AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

FISCAL YEAR 26 STATE DEPARTMENT POSTURE: PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

May 21, 2025

Serial No. 119–19

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

FISCAL YEAR 26 STATE DEPARTMENT POSTURE: PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS

FISCAL YEAR 26 STATE DEPARTMENT POSTURE: PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

May 21, 2025

Serial No. 119–19

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Available: *http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov, http://docs.house.gov*, or *http://www.govinfo.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

61–366 PDF WASHINGTON : 2026

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BRIAN J. MAST, Florida, *Chairman*

MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
JOE WILSON, South Carolina
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania
DARRELL ISSA, California
TIM BURCHETT, Tennessee
MARK E. GREEN, Tennessee
ANDY BARR, Kentucky
RONNY JACKSON, Texas
YOUNG KIM, California
MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR, Florida
BILL HUIZENGA, Michigan
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, American Samoa
WARREN DAVIDSON, Ohio
JAMES R. BAIRD, Indiana
THOMAS H. KEAN, JR, New Jersey
MICHAEL LAWLER, New York
CORY MILLS, Florida
RICHARD McCORMICK, Georgia
KEITH SELF, Texas
RYAN K. ZINKE, Montana
JAMES C. MOYLAN, Guam
ANNA PAULINA LUNA, Florida
JEFFERSON SHREVE, Indiana
SHERI BIGGS, South Carolina
MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER, Washington
RYAN MACKENZIE, Pennsylvania

GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York, *Ranking Member*
BRAD SHERMAN, California
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
WILLIAM R. KEATING, Massachusetts
AMI BERA, California
JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas
DINA TITUS, Nevada
TED LIEU, California
SARA JACOBS, California
SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Florida
GREG STANTON, Arizona
JARED MOSKOWITZ, Florida
JONATHAN L. JACKSON, Illinois
SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE, California
JIM COSTA, California
GABE AMO, Rhode Island
KWEISI MFUME, Maryland
PRAMILA JAYAPAL, Washington
GEORGE LATIMER, New York
JOHNNY OLSZEWSKI JR, Maryland
JULIE JOHNSON, Texas
SARAH McBRIDE, Delaware
BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER, Illinois
MADELEINE DEAN, Pennsylvania

James Langenderfer, *Majority Staff Director*
Sajit Gandhi, *Minority Staff Director*

C O N T E N T S

REPRESENTATIVES

	Page
Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Mast	2
Opening Statement of Ranking Member Gregory W. Meeks	3

WITNESSES

Statement of Hon. Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State	5
Prepared Statement	8

APPENDIX

Hearing Notice	78
Hearing Minutes	79
Hearing Attendance	80

MATERIAL FOR THE RECORD

Rep. Baumgartner statement for the record	81
Rep. Bera material for the record	83
Rep. Keating material for the record	87
Rep. Stanton material for the record	90
Rep. Wilson material for the record	92

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Amo	97
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Baumgartner	112
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Bera	126
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Biggs	159
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Castro	161
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Costa	188
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Dean	194
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Jacobs	198
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Kamlager-Dove	204
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Keating	237
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Kim	252
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Latimer	255
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. McBride	257
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Meeks	264
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Mfume	348
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Olszweski	384
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Self	395
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Shreve	398
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Smith	403
Questions submitted to Marco Rubio from Rep. Zinke	410

FISCAL YEAR 26 STATE DEPARTMENT POSTURE: PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Brian Mast (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman MAST. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order.

I am going to ask that everybody rise and join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Please remain standing as we are going to also recognize the passing of our friend, Gerry Connolly, for a moment—few moments after that as well.

Please join me in the Pledge.

All. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chairman MAST. Please remain standing. We are going to do a moment of silence in a moment. I just want to say Gerry was my friend, and I was very sad to hear of his passing this morning. Gerry was a fierce fighter. We had a lot of fights on this dais together, and we had a lot of fights on the House floor between one another, and I will certainly miss him.

I would like to recognize my friend, Ranking Member Meeks, to say a few words as well, and then Represent Burchett is going to say a brief prayer as well.

Mr. MEEKS. This is a sad day. Gerry Connolly wasn't a politician. He was the true essence of the word a "statesman." He loved this country. He loved this committee. He loved this Congress. He is a dear man that worked as president of the NATO PA in the cross-Atlantic relationship. He was sincere. He had this funny, personality that he would make you laugh with what he talked about.

He was a great American. He will be dearly missed on this committee, in this Congress, and in his district of Virginia. A true statesman, Gerry Connolly. May God bless his soul.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Ranking Member Meeks.

Representative Burchett, do you want to give that prayer?

Mr. BURCHETT. Dear Lord, thank you so much for the gift of Gerry Connolly. Lord, you know he and I didn't agree on much of anything, other than our friendship. He always had a kind word to

say to me when I was down, and I tried to lift him up in his very brief but tragic illness.

Please, Lord, bless his family, draw them close to you, and draw these members close to you, as we mourn the passing of a dear, dear friend. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

ALL. Amen.

Chairman MAST. Please be seated.

The purpose of this hearing today is to explore the State Department's Fiscal Year 2026 budget request and explore the myriad of challenges facing the United States in its diplomatic lines of effort around the globe.

I am now going to recognize myself for a brief opening statement.

CHAIRMAN BRIAN MAST OPENING STATEMENT

Secretary Rubio, I want to start by thanking you for your attendance today. Since day one, President Trump and yourself, you have taken bold action to clean house, to restore accountability, to slash waste, and put America and Americans first, and I would say that this was desperately needed.

In the past two decades alone, the State Department's budget grew from about 9–1/2 billion to over 55 billion, and I think we could all easily say for what? In any way, shape, or form, did our foreign policy feel like it was five times more effective under Joe Biden? I think everybody would say no.

Instead, we had a State Department that was literally a slush fund for many far left bureaucrats, grifting, non-government organizations, and foreign adversaries like the Taliban. We had our tax dollars going to things like vouchers for migrants at our southern border, mobilizing elderly lesbians to vote in Costa Rica, as well as drag shows and LGBT comic books, musicals, plays, and operas.

That stuff was not PEPFAR, to say the least. It didn't make America safer. It didn't make America stronger. It didn't bring other countries closer to us. And it didn't save lives.

Now many of my colleagues might think that canceling these programs creates an inroad for China, and I would say that we could only hope that China is stupid enough to spend money in that way.

I want to thank this Administration for bringing charges against those who it appears were stealing from the State Department and USAID, and in turn the American people. And I want to thank you, Secretary Rubio, for reorganizing the State Department into a lean and effective diplomatic operation.

Let's give proof of that. Just this past week alone, President Trump secured more than $2 trillion of investment from the Middle East. That is more than 10 times what Joe Biden secured from the Middle East during his entire 4 years in the White House, which is not entirely surprising considering under the Biden State Department there was millions spent on programs like trans inclusion in Tunisia. That was the focus in the Middle East.

