fed that need to be fed and with better health care so that countries don't collapse and we wind up having to pay the price of that collapse.

You have counterparts in virtually every one of those nations, is that correct?

Ms. POWER. The substantial donors specifically.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Ms. POWER. Foreign ministers often take the task.

Senator GRAHAM. Can you do me a favor? You don't have to do it today, but give me some indication of what other countries are doing in comparison to us because when David Beasley from the World Food Program was here, he said that Saudi Arabia had given them like \$11 million and the UAE was zero. So that stood out to me.

I try to tell the taxpayers back home that you pay now, you pay later in these areas. Let's get in on the ground, shape events, rather than being overwhelmed by them, but there's also a legitimate concern by all Americans that are we doing this by ourselves. So we've got to make the case that other nations are helping and when they're not, we got to make them help. Does that make sense to you?

Ms. POWER. It does.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. All right. So we'll go to work on that, Mr. Chairman, and see if we can come up with some dynamic of how parts of the developed democracy world is doing compared to us.

We did a push for a global fund for food security. Does that make sense to you?

Ms. POWER. I think more resources for food security make sense. We should talk about the modalities, just particularly given some, I think, important positive developments that align with your first question/comment, like the World Bank setting up a \$30 billion Resilience and Solidarity Fund, the modalities in which we're still digging into to understand how that's going to be used.

So something that coordinates bilateral donor assistance, the multilateral development banks, both regional and global, like the World Bank, could be very important.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Well, I want to be helpful there. I want to let the taxpayer know that we're pushing other countries to do more when they can do more and should do more, and we'll say thank you to those who are doing their part and then some.

We sent a letter to you 4 months ago, myself and Senator Risch, regarding USAID's efforts to hunt for and research novel viruses, including in China. We haven't gotten a response. Can you please answer our letter?

Ms. POWER. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Good. Now the bottom line for me about Afghanistan is can you think of a scenario of where we help the Central Bank of Afghanistan without the Taliban being benefitted?

Ms. POWER. Senator, right now I certainly see grounds for skepticism, given that the Central Bank of Afghanistan is run by a Taliban Minister,—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. But at the same time with the country's economy unraveling, with the Central Bank for nay country—

Senator GRAHAM. Was that a predictable consequence of our withdrawal?

Ms. POWER. Was what a predictable consequence?

Senator GRAHAM. That the country would fall apart under Taliban control.

Ms. POWER. Well, I think that there were views that have been talked about up here that the Afghan forces would be able to withstand—

Senator GRAHAM. We have a list of the pluses and minuses. One of the minuses had to be that the Taliban get in charge and the country would go to hell in a handcart.

Ms. POWER. I think I can't speak for the President here today, but I think,——

Senator GRAHAM. I mean,——

Ms. POWER [continuing]. You know,——

Senator GRAHAM [continuing]. From your lane, were you worried about that if we——

Ms. POWER. I think all of us who care about the Afghan people, of course, were worried about the consequences that would ensue, you know, with any——

Senator GRAHAM. Are you surprised the Taliban are not letting girls go to school in a robust way?

Ms. POWER. Well, let me just say that am I surprised compared to what I thought of the Taliban before they took power? Of course not. That's their world view. That's their ideology. They made no secret of that. Am I surprised? I'm not at all surprised when they break their word, but they had in fact committed to work with UNICEF and other international actors to allow donors to bypass the Education Ministry to be able to support girls to be able to be in school and so, as you know, they went back on a commitment that they had made and that we thought we were going to be able to actually continue——

Senator GRAHAM. So here's the question.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. To support girls in school.

Senator GRAHAM. Given their history, I'm not surprised and I share your concern about the Afghan people. They're living in hell. So if you can find a way to convince me of how we can get outside organizations effectively working in Afghanistan to keep people from starving, I'd be willing to help.