Now, as you know, Secretary Rubio, the job is not done. Up until now, over 80 percent of the State Department has been unauthorized. We have bureaus and offices that have grown from thousands of dollars to billions of dollars, and that change is in law when we

passed the first comprehensive and standalone State Department reauthorization that has occurred since 2002.

I look forward to working with the members of this committee. I look forward to working with you, Secretary RUBIO. And I look forward to working with Senator Risch moving forward to make sure that one thing, and one thing alone, takes place. Every single dollar and diplomat that we authorize and send into the field puts America first.

In that, I would now like to recognize Ranking Member Meeks for any opening statement that he may have.

RANKING MEMBER GREGORY MEEKS OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Rubio, I am glad you are finally before this committee. Your testimony actually comes long after the State Department, under your leadership, took actions without the required congressional consultation or that were contrary to the law. But I guess it is better late than never.

But let me be clear: showing up months after the fact and refusing to stay until every member has questioned you for 5 minutes, as entitled to under House rules, are not the standards to which we hold the Secretary of State.

Mr. Secretary, I have known you for a while, and I respected very much Senator Rubio, even when we disagreed. Senator Rubio was a principled statesman. Secretary Rubio, however, as we have seen in the past few months, is something different entirely.

As a senator, you spoke often and forcefully about the dangers of executive overreach. You warned America not to lose its moral clarity or sacrifice democratic principles for short-term gain. Senator Rubio recognized that we cannot allow the executive branch to unilaterally determine the direction of the United States' foreign policy without accountability to Congress.

Secretary Rubio is doing precisely what Senator Rubio feared: withholding congressional-appropriated funds, stonewalling oversight, and acting as if laws passed by this body are optional. Secretary Rubio has presided over the dismantling and destruction of everything Senator Rubio once defended.

So, although you may be the Secretary of State, the acting head of USAID, the National Security Advisor, and the Archivist of America, the empire you have stumbled upon is not one of influencer. It is a kingdom of ash.

So I ask, was it worth it? Was it worth it to allow the near extinction of U.S. foreign assistance and USAID which Senator Rubio said, and I quote, "is a very cost effective way, not only to export our values and our example, but to advance our security and our economic interests"?

Lie is exactly what this Administration has done again and again. Each time Elon Musk and his department of arsonists brag and mislead the American public about massively inflated savings, or lie about the programs they have cut and their purpose, they are not telling you about the food that rotted on the shelves while people went hungry or the medicine that went undistributed to children needlessly suffering or the trust that was lost by your actions.

But I believe you know better, because you have said as much, and yet here we are.

In 2022, Senator Rubio wanted about the urgent and growing threat posed by China and called for a fully funded State Department and USAID. Senator Rubio wrote that soft power tools and alliances were vital to our national security. And today Secretary Rubio is here to defend an 84 percent cut of the foreign affairs budget.

How does hollowing out our State Department and dismantling USAID help us compete with China? How does the America Alone budget project American strength?

On human rights, the contrast is even starker. Senator Rubio built his political brand on the cause of freedom and dignity. You condemned autocrats in Caracas, Havana, and Beijing for silencing dissent. But Secretary Rubio, he looks the other way when strongmen commit similar abuses. Secretary Rubio even defied a Supreme Court order to facilitate the return of a wrongly detained spouse of an American citizen.

When Senator Rubio became the first Hispanic American to serve as Secretary of State, he made sure to pull the ladder up behind him. In the name of dismantling efforts to making hiring and promotion fair—as you call it, wokeness—you have unlawfully dismantled programs designed to address decades of historical exclusion.

These are not political experiments. They were congressionally supported efforts rooted in bipartisan recognition that our diplomatic core must reflect the diversity and the strength of the Nation it represents abroad. These are initiatives that Senator Rubio supported.

You replaced experienced career employees with ideologues and political loyalists. Under your watch, sir, America's diplomatic and development cores have suffered the greatest brain drain in history, and America has been weakened and made more isolated by the actions of an Administration that has abandoned its allies, cozied up to dictators, and conducted a foreign policy driven not by interests of the American people but in support of the personal enrichment of the President and his family.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. I thank the ranking member for his opening statement, and I would also thank the 20 members of this committee who voted in the 2024 appropriations to make sure that the Secretary and the Administration had the authority to reorganize the State Department. And other members of this committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

We are pleased to have Secretary of State Marco Rubio before us today. Your full statements will be made a part of the record, and I will ask you to keep your spoken remarks to 5 minutes in order to allow time for members' questions.

I now am proud to recognize Secretary Rubio for any opening statement that you may have.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary RUBIO. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I will try to stay under the 5 minutes, so we can get time for questions here.

So when I took this job, and I said this to you in my confirmation hearing, the most important thing we need to do is return American foreign policy to be centered on our national interest. For far too long, that had been lost as a concept of foreign policy.

In essence, in many cases oftentimes the U.S. engaged in the world on the basis of what was good for the global order or the international community and what it is like—and, look, for about 30 years, that made a lot of sense, until the end of the post-cold war era. So that made a lot of sense for a long period of time during the cold war, but then we entered the post-cold war era, and the war—and the world order has rapidly changed. We entered a new era about 12 or 14 years ago.

We entered an era of near-peer competition where for the first time since the end of the cold war the United States had a near-peer competitor and adversary in the State of China, and we need to confront that and our foreign policy needs to be geared around that and all the realities of this new world.

What that means is we have to have a State Department that can deliver on a foreign policy that is rooted in the national interest of the United States. To defend the national interest of the United States requires us, number 1, to make sure that every dollar we spend and every action we take has to have measurable outcomes that deliver for the American people.

They have to either make our country safer or they have to make our country stronger or they have to help make our country more prosperous. It has to do at least one of those three things. And, ideally, whether it is a program or a measure that we take, it should do all three of them.

Now what that means is that there are some great causes in the world. There really are. There are some great causes. There are some horrifying things that are happening on the planet. America cannot solve every single one of them. What we need to focus on is prioritizing our foreign policy to those areas that are in our national interest.

Now we will still remain the largest contributor of foreign aid and humanitarian assistance on this planet by far. The United States, even under the budget that is before you today, and the changes we have made, will still contribute more in foreign aid than the next 10 countries combined, than the entire OECD. The next closest country is not China. It is Germany and it is way behind us, even now. But that foreign aid has to be geared toward our foreign national—to our national interest.

We need to design a State Department that delivers on that. Yes, we canceled a bunch of contracts in USAID. Some were stupid and outrageous, others didn't serve the national interest, and others we kept. And we are folding it under the Department of State. And you know why? Because we want it to be part of the toolbox of foreign policy, not a standalone.

It is not charity. Foreign aid is not charity. It is designed to further the national interest of the United States. So we will do humanitarian assistance. We will do food assistance. We will do developmental assistance, and we will do security assistance, but we will do it driven by our embassies and our regional bureaus, because what those issues mean look very different in Guatemala than they may in Chad or in Kenya or in some other part of the world in the Indo-Pacific.

One of the things that we have tried to do in our reorganization is drive power and influence on policymaking and decisionmaking to the regional bureaus and ultimately to our embassies. Our embassies, our Ambassadors, are the front line of American foreign policy.

The most important thing I do every single day is not read memos; it is read cables. Every night I get 10, 15 select cables from stations around the world, different embassies. The best ideas in that building come from the ground up from our embassies.

Now I want to tell you something else. Look, I did serve in the Senate for a long time, so this is a new job to me. When I got there, I would get a memo—I still get these memos. I should have brought one today. In order for an idea to reach me, a decision to reach the Secretary of State, some of these things have to be checked off by 40 people, 40 boxes. If any one of these people has a question, they can hold it up before the idea even ever gets to me.

Now that sounds like a crazy thing to begin with. We can't afford it in the 21st century. We have to be able to move very quickly. And a case in point is what happened last week. Syria, under a new authority, granted people with some checkered background, is on the verge of collapse potentially. And if it collapses, it will devolve into civil war, and civil war will mean that it will become a playground for ISIS and other jihadists, not to mention Iranian influence coming back in.

So there is no guarantee that by outreach and working with the transitional authority in Syria things are going to work out. It may work out; it may not work out. But if we don't reach out and try, it is guaranteed to not work out. And so we had to move very quickly to action that.

If we had not done sanctions relief last week, and now the EU has followed suit, then our partners in the region could not have provided donor dollars so that that transitional authority could try to stabilize its governance of the country, that place could have collapsed within weeks and become an ISIS playground once again.

There is no way that a traditional system could have delivered on that. It would have gone to the interagency. It would have gone through 6 to 9 months of debate. Any individual could have held it up with an information hold, and we never would have acted. We can't afford it. The world moves too quickly, and we need to drive policy from the ground up, from our embassies and our regional bureaus, and that is what we are doing. And that is what we are doing.

The last point I would make about foreign aid. Foreign aid has to be part of our portfolio, part of what we do, and it has to be consistent with our agenda in any region of the world or any country.

And oftentimes you will find—and maybe some of you have found when you travel—you go talk to an ambassador and they will tell you what USAID was pushing and what they are pushing in the country are not just different, they are in contradiction.

In many cases, USAID programs were undermining the mission of the embassy. That is a fact, and I heard that over and over again. I heard it in the Caribbean Basin, and I have heard it in other parts of the world.

I am not the first Secretary of State that wanted USAID and foreign aid to be under the Department of State. I am just the first that has been able to do it. And I am glad we have done it, and it will deliver better foreign policy, and, frankly, more accountability and more oversight opportunities for your committee down the road.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Rubio follows:]

Secretary of State Marco Rubio
Statement Before the
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

May 21, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and distinguished members of this Committee for inviting me to address you today.

The State Department is our first line of defense and offense on the world stage, and I am proud that in just a few short months, we have already implemented President Trump's vision of an America-first foreign policy.

Today, America is back.

Secure borders, safe communities, and zero tolerance for criminal cartels are once again the guiding principles of our foreign policy.

We've deepened partnerships with Mexico, El Salvador, and others to intercept illegal migration at the source and break the back of foreign terrorist organizations like MS-13 and Tren de Aragua.

We are working with law enforcement to revoke the status of foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality, threaten our citizens, and express support for this nation's enemies.

The Department has taken President Trump's policy message across Europe, securing the NATO Secretary General's commitment to increased defense spending, recalibrating transatlantic political and economic relations to better serve American interests, and alongside Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, moving decisively to end the Ukraine war.

Last month, I hosted the foreign ministers of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo at the State Department to initiate the preliminaries of a peace agreement facilitated by Senior Advisor Boulos in coordination with the White House National Security Council. That agreement will end years of conflict and open the way for American investment.

In the Middle East, the Administration's maximum pressure campaign has secured the release of the last living American hostage held by Hamas, a pledge by the Houthis to abandon attacks on American ships and forced Iran to beg for talks with the United States.

We are resetting America's trade relationship with the world through pro-growth tariffs to balance trade and raise revenue. On every continent, except perhaps Antarctica, where the penguins are proving difficult, we are supporting USTR's work to negotiate trade deals that protect American workers and secure investment that will grow our economy.

The Department is confronting China's nefarious influence from the Indo-Pacific to Africa to Latin America. The era of indulging the Chinese Communist Party as it abuses trade practices to steal our technology and floods our nation with fentanyl is over.

Today, I present the President's Fiscal Year 2026 Budget request for the Department of State.

This Budget, totaling $28.5 billion, will allow the Department to fulfill its mission while also proposing the recission of $20 billion in duplicative, wasteful, and ideologically driven programs.

Last month, I announced a department-wide reorganization, the principles of which are reflected in our fiscal year 2026 budget request.

Henceforth, every bureau and office will have a clear mission. The Department will speak with one voice, guided by our statutory mandates and national interests—not fads or fringe academic theories.

A core principle of this reorganization is the belief that what matters is not the size of budgets but the agility with which they can be deployed.

That is reflected in the new America First Opportunity Fund, or A1OF—a $2.9 billion flexible account that consolidates numerous fragmented and inefficient foreign assistance programs.

It will allow the Department to respond rapidly to crises, engage proactively with critical partners like India and Jordan, support essential repatriation efforts, and confront strategic threats from near-peer competitors like China.
The A1OF builds on the lessons we learned from USAID, the Department's existing foreign aid award system's failures, and the few significant successes.
Consistent with the President's executive order, the Department has been reviewing our more than 15,000 foreign aid awards; we have already found billions diverted to ideological causes, including climate activism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and LGBTQ initiatives in foreign nations.

These programs were counterproductive to American interests, wasting taxpayer money and provoking resentment abroad.

They reflected State Department culture, where the creation of new offices and programs became a pathway to career advancement, and dedicated public servants were discouraged from finding ways to improve or streamline existing programs.

A State Department where everything took too long, cost too much money, involved too many individuals, and failed the American people.

It is time to show how foreign assistance can be an accountable and effective component of an America First Foreign Policy.

Going forward, the America First Opportunity Fund, the consolidated Global Health Programs Account, and the new consolidated Humanitarian Assistance account, will become models for delivering life-saving and strategic assistance that advances US diplomatic, security, and economic goals.

As Secretary, I have the honor of leading the world's most talented diplomatic workforce.

They deserve better.

They deserve clear responsibilities and chains of command.

They deserve a State Department that unleashes their full potential from the ground up, harnessing the capacities of every embassy, consulate, and bureau to set a course for a new American century.