Finally, when we look at what's on the horizon through the end of this year going into the next, I hate to be a Debby downer here, but 40 countries rely upon to 50 percent of the grain supply that comes from Ukraine and most of them are in developing world. I don't see the war in Ukraine ending any time soon. Famines have hit Africa in unprecedented levels. Are we ready for this?

We've had a supplemental, but how do we deal with this? What's your advice to this Committee because everybody doesn't want to spend any more money than we have to, but I just don't see a way out of dealing with this, Mr. Chairman, without putting some resources in the pipeline.

I would end with this. America's national security interests are well served when there's a certain amount of stability in the world, but we can't do it by ourselves. Will you pledge to this Committee not only to give us sound advice about how we can do more effi-

ciently, save some money in other places, but also how we can push the world to do their part? What do you see for the next year?

Ms. POWER. Well, let me say this, Senator. First, just underscoring the premise of your question which is according to the World Bank, 10 million people are thrust into poverty for every 1 percent increase in food prices and food prices are already up 34 percent but, you know, given Putin's blockade of the grains and sunflower oil and other oils coming out of Ukraine, you know, there's no guarantee that that has capped.

So I'm a former UN ambassador. I very much share the predicate for your whole kind of line of inquiry which is we need to leverage what we do to get other countries to do more.

I do think that the Europeans have stepped up both in terms of, you know, opening their doors and hearts and homes and resources to Ukrainians who've crossed into Europe. Unfortunately, though, and I'm not sure how closely everybody is tracking this, in many European budgetary processes the resources to help Ukrainian refugees are coming out of overseas development assistance, and so if you combine that with the cuts that we've seen from the United Kingdom over the last year and what we know are going to be the demands inside Ukraine around reconstruction but also just around tending to the acute needs of people who are still under siege and who've been displaced, I worry about a shrinking pie and it places a premium on getting new donors or donors or who have contributed.

Saudi Arabia was contributing, was increasing steadily its contributions every year to humanitarian assistance and then that tapered off and now has dropped. They have made substantial new announcements for Yemen which is very useful because there's so many needs in so many places, and so, you know, particular countries are going to help particular parts of the world that they maybe feel a closer attachment to, but what everyone needs to do is to do what you have done which is to recognize that we're in an extra budgetary moment.

You know, if we're just, you know, taking money out of our Food Security Program in order to, you know, support energy diversification so that people can wean themselves off dependence on Putin's energy, that's not going to work.

You know, if we are not supporting journalists who are uncovering the crimes and corruption of their leaders, that's a big loss because this is a moment in which when people feel the needs that they are feeling, they have a right to democratic accountability and we should be supporting that aspiration that they have.

So, you know, everything is connected to everything else and we can't—I know you alluded to this in your opening comment, Senator. I wasn't sure exactly what you meant, but it would be a huge missed opportunity for the United States to give up also on the incredibly effective COVID-19 work that we have been doing.

I mean, from your travels you must see the gratitude, the fact that our vaccines and our PPE and our therapeutics and tests don't come with strings attached. You know, they're not in exchange for, you know, some country doing this back or taking on some debt to us. You know, these are donations. These come out of generosity

and compassion and self-interests of the American people. People understand that connection.

But, you know, to emphasize food security and give up on COVID, that can't be an option, right, given that the food security crisis predated Russia's invasion of Ukraine in part because of what COVID has done to supply chains around the world.

Senator GRAHAM. Just one quick question. I got to go. What's the vaccination rate in Africa? Do you know?

Ms. POWER. Excuse me. It's around 17 percent.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. So we all agree that it's low, but I don't see it changing much for a variety of factors.

One thing that people on our side of the aisle think about, Mr. Chairman, is therapeutics, is to keep people out of hospital, get them well as quick as possible. I hope that this combination that we're talking about for COVID would look at therapeutics.

Senator COONS. If I could follow up on that, Madam Administrator, before my colleague leaves, in terms of the timing of additional funding around COVID, both for therapeutics and for finishing the delivery of vaccines we've already produced, already been delivered, what's the difference if there's an additional several billion dollars for COVID relief for therapeutics and for vaccines? What's the difference between that happening in June versus September versus December?