One where the power and prestige of the United States are unequaled by any other force in the world.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And I would love to see that tree of 40 people who, in the last Administration, signed off on things like a transgender job fair in Bangladesh for $800,000. I would love to see that list.

I am going to defer my questions until the end, if there is time for that. And I am going to begin by recognizing Representative McCaul of Texas.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me express my deep sympathy to the family of Gerry Connolly. He is a dear friend of mine. I will miss him dearly and the Irish twinkle in his eye.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for being here today. Under the last 4 years under President Biden, the world is on fire now, from the debacle, the evacuation—poorly executed—from Afghanistan, which then led, I believe, to Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the largest land invasion since World War II in Europe, to the Middle East on fire now.

I commend you for trying to seek peace in these hot spots, including the Indo-Pacific, which probably presents the greatest threat.

I will be clear-eyed with Mr. Putin. I personally don't think he is negotiating in good faith. The Ayatollah cannot be trusted. In fact, it was recently reported that they got their proxy, Hamas, to invade Israel on October 7 to derail the normalization talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Let me go to the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act. It was initially created to counter the rise of the Soviet Union. Today I believe it should be used to counter the influence of communist China around the globe, and that is a core mission I know you support, as do I.

When I was chairman of this committee, I put holds on the programs the current chairman is talking about, that being the drag shows in Ecuador to grants to advance atheism in Nepal. These are not in the interest of the United States or our national security interest.

So I think we need to return these agencies and programs to their core mission. I believe that you are trying to do that by bringing them under your supervision at the State Department. It is not a new idea. Madeleine Albright tried to do that many years ago. And I do think under your supervision we will have transparency and accountability with the foreign assistance programs.

We are engaged in a reauthorization of the State Department. Sir, can you tell me how this would assist you with respect to reorganization of these important agencies under your department?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think the key to reorganization—and, by the way, we never did it in all the years that I was in the Senate either. It never happened. It needs to happen. We want it to happen. As you know, in our reorganization, we didn't touch any of the statutory offices because we can't, but there is two advantages to it or three advantages.

The first is it becomes permanent. We can create an organizational structure that becomes enduring, especially if it is one that we believe in.

Second, I think that it will help us with the input and ideas. Look, we put—we notified—it wasn't—we provided the initial preliminary indication to Congress. We have been taking input, in-

cluding from many on the minority, and some of those are going to be reflected when we put out our final, you know, approach that we want to take, but ultimately we would love to work with the committee to find ways to improve on the streamlining.

By the way, we are also taking input from inside our building. Some of the ideas in our reorg, many of the ideas from our reorg, came from inside the State Department from career officials, including some that are still providing input for us in sort of how to structure it. But I think the advantage of doing it statutorily is that it becomes enduring and permanent and provides certainty in the days to come.

Otherwise, you know, it can change over time and continue to bloat and expand to levels that it got to. It was an unreadable org chart. The org chart that I showed you. The initial org chart that I inherited was just the top line. Within each one of those boxes, there were multiple boxes, some of them duplicative, redundant. In many cases, no one could even tell us what they were doing, because it is easy to grow. It is much harder to reorganize and to streamline activity, and that is what we want to do.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, that is a very noble effort. With my 1 minute remaining, I have authorized the Remain in Mexico program in this committee. I commend the Administration, within a matter of months have restored order to the border, taken chaos and turned it into a safe border. I mean, the crossings have gone down 95 percent. There is no longer catch and release. And I do think the executive order on Remain in Mexico is very important.

I know you share that responsibility with the Department of Homeland Security, a committee I chaired as well. What is the latest in your negotiations with Mexico to bring that important program back?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, as you are aware, I am sure, that we have had a number of what I would call both irritants but also areas of cooperation with the Mexican government have been actually pretty positive. They have been very responsive on our security concerns. They have increased their security cooperation with us in ways that have been very productive.

In fact, at some point here over the next few weeks, I intend to travel potentially to Mexico, along with a couple other cabinet members, to sort of finalize some of these areas of cooperation. This may be one we talk about, but we have been primarily focused with Mexico on two things. One is on trade, which is not my department, but obviously our Trade Representative, Mr. Greer, and also Commerce Secretary Lutnick has been engaging with them. And then the other is on security cooperation.

We have a mutual interest in Mexico. In essence, the cartels that operate within Mexico and threaten the State are armed from weapons that are bought in the United States and shipped there. We want to help stop that flow. The reverse is, those cartels threaten the State.

There are parts of Mexico that are governed by cartels, where there is—in fact, I think I heard last night two more people were murdered in Mexico City associated with the mayor of Mexico City. The political violence there is real. They have a vested interest,

and a desire to go after these cartels, and we want to help equip them and provide them information.

They have also been increasingly cooperative, more than ever before, in bringing back and extraditing people wanted in this country for crimes who are in their custody. So I think we have got good areas of cooperation. We still have some more work to do on migration, but they have been cooperative.

Chairman MAST. The chair now recognizes Ranking Member Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you. I am trying to figure something out. You know, I know you said you read a lot of cables every day, and I know that when you first got sworn in on—at your confirmation hearing you stated that being the Secretary of State would be an extraordinary responsibility.

Here we are 4 months later, you are reading cables every day. How much time do you spend at the State Department?

Secretary RUBIO. How much what?

Mr. MEEKS. How much time——

Secretary RUBIO. Do I spend——

Mr. MEEKS.—at the State Department?

Secretary RUBIO. Almost every day if I am in the country. I travel a lot. It is part of the job.

Mr. MEEKS. I agree. I understand. But now you have four jobs, don't you? Now you are not only the Secretary of State, you are also the acting USAID Administrator, you are also the acting Archivist, you are also the interim National Security Advisor. You cannot spend every day at the State Department and then neglect your other jobs that you have the responsibility to do.

So how much time do you spend at the other jobs if you spend every day at the State Department?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, now you know why I can't offer you 8 hours today to answer every question on this committee, which you were complaining about earlier.

Look, here is the thing. All those jobs are being done. USAID largely has been folded under the——

Mr. MEEKS. But the jobs——

Secretary RUBIO. Do you want my answer or do you want to——

Mr. MEEKS. Well, I just want to know this. Did you anticipate or did you want—when you were sworn in to be the Secretary of State, did you want to have the jobs of——

Secretary RUBIO. No, I did not——

Mr. MEEKS.—USAID Administrator?

Secretary RUBIO. No, I did not apply for those jobs.

Mr. MEEKS. Did not apply for them.

Secretary RUBIO. I was asked to serve in those roles, and I am happy to do it. The Archives are doing great. The USAID has been folded under State, so it is sort of a duplicative role. And the National Security Advisor, which is on an interim basis, has tremendous overlap with what we are doing at the State Department and——

Mr. MEEKS. Well, then, why not get rid of all of them and just put everything under you? Get rid of all those departments if it is not crucial to have someone every day at the national—as the National Security Advisor. You folded in USAID. You are saying the

Archives is fine. Get rid of them. Wouldn't that be, then, waste based upon how you have determined there is waste, based upon your testimony earlier, in some of these other departments that were duplicative? So, if it is duplicative, then get rid of them.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you would have to pass a law to do that, if you want to combine those four offices in your reorg.

Mr. MEEKS. Well, look, that hasn't stopped you in the past because the law requires you to consult with Congress on any proposed reorganization of USAID or the State Department. That hasn't happened.

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, it has.

Mr. MEEKS. I would agree, it should be the Congress' responsibility. Your staff claimed, quote, "That extensively—you have extensively consulted Congress on your plan to fold USAID into State," but that did not happen. All we Members have gotten was 1 hour—1 hour—of a meeting with Pete Marocco who you later fired and who couldn't answer our most basic questions about the aid freeze and you have ignored thus far.

That is why I want to know about—you have ignored nearly 20 letters from this committee seeking information about who, you know, since you took office, as well as not—we spoke one time, but not consulting this committee at all. I don't call that extensive consultation. So you are right. Things that you have done should be in collaboration with the U.S. Congress, but surely the USAID and all of these other things was not—Congress was not consulted one time. Senator Rubio would have demanded it.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, we have complied with every part of the law. Every single part of the law has been complied with, including we have—you, for example, have written us 16 letters. You have been briefed on seven of them. Some of them we couldn't answer, and we told you why we couldn't answer, because they were subject to litigation. Four you have gotten answers in writing, and five we have gotten——

Mr. MEEKS. I have not.

Secretary RUBIO.—just in the last few days.

Mr. MEEKS. I have not.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you know, 16 letters. I have been there 17 weeks. You are writing me a letter a week.

Mr. MEEKS. I am going to yield my last 40 seconds, 48 seconds, to Representative Johnson.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Rubio, thank you for being here. You know, corruption is determined by our democracy—is detrimental to our democracy, and the Trump Administration has moved swiftly to scale back, reverse, and dismantle various guardrails that protect Americans from corruption. We have now a plane that he has accepting by a foreign government, his family is doing business deals with a foreign government, and your office has authorized Elon Musk's company Starlink to do business in at least five African countries and many, many others.

My question is, with the dismantling of the enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and many other things, what efforts are you doing as Secretary of State to make sure that our govern-

ment is free from foreign—improper foreign influence over our policy?

Secretary RUBIO. I don't—I mean, the examples you have given, Starlink is all over the world. There isn't a country in the world now that doesn't have Starlink for the most part. They have Starlink in Syria. We certainly didn't help them land that deal, but they have got—Starlink is a global company that is present everywhere and continues to grow because they provide a very unique service no one else provides.

I am not aware of any plane that has been given. I know the media reports about it. I know that the Air Force One that is scheduled to be delivered is like 5 years off balance, so they went to Boeing and—this is the extent of what I know about this plane. I have never seen it. They went to Boeing and said, "Are there any planes that fit the bill?"

Boeing produced a list of planes that they had sold over the last few years. One of them happened to be in Qatar. You would have to ask the Department of Defense because that would go to the Air Force. That would not come to the State Department.

Beyond that, look, we are—we are involved in helping businesses expand all over the world. There isn't a single day that we don't—aren't involved in helping an American company gain access to a market, and we will continue to do so.

As far as people involved in our government that are doing that, I am not aware of anyone on the Cabinet or in the President's White House that is using the State Department to expand their personal portfolio. And if they are, we wouldn't help them do that, but no one has ever asked us to do that.

So I think we are following the law with regards to what we are doing to prevent corruption.

Ms. JOHNSON. So is the answer to——

Chairman MAST. The chair recognizes Representative Smith from New Jersey.

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

First of all, it was an honor, Mr. Secretary, to serve with you as co-chair of the China Commission. We did so much together. I want to thank you for that leadership. It was extraordinary. I want to thank you for bringing the DR Congo and Rwanda together on April 25 for that statement of principles. You are tenaciously pursuing peace all over the planet, including in DR Congo where the fighting is very intense and has been.

And, of course, tomorrow I have a big hearing on Sudan, and I know you are trying to do everything you can to try to mitigate the horrific violence that is occurring there.

Let me just ask you a couple of questions, if I could. I had a hearing on Aliyev and Azerbaijan on the Tom Lantos Commission, and it is very clear that after the genocide committed by Aliyev against the Armenians that there are many, many political prisoners and POWs being held. I would just encourage you to do whatever you can to get those men and women released.

At least 300—I met with Aliyev twice in Baku. He is a dictator. You know, I know we have worked with dictators and we have to have at least some kind of conversation with them, but release

those prisoners. They are being maltreated and horribly mistreated by Aliyev, so I would ask for that.

Second, you know, you and I have worked on issues like forced organ harvesting. You were the—you and Tom Cotton were the prime sponsors of a bill on the Senate side. Two weeks ago, we got the bill passed here again. It is a horrific human rights abuse by Xi Jinping targeting the Uyghurs, of course, the Muslim Uyghurs, because those organs are being sold in the Middle East. So they want to have livers that are coming from a Muslim, so the market is very, very high, of livers and other internal organs. And Xi Jinping is making billions by killing tens of thousands of young people, average age 28, each and every year— including Falun Gong—and you know it.

You are a sponsor of the bill. I would appeal to you, if you could—it passed the House 406–1—if we could get it out of the Senate, it would hopefully clamp down on this egregious human rights abuse in China.

It is a global bill. It would outlaw forced organ harvesting profoundly with real penalties, up to 20 years in prison, for those who are part of that supply chain. But it would most directly affect Xi Jinping and the people who are doing this horrific abuse.

I yield.

Secretary RUBIO. Thank you, and I appreciate that. And, obviously, the organ harvesting, China is—plays a concerning role in that regard, and we would obviously be helpful in any way we can in helping you pass that in the Senate, certainly put in a good word for it, and the like.

But it is not limited to China, unfortunately. There are other parts of the world where we are now seeing that, and there are places where we are trying to verify, but we hear reports of that. And that is something that is going to be called out as well.

As far as Azerbaijan is concerned, our core focus has been on trying to establish a peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia. There is the real risk there of a conflict that we are trying to prevent from happening. Our teams have been very engaged in that regard in trying to make something come about and prevent an armed intervention there that would—and, obviously, within the context of those conversations, the issues you raised about prisoners and human rights are critical to it.

Again, another example of where we want to use our embassies, so when we talk about people will complain, well, you got rid of the human rights office and the functional bureaus. It is because it is being transferred to the regional bureaus. And our regional bureaus will not just have a focus on human rights within the bureau, but so will our embassy.

And so that is the human rights issue with regards to Azerbaijan, and so that is what our embassy will be focused on pushing. It is different from what the human rights issue might be in another part of the world, but we think it is important to have people on the front line prioritizing these issues as part of our holistic approach.