Ms. POWER. Well, Senator Graham, I know you have to go, but I hear you on the low vaccination rates, but I don't agree that we can afford to embrace a fatalism around the ability to dramatically lower infection, hospitalization, and death rates, and I actually think we started this initiative called Global VAX with your support in December which was aiming to put shots in arms, not just, you know, COVAX was delivering the vaccines that the American people donated generously.

You know, we've committed 1.2 billion vaccines in total and gotten 500 million out there, but it turned out that once the vaccines began flowing the best-laid plans that many countries had for vaccine delivery were overcome by Russian disinformation, by cold chain challenges, by the absence of accessibility for pop-up clinics, and so we have met those gaps in the infrastructure in the countries that we've been able to afford to provide delivery support to and that was the Global VAX Initiative.

To your question, Senator Coons, I think right now we are continuing the work in the 11 surge countries and we are seeing the results. I mean, you're seeing vaccine rates of eligible adults that were 18 percent in December in a country like Cote d'Ivoire up to now 38 percent of eligible adults. So I could go country by country where we are surging resources. It is working.

To your question, we will not be able to expand that to some of the countries that are in Africa that are under 10 percent and where we have begun to plan with those countries to receive new resources to train health workers or to get them to be able to work overtime or to have the pop-up clinics but nor will we have the resources for what Senator Graham was talking about which is therapeutics and an ability to try to wrestle to tame COVID when you have an outbreak and we know there will be more outbreaks going forward.

I think if we were to — in a sense what you would see is our vaccination drive ground to a halt——

Senator COONS. Right.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. In around August of this year if that \$5 billion supplemental is not appropriated, you know, in the next month or two.

Senator COONS. If we could, I'm expecting one more Senator and then I have a 4:15 event at the White House I'm trying to get to, just a few quick back and forth here if we could.

The DFC's role in supporting regional vaccine manufacturing, do you see that as holding promise and being something that we can possibly stand up and make more effective?

You've got a request for 6.5 billion in 5 years in mandatory spending for global pandemic preparedness. What are the key elements of that?

And then to what extent do you think we can work together to craft more flexible and sustainable public/private partnerships around hunger, pandemics, and conservation?

I'm happy to repeat those. Let's go one at a time.

Ms. POWER. Okay.

Senator COONS. The DFC has taken on a role in helping finance regional vaccine manufacturing. So, for example, in South Africa, there's another site there possibly developing in Kenya. Are you supporting those efforts and do you think in the long term boosting regional vaccine manufacturing is an important investment?

Ms. POWER. So in brief, we are working very closely with the DFC on this. I think that we would like to see more promising initiatives in the pipeline than we currently have. I think the next investment—USAID provided a grant funding for the Louis Pasteur Institute in Senegal which I think is probably next up where the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and now the DFC are also looking to come in.

So, you know, I think it's important, particularly just as here attention has receded a little bit from COVID, that we think of vaccine manufacturing structurally, not just about this vaccine at this time but about the fact that 99 percent of Africa's vaccines even prior to the pandemic came from outside Africa and so there's a structural need.

Senator COONS. Any input you can briefly give me on the 6.5 billion 5 year mandatory? Like what would that accomplish? If I think about the things that you could do with more funding and that you won't be able to do if we don't get you full funding, providing predictable global pandemic surveillance and preparedness both for the public health workforce and for sustained resources would strike me as near the top of that list.

Ms. POWER. Indeed. What it boils down to is do we want to be in a position to detect viruses before they have become pandemics. You know, every country has some form of health infrastructure. Do we want it to be stronger or do we want it to be more fragile? We want it to be stronger. We want lab turnaround times to be shorter. We want communities to be educated on animal-to-human transitions, zoonotic diseases and the like.

We want the ability to take samples and move them into some of our global health infrastructure at CDC or at NIH more quickly so that countermeasures can be developed sooner.