You have outlined it correctly. We do want to have—we may not agree with the system of government. We may wish it were different. But the truth of the matter is that we have to deal with

countries in many cases that perhaps don't have ideal models, but we have to deal with them in our national interest.

And we need to balance all of these things together—our national interest and diplomacy—without surrendering and finding opportunities to further interests such as human rights. And Azerbaijan provides us an opportunity to do that in the context of the broader piece that we are trying to establish there.

Mr. SMITH. Finally—I am almost out of time—yesterday I chaired a hearing on the global problem of antisemitism and how it is getting worse. It was my 18th hearing on it. We had Ted Deutch, who is at the leader—was a leader here when he was in Congress—as one of our witnesses.

And I just want to say thank you for what you are doing vis-a-vis Israel and what you are doing to try to stop the scourge of antisemitism that is exploding, especially at the United Nations where the U.N. Human Rights Council is filled to overflowing with people in agency positions, not just the members of it, who are absolutely antisemitic.

So I want to thank you for that as well.

Chairman MAST. The chair now recognizes Representative Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. We all miss Gerry Connolly, and I do not think that he would want us to be passive in our questioning here today.

Mr. Chairman, it is our job to oversee the State Department. You can't do that by over—by having think tank witnesses come before us. Our job isn't to oversee the think tanks.

In 2023, we had 44 government witnesses. This year, we have our first, and I hope very much that we have all the—not only the secretary, but the under secretaries and assistant secretaries, so that we can really do our job.

Secretary Rubio, in the 1970's, there was a powerful Middle East monarch who claimed to be a friend of the United States, was—may very well have been, claimed to be at least agreeable to Israel, and then so in the 1970's we transferred enormous sophisticated weapons to him. In 1979, the Shah was deposed, and all those weapons were in the hands of the Ayatollah.

Today, MBS wants a nuclear weapon, but he says what he wants is a nuclear cooperation agreement. Well, we have a nuclear cooperation agreement with the United Arab Emirates and Turkey and Morocco that all provide for a gold standard of safety. Can you assure us that you will not enter into a nuclear cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia that does not have that same gold standard of security to make sure they are not building a nuclear weapon?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, first, I will tell you that there is no—been no conversation about entering into one. For example, during the recent trip——

Mr. SHERMAN. Can you—I have got limited time.

Secretary RUBIO. I can. So here is the thing. I can try to——

Mr. SHERMAN. Either give me a yes, give me a no, and let me go on.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I am going to give you my answer if you want my answer. But this——

Mr. SHERMAN. I want a yes or a no.

Secretary RUBIO.—is not a game show.

Mr. SHERMAN. Reclaiming my time.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, reclaim your time, but it is not a game show. I get to answer—these are complex questions. Let me answer.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Secretary, I am reclaiming my time.

Secretary RUBIO. I don't know what that means.

Mr. SHERMAN. The filibustering——

Secretary RUBIO. But never mind.

Mr. SHERMAN.—takes place in the Senate, not here.

Secretary RUBIO. I am not filibustering. I am trying to answer your question.

Mr. SHERMAN. You are trying—let's go on to the next question. With regard to Iran, can you assure us that you will continue sanctions on Iran until they verifiably agree to abandon all enrichment? That is a yes or no question.

Secretary RUBIO. No, it is not.

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, can you give me a yes or no? Should I go on to the—go on to the next question?

Secretary RUBIO. We believe that Iran should not be allowed to enrich uranium. Correct.

Mr. SHERMAN. You believe that it—oh, I——

Secretary RUBIO. We believe that an acceptable deal with Iran is one in which they cannot enrich, because if they can enrich, they can weaponize.

Mr. SHERMAN. I know why we don't want—I asked you, will we agree—will we continue the sanctions until they verifiably agree to get rid of the enrichments?

Secretary RUBIO. Oh, you have nothing to worry about us. The worry was the previous Administration. This Administration has been——

Mr. SHERMAN. Sir, your refusal to give me an answer is loud and clear.

Secretary RUBIO. No. It—well, I would like to answer your question.

Mr. SHERMAN. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chair, you told us about all these wonderful business deals that were announced in the Middle East. It is reminiscent of the first year or the first term of Donald Trump where he announced a $10 billion investment by Foxconn in Wisconsin. It is still an empty field.

I am sure that the only deals announced in the Middle East that will actually happen were the bribery deals, the $400 million plane, and the $2 billion Abu Dhabi will put into the crypto currency sponsored by Mr. Trump.

TikTok. Mr. Secretary, you led the effort to say that it shouldn't be controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. We passed a law with your help. That law requires that we ban TikTok now because all of the expiration dates have gone—have expired.

But when, instead, we saw Chinese interests affiliated with TikTok transfer $300 million into the TRUMP coin, which is a pure gift. It is $300 million for nothing but Monopoly money. And so there is a word in Mandarin for this. It is called bribery.

It raises the question that I will ask you to respond to for the record, and that is, is there any statute this Administration will not violate for a $300 million Chinese bribe?

We next focus on the—on USAID. Musk gutted it. He said no one died as a result. Do you agree that no one has died yet as a result of the chainsawing of USAID? Yes or no.

Secretary RUBIO. I am sorry. The question is, has anyone what?

Mr. SHERMAN. Has anyone in the world died because of what Elon Musk did?

Secretary RUBIO. Listen——

Mr. SHERMAN. Yes or no, reclaiming my time. If you won't answer, that is a loud answer.

Secretary RUBIO. No one has died because of USAID.

Mr. SHERMAN. But the people who have died——

Secretary RUBIO. That is a lie.

Mr. SHERMAN.—as a result of cutting off the oxygen of a woman in Burma and denying HIV/AIDS treatment to those in Africa. They are dead now at the hands of Elon Musk——

Secretary RUBIO. That is false.

Mr. SHERMAN.—and his co-conspirators. I yield back.

Chairman MAST. The chair now recognizes Representative Wilson from South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Chairman Brian Mast, for your leadership holding this hearing at a very critical time where dictators with rule of gun are invading democracies with rule of law.

My sympathy for the Connolly family as I will always cherish my friendship with who I call Mr. President, Gerry Connolly.

Mr. Secretary, congratulations on your success on behalf of the American people to implement the policies of President Donald Trump. Sadly, as you address problems that have plagued the Department, bureaucrats in the past have undermined the intent of the President.

It was historic to have, as you just cited, the announcement of President Trump to lift sanctions, giving Syria a chance, which was welcomed by a standing ovation in Riyadh, which was so historic, and now the progress that you have made, instead of billboards—electronic billboards of the dictator, Assad. They have been replaced by billboards praising Donald Trump and praising the Crown Prince.

What an incredible change in 6 months, to go from dictator to a potential of democracy. With that in mind, I have concerns that there could be efforts to undermine. And so will you be working in every way to have full executive authorities to carry out the President's orders rather than a phased approach?

In addition, can we lift the specific export controls on Syria?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. Well, as you know, the sanctions in Syria are largely based on a statute, the Caesar Act, and so that allows the President to do rolling waivers, I believe 6 months at a time. So the goal is ultimately to make enough progress, so that Congress will permanently repeal those. In the interim, what we want to make sure is that the sanctions relief that we are providing allow our partners in the region to begin the aid flow that they want to do without running afoul of the sanctions.

So that is what we are focused on executing, even as we speak. There was a meeting on it yesterday. It is in execution today as well.

Mr. WILSON. Well, again, thank you for your leadership and insight to see how quickly that should have been done. I am also grateful for the strong position of the Trump Administration in regard to the anti-American Georgian Dream regime in the Republic of Georgia.

They rigged the election in Georgia on October 26. They have criminalized association with America. They think that American companies are blocking trade and mineral access to the Middle Corridor, selling Georgia to the Chinese Communist Party. They have repeatedly smeared President Trump and American leadership.

With that in mind, I am really grateful that actually with the Iran Delhi Foundation there has been a report just released indicating the control by the Chinese Communist Party now in the Republic of Georgia. And I would like to provide this for the record.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix:]

Mr. WILSON. Additionally, for 200 consecutive days, freedom-loving Georgians have heroically taken to the street, embracing themselves in American flags and carrying posters of the President. Under your leadership, what will be done to help the State Department impose real cost on the anti-American Georgian dream on behalf of the people of Georgia?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, as any—going back to what I said earlier in my opening statement, the goal of the United States is our national interest. So we will look at that and say, "Is it our national interest to have an anti-American government governing an important part of the world?" And, if not, we will take appropriate actions to impose costs on that government.

That is currently under review, and we are looking for options and additional options. I have no announcement today specifically on what we plan to do yet, but I can tell you that that is something that is being discussed, and, again, a great example of why we are going to look to our regional bureaus and our local office on the ground there to provide us guidance as to what are the measures that the government—the anti-American government would be most responsive to.

Mr. WILSON. And it is so refreshing to get your response. And, additionally, another issue is Kurdistan, the regional government of Iraq. And they have recently signed an agreement with American oil companies for the exploration and for the development of the oil capabilities, billions of dollars in northern Iraq. But, sadly, the regime in Tehran has impacted Baghdad and is actually controlling the actions of Baghdad. And so Iran is intruding in trying to stop the agreements.

What is being done to promote freedom for the ability of Kurdistan to—and regional government to really support the people of Iraq to——

Secretary RUBIO. Well, we first have made clear the linchpin of our approach toward Iraq is that autonomy that the Kurdish popu-

lation has in that part of the country. And part of that is allowing them the economic lifeline that allows them to prosper and succeed.

The Iraqi officials have expressed an interest in a closer, better relationship with the United States, and we have explained to them that the core to that is respect for the companies that are operating from—in that country from our country operating within Iraq, also respect, as I said, for the autonomy of the Kurds.

Third, is the Iranian influence, and the Iranian influence has continued to grow, unfortunately, in some sectors of their elected government and poses a grave danger to the United States, including in the form of pro-Iran Shia militias, who have, in the past, struck against the United States and have expressed interest in doing so again in the future. That is unacceptable, and that has to be addressed.

Mr. WILSON. Congratulations on your success.

I yield back.

Chairman MAST. The chair now recognizes Representative Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will miss my seatmate, Gerry Connolly. He loved sitting here, and we loved him.

Mr. Secretary, in 1944, my uncle, James Arthur Keating, was serving in France. And as soldiers, his fellow soldiers, were dying around him, he wrote a letter back—in combat back home about the cost of human sacrifice and whether it is worthwhile to defend a piece of mud on the Earth.

Only a week after that letter he answered that question while carrying lead in himself as one of the people in his command was exposed and injured. He was wounded himself carrying lead and crawled out there, brought him back to safety, saved his life, and as he was going for another person was machine gunned to death himself and killed in action.

Four hundred thousand other American families gave the same sacrifice, but the peace and prosperity that came forward the world has never seen. It is the Trans-Atlantic Alliance where our allies sacrificed their young men and women when America was attacked, and 9/11, and economically, they are a $1.6 trillion trading partner with us with 16 million jobs on both sides of the continent.

So my questions today are looking for clarity on where we stand with our allies and partners for more than 80 years, because they are expressing their doubts. They are expressing their doubts publicly. They have expressed it to me privately.

So, as the face of our country, as the lead foreign policy representative in the United States, I am just looking for this clarity. So, first, simply answer this question, if you will. Is Russia the aggressor in this Ukraine war?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. Russia invaded Ukraine.

Mr. KEATING. So they are the aggressor in this war, correct?

Secretary RUBIO. They invaded them, yes.

Mr. KEATING. Well, thank you, sir. Because it is important to get this clarity because President Donald Trump said it was Ukraine that started this war, and our allies have the right to know this.

Second, the person we are negotiating with, Vladimir Putin, is he a war criminal?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think you can look at instances that have happened there and certainly characterize them as war crimes, but our intent is to end the war.

Mr. KEATING. Is he a war criminal?

Secretary RUBIO. We can't end the war without talking to Mr. Putin.

Mr. KEATING. No. It is pretty simple. Is he a war criminal?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, that is——

Mr. KEATING. This man we are negotiating with, Vladimir Putin, is he a war criminal? That is not tough.

Secretary RUBIO. But why—I am trying to answer your question by telling you that we are trying to end the war here.

Mr. KEATING. Well, to answer—go ahead.

Secretary RUBIO. It is not——

Mr. KEATING. You are equivocating.

Secretary RUBIO.—a simple answer.

Mr. KEATING. You are equivocating, sir. Just answer the question.

Secretary RUBIO. I am answering your question, and the answer is that war crimes have been committed, no doubt. And who is responsible for that? There will be time and place for that accountability, but right now the job is to end the war. If we don't——

Mr. KEATING. So you won't answer the question.

Secretary RUBIO.—end the war, people are going to get killed.

Mr. KEATING. Reclaiming my time, sir. Let me go on, because I don't understand this, because you are sitting in front of us now as Secretary of State. It wasn't long ago that you were sitting as a Senator with Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson at the time in the exact same circumstances, only reversed, and you questioned him about Putin directing attacks against schools, markets, hospitals, playgrounds. And on top of this, in this instance, he has abducted 20,000 children, a clear war crime.

So you were very clear then Vladimir Putin is a—was a war criminal. Now he is—you are unmaking him a war criminal? And you won't answer the question about the exact same circumstances——

Secretary RUBIO. You are putting words in my mouth.

Mr. KEATING.—that my—I am reclaiming my time, sir.

Secretary RUBIO. You are putting words in my mouth.