So your question, it's a matter of taking the global health security foundation that we have in I think 10 countries and expanding it to an additional 25 and so we can show the good that we have done in the countries we are operating in the global health security space at this point and now we need to spread it and scale it because viruses aren't looking to see where we have a global health security program and where we don't. Viruses are doing what viruses do and we have to prevent them before they spread.

Senator COONS. I look forward to a more detailed briefing as we go ahead with this year's process.

Public/private partnerships, something that a number of colleagues have asked about, and I think you're getting a bipartisan letter led by Senator Warner. They're looking for flexibility in Ukraine in terms of delivering hunger relief.

World Central Kitchens has been brought up to me a number of times as an example of the kind of partner that can flexibly respond to a rapidly-evolving humanitarian disaster, one of the things Senator Graham and I have talked about, and there was some funding in the fiscal year 2022 bill for this, supporting public/private partnerships for long-term conservation management in Africa.

I wondered if you had any thoughts on the fiscal year 2023 request for sustainable landscapes and for planning around wildlife conservation, wildlife trafficking, sustainable landscapes, and conservation on the continent.

Ms. POWER. Well, I can't resist saying something about World Central Kitchen with whom even though USAID is not a funder of World Central Kitchen and they have been wonderfully and appropriately successful in fundraising from private citizens and from companies and foundations, we work hand-in-glove with them, but their ability to get to places, you know, where even, you know, the UN hasn't been able to get is really, really admirable and a tribute to their staff.

They also procure locally and so we are partnering with them in terms of we have agricultural programs in Ukraine where we're trying to get seeds to farmers so they don't miss the planting season. Jose Andres is involved in discussions about granaries and how those granaries can get emptied so that more supplies can go in, and we've done just in brief a wonderful partnership with them whereby Moldova's apples, because we all want Moldova to succeed, tremendous leadership there in fighting corruption and building the Rule of Law, but Moldova's apples used to all go to Russia and Herzegovina now that's not happening and so what did World Central Kitchen do? They agreed to procure apples from Moldova, thereby helping the Moldova apple industry in order to feed people in Ukraine.

So those kinds of—you know, it's not always about, you know, what kind of money does USAID contribute, you know, or leverage with the private sector, but sometimes it's just about knowing what a private sector actor's comparative advantage is in meeting a development or humanitarian challenge.

On conservation, I believe there's already a public/private partnership of sorts underway between us, NASA, Unilever, and Google as it relates to land use forecasting, you know, and actually going to farmers with the data about how they can in the long run be advantaged by alternative uses of farmland, but I think there's much more we can do.

Senator COONS. There is. Give me 2 minutes on workforce and the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. This bill increases your personnel. Something I've been concerned about is making sure that both the State Department and USAID have the resources to recruit, train, diversify, retain highly-qualified workforce.

How important is it that you get the additional 260 million you're requesting for that purpose and what are the key challenges around your workforce?

Ms. POWER. It's critical. I mean, first of all, we have to move faster as an agency given the swirl of events and the urgency of all of these crises, and if you take a USAID contracting officer, they are contracting roughly three or four times the amount as a comparable DOD contracting officer because of the paucity of contracting officers and the attrition over time.

We have the largest Foreign Service class in sometime that has just entered. It's also the most diverse class. So we're building out those numbers, but you also, Senator, have prioritized rightly, and one of your questions today spoke to this, the importance of working with local organizations so that our investments can be more sustainable over time.

The increases that we've requested in operating expenses, a portion of which you granted in the 2022 Appropriations bill but we need more of, are also used to be in a position to in a sense mentor and help build capacity in local organizations so that they can be partners to USAID.

So it's a front-end investment that will pay lasting dividends over time.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

While Senator Shaheen comes forward, my last question to you was about the African Leaders Summit. I had the chance to meet with a number of African heads of state who had participated in the one previous such summit we held now quite a few years ago and to be blunt, they're somewhat skeptical.

I'd welcome any input you've got about what sorts of plans are being made and what kind of role USAID might take and then, frankly, I'm going to hand the gavel and the closing questions to my friend and colleague from New Hampshire while I run to the White House for an event.

Thank you for everything you do and for your leadership.

Senator Shaheen, when she answers this question, I'm going to hand you the gavel and the closing statement to make about keeping the record open so that I can flee to an event at the White House.

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

So I think what I will say is that food and fertilizer are foremost on the minds of many, many African ministers right now and certainly many African heads of state and so in the supplemental, in addition to the \$4.3 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance,

which, of course, some of which will reach African acute and vulnerable communities in Africa, I think looking also at the food security assistance and the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine and how we can utilize some of that food security ESF money in order to help farmers, you know, better target the fertilizer they have in order to help them supplement the fertilizer that they have with, you know, composts and manures they have, the Ethiopian Government is now encouraging.

So the sort of how do we get through the crisis piece of this but also how to diversify imports and exports, how to build more resilience. We've been talking about resilience for a long time in the climate space and we in the United States are talking constantly about supply chain resilience and what the pandemic has revealed about some of the downsides of globalization, the vulnerabilities of globalization.

Well, this is another example of that in Africa and I think what I hear from the leaders that I engage with is a desire for more USAID and more DFC and other support in helping them thicken their ability to withstand what we know are just going to be a growing number of shocks that come at them and so I think that's a huge challenge but a major opportunity and I hear the skepticism for sure but there's also a lot of buyer's remorse about the huge debt incurred by virtue of—

Senator COONS. China refuses to be transparent, refuses to be partner with anything like the same—you know, a generation ago dozens of African countries had significant debt burdens relieved in no small part through the leadership of Bono and the One Campaign and the Chinese are doing nothing like that now, and I am convinced that many African countries would still prefer to be close partners with the United States but they view us as unreliable and I have heard some significant pushback.

I think the vote at the UN about condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine in which a significant number of our otherwise close partners on the continent either abstained or voted the other way was meant as a wake-up call for us about our lack of delivery on vaccines, on humanitarian relief.

This is no way to be critical of you or your agency but just something I say to my colleagues quite a bit, that we have a moment where we could make that right and where we could deliver and where we could engage and I agree with you that meeting human needs and agricultural development challenges is a big part of it, but showing up, showing up robustly through AID, DFC, MCC, and through other partners and, frankly, re-engaging in UN entities in a way that contests that space are absolutely critical.

Thank you for your testimony. Thank you to my colleague from New Hampshire. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the year ahead.

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

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing open so I could get here. I was at another hearing and thank you very much, Administrator Power, for being here today and for the great work that you're doing and so many at USAID are doing.

I really wanted to be here to talk with you a little bit about the Western Balkans, a part of the world I know you know very well, and I had a chance to visit the end of April with Senators Murphy and Tillis. We were in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, and I think it's fair to say that, first of all, with respect to USAID, we saw particularly in Bosnia some—heard about some really exciting and interesting work that you're doing there that was very positive.

But I, for one, came away feeling like each of those countries had gone backward in terms of their road towards democracy and European immigration since the time I first visited each of them, and I think we were all very concerned about what was happening in Bosnia and the fact that I think after the Dayton Accords, after U4 set up the mission in Bosnia and Europe seemed to take some responsibility that there has not been as much attention to the region as we really need.

Corruption is rampant. Their political structures are not working in the way that at least the people we talked to in the country felt were in the best interests of residents.

So talk, if you will, a little bit about what more we can be doing there, what more can USAID do to address particularly young people who are moving out of Bosnia and the out-migration rate is significant there, and how do we help address the challenges that they're facing?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Obviously there's no silver bullet because certainly when it comes to Bosnia, like you, President Biden, you know, has been a champion of Bosnia's sovereignty, its territorial integrity, its democracy for such a long time. I think, you know, we have engaged, you know, intensively because of the risk that really feels quite acute and, you know, I have been traveling back to Bosnia every few years since I left in 1996 and, you know, every time I traveled back in the past I would hear Dayton's broken, it's not working. You know, there was always a sense of some kind of political paralysis, but on my more recent trip which was a few months before yours, you know, it was the first time that I encountered people who actually had packed their bags in the event of a more dire scenario and that is attributable, I think, to particularly the leader Milorad Dodik but other political leaders putting their own kind of power grab and their own economic ill-gotten gains above the interests of not only young people but all of the people of a country that has been through so much and has so much to offer but the politicians are definitely getting in the way.

And so I am sure you saw some of the same unbelievable anti-corruption and environmental kind of crusaders and the independent media that USAID has invested in so much over the years and it's still, you know, speaking truth to power but just power isn't listening in the way that it needs to be and the idea that Dodik, you know, Republica Srpska could see fit to secede from, you know, some of these very technical but very important, you know, joint institutions at the time of a pandemic, at the time of spiraling food and fuel prices, at the time of even more severe out-migration from Republica Srpska than any place else in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it's just missing the point, right. It's about meeting

the needs of the people and giving them reason to stay and I'll get to what we're going to do about it in a second, but, you know, I met with one. I went and played or pretended to play volley ball. They played and I pretended to play volley ball with a group of young Serbian women and I said how many of you see a future for yourselves here in the country and not one raised their hand and these women, oh, my gosh, you know, they could do anything.

I mean, you could just tell their potential and their dynamism and all they wanted to do is go take it elsewhere because they just feel like again political leaders will never do what is required to create the kind of economic opportunities we need.

So we're, you know, still chugging away there and continuing to try to invest. You and I talked about this a little bit on the phone once, I think, but trying to support more local government where, you know, just as in this country we see sometimes partisanship and polarization give way at the mayor or city council level.

So, too, some of that is happening in places like Tuzla and so migrating our programming in a more decentralized way. I think the tourism industry, you know, who knew that Bosnia and Herzegovina was the mountain bike capital of the world, I certainly didn't, but supporting actors on the ground to build those mountain biking trails and again create jobs and looking for tourist opportunities that cross lines.

I did a joint event with the Minister of Tourism from the Federation and the Minister of Tourism from so-called Republica of Srpska and, you know, it was amazing to imagine how many more tourists would come to take advantage of all Bosnia has to offer if there weren't the political gridlock, if people didn't always have a sense that things might unravel. So that's there.

I will say that I thought you all showed great foresight in both supplemental in taking also note of how vulnerable these countries are to the current crisis, both because Putin is very active—

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. In the Western Balkans and we're seeing a spike in disinformation and so we need to be in a position to come back and, you know, again support independent media for telling the truth or, you know, name the disinformation as it's coming out as we're doing more and more here in the United States.

So I think the nearly \$31 million in the first supplemental will go to programming across the Western Balkans. You know, there are some encouraging developments in Bulgaria and in Kosovo. You have leaders who are pushing an anti-corruption agenda and looking for resources to help on procurement laws and sort of structural reforms that could make also the business climate more attractive which in turn could have knock-on effects in stemming migration, but again the psychological insecurity around unsettled grievances and disputes, you know, fundamentally, the political leadership across the region just has to act, you know, especially at a time of crisis like this, with society and the people first in mind, and again I think there are pockets where that is happening and nothing like a crisis to focus the mind and certainly you see in public opinion polling, you know, the moment of opportunity now in light of Russia's aggression because that has broken through, notwithstanding all of the disinformation, but being there with

these new resources to help small- and medium-size enterprises, to help anti-corruption reforms, to help STEM education as they seek to build out their IT sectors, and I will say Kosovo's one example, last point I make is there's also an opportunity as so many private sector actors leave the Russian Federation where they might have been able to set up shop.

We see every day, you know, the names of new companies who are leaving. We at USAID are thinking through, okay, how do we work, for example, with the leadership in Kosovo to try to attract, you know, some of those investments. There just may be opportunities now out of this otherwise horrific crisis that we need to be in a position to move on.

So that's why the additional resources in the second supplemental, as well, would be very helpful in that regard.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I really appreciate that.

I think it's also important to point out that when I first visited the region in 2010, there was a real sense among the countries that I visited at the time and that included the three we just visited that there was a regional opportunity, that the opportunity was to look to the EU, to NATO, to the West, and to work together and Serbia and Croatia at the time had a real opportunity to play a very positive role in what was happening in Bosnia. That is still the case. The question is will they take advantage of it? Will they recognize that it's in all of their interests to look at what's important regionally because it's important to their own countries, and, you know, I think it's important and incumbent on us to do everything we can to try and encourage that.

Ms. POWER. Well, let me just say, Senator, last thing, that I'm just so grateful because I do think that the attention generally across our government to this region, you know, of course, the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina was drawing attention, the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, you know, always generating episodic engagement, but, you know, if I look at Eastern Europe as a whole, you know, USAID did shut down our programming, you know, and shut down missions, you know, in countries like Slovakia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe outside the Western Balkans and I think this provides us all with an occasion to sort of reset and to say okay, you know, there are real vulnerabilities here. There are also real opportunities to enlist, you know, more congressional delegations to travel to the Western Balkans.

You know, again, USAID's role to try to broker with the DASPR communities, as well, more interest in getting engagement. I came back from Bosnia, I did a big DASPR call and did the same with the Moldovan President looking at Eastern Europe and again the shocks that predated the war in Ukraine and now that are stemming from that.

So maybe, you know, as people's attention kind of drifted from that period when this was such a centerpiece of American foreign policy, maybe now is an occasion where we can really concentrate the mind, concentrate resources, and I think you alluded to European attention also, you know, flagging. I think the risk of Ukraine is that everything is focused on Ukraine and a very, very fragile situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be neglected, but I think

at the highest levels we've been engaging our European counterparts.

So that any push we make is a joint push which always makes it more effective.

Senator SHAHEEN. Good. Well, thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony this afternoon.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Agency for response subsequent to the hearing:]
No questions were submitted for the record.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator SHAHEEN. The hearing record will remain open until 5 o'clock on Wednesday, June 1, for any written questions and the hearing is now concluded. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:14 p.m., Wednesday, May 25, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

LIST OF WITNESSES, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PREPARED STATEMENTS

	Page
Blinken, Hon. Anthony, U.S. Department of State:	
Prepared Statement of	7
Statement of	6
Coons, Senator Christopher A., U.S. Senator From Delaware, Opening State- ment of.....	1, 39
Graham, Senator Lindsey, U.S. Senator From South Carolina:	
Opening Statement of	3
Statement of	40
Leahy, Senator Patrick, U.S. Senator from Vermont, Opening Statement of	4
Power, Samantha, Administrator, United States Agency for International De- velopment, Prepared Statement of	44
Ullom, General Thomas J., Acting Inspector, U.S. Agency for International Development, Prepared Statement of	51

SUBJECT INDEX

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE	Page
Additional Committee Questions	38
Afghanistan–Related Work	12
Mission and Results	8
Oversight Efforts	9
Resources	13
<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Additional Committee Questions	79
Addressing Irregular Migration from Central America	49
Advancing:	
Foreign Assistance Priorities Through Coordinated Efforts	55
Advancing Global Health Outcomes	52
Bolstering Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance and Fighting Corruption	47
Concluding Observations About Continued Oversight	56
Controlling COVID–19 and Strengthening Global Health Leadership	46
Investing in our People and Building a Stronger Culture	50
Leveraging Local Strengths for Sustainable Development	54
Managing Aid in Emerging and Protracted Crises	53
Responding to Humanitarian Crises in Places Like Ethiopia and Afghanistan	49
Restoring U.S. Climate Leadership	48
Strengthening Core Management Functions	56
Supporting Community-Led Development	50

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