Mr. KEATING. And you know what you said to Secretary Tillerson——

Secretary RUBIO. That is not what I said.

Mr. KEATING.—at the end of his answer, when he equivocated just as you are right now——

Secretary RUBIO. I am not equivocating.

Mr. KEATING.—you said——

Secretary RUBIO. You just don't let me answer.

Mr. KEATING. It sure sounds like it to me. Then I will give you a second chance. Is Vladimir Putin——

Secretary RUBIO. You never gave me a first chance.

Mr. KEATING.—a war criminal?

Secretary RUBIO. I already told you war crimes have been committed.

Mr. KEATING. No. You didn't tell me if he is——

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I can't even——

Mr. KEATING.—a war criminal.

Secretary RUBIO. Mr. Chairman, am I allowed to answer questions or is this the——

Mr. KEATING. I am reclaiming my time, sir. And, listen——

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you are reclaiming——

Mr. KEATING.—I am using your own words, so you don't have an answer. Do you know what you said to then-nominee Secretary of State Tillerson? You said you were very discouraged in his inability to accept that Putin was indeed a war criminal. Your words. We don't need any more. You are inconsistent.

The third question I have, sir, is——

Secretary RUBIO. I answered your question. You just don't like the answer.

Mr. KEATING. You did not answer the question about Putin's——

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you keep——

Mr. KEATING.—war criminal conduct——

Secretary RUBIO.—reclaiming your time.

Mr. KEATING.—in Ukraine.

Secretary RUBIO. You ask me a question, and then you reclaim your time, so how can I answer your question?

Mr. KEATING. You answered it. Listen, let me forward with this. Three questions, and I am——

Secretary RUBIO. Are you going to reclaim time on those, too?

Mr. KEATING.—going to be pretty clear to you. I am giving you a chance to answer. Give me a chance to ask the question. Here it is. So there is a concern among these allies that we have had—our closest allies—about the one-sidedness of the negotiations with Russia and Ukraine.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time has expired.

Secretary Rubio, if you would like to respond, by all means.

Secretary RUBIO. Can I reclaim my time for a few seconds? Thank you.

Number 1, crimes have been committed in the war on Ukraine, and there will be accountability for that. But our goal right now is to end that war, because, let me tell you, every single day that that war goes on, more people are killed, more people are maimed, and, frankly, more crimes are—more war crimes are being committed every day that the war lasts. Number 1.

Number 2, I don't know how European allies could say that. I talk to European allies literally every single day. I see or talk to the foreign minister of the UK and France and Germany more than I see or talk to——

Mr. KEATING. History.

Secretary RUBIO.—my own kids on some days.

Mr. KEATING. Chairman——

Secretary RUBIO. So these are all——

Mr. KEATING. I am reclaiming my time now——

Chairman MAST. You have no time. You are not recognized——

Mr. KEATING.—because you have——

Chairman MAST.—Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING.—given him time, and I ask unanimous consent——

Chairman MAST. You are not recognized, Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman MAST. You are not recognized.

Mr. KEATING. I am asking for unanimous consent to put in the record——

Chairman MAST. Mr. Keating, you are not recognized. The Secretary is speaking.

Mr. KEATING. I am asking unanimous consent to put in the record——

Chairman MAST. Mr. Keating you are not recognized.

Mr. KEATING.—the op-ed—oh, so you are not going to recognize, Mr. Chairman——

Chairman MAST. You are not recognized in this moment.

Mr. KEATING.—anyone that asks unanimous consent to put in for the record a document——

Chairman MAST. Mr. Keating?

Mr. KEATING.—you are not allowing them——

Chairman MAST. You are not recognized right now. Your time expired. You might have a minute in a few.

Mr. Secretary, please continue.

Secretary RUBIO. The last point is, our goal is to end this war. We have to be able to talk to both sides in order to do——

Mr. KEATING. Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary RUBIO. In order to be—we have to end this conflict——

Mr. KEATING. My time is answered. His time answering my question ended, too. It is the next person's time. That is the rules in this committee.

Chairman MAST. Mr. Secretary, please continue.

Mr. KEATING. When you won't even let a person enter into the record something from our Ambassador, 'til recently, from Ukraine, Ambassador Brink, who resigned——

Chairman MAST. Mr. Keating, you should——

Mr. KEATING.—because of the conduct of——

Chairman MAST.—keep a better eye——

Mr. KEATING.—this Administration after——

Chairman MAST.—on the clock right in front of you.

Mr. KEATING.—30 years of service, sir.

Chairman MAST. You should keep a better eye on the clock in front of you. Your time expired.

Continue.

Secretary RUBIO. Our goal is to end this war, so more people don't die. And, by the way, we want all those kids returned back to their homes that were kidnapped from their parents. We just want people to stop dying. Every day this war goes on people die, things are destroyed, and lives are ruined. And we want it to stop.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Secretary.

Did you have something you want to submit for unanimous consent?

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Now would be your opportunity.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, sir. I want to submit for the record an op-ed by Ambassador Brink from Ukraine, the regional Ambassador that was—until recently, 30 years of service, a Democrat, presidents——

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix:]

Mr. KEATING. It is an op-ed that says——

Chairman MAST. So ordered. Representative Issa is recognized.

Mr. KEATING.—and she details how——

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

Mr. KEATING.—peace at any cost is peace——

Chairman MAST. I said yes for an answer. So ordered.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MAST. Representative Issa is recognized.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent that the accomplishments of the Secretary of State in the first 100 days be placed in the record.

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

[The information referred to has not been submitted]

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, good to see you again. We are holding up just some of those. You probably recognize what you have done for 100 days. It is absolutely amazing that you have done all of that. And, as you said in your opening statement, it is our job in reauthorization to make many of them permanent.

I share with you the fact that for decades the division of USAID, sometimes in the embassy, sometimes out, coordinating sometimes, often not, populated by people who left State to go to AID, but then weren't treated the same, all of that had to end. And I really appreciate your doing it, and I look forward to making that permanent.

I want to just ask you a few questions, and some of them go to the previous questioner. Is Vladimir Putin the undeniable head of a country that has as many, basically, ability to bomb us into oblivion with nukes as any other country on Earth?

Secretary RUBIO. They have the largest—I believe the largest strategic weapons stockpile in the world and one of the largest tactical nuclear weapons stockpiles.

Mr. ISSA. And he is the undeniable leader.

Secretary RUBIO. Correct.

Mr. ISSA. Is one of the things that every Secretary of State keeps in their mind that peace is never made with your friends but, rather, with your enemies?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, it is one of the reasons why irrespective of Ukraine there has to be some level of communication between the United States and Moscow. It is, frankly, irresponsible to not have the two biggest nuclear powers on the planet communicating, which was the case for 3 years. That doesn't mean we are going to be allies or friendly, unless conditions change, but we have to at least be able to communicate with them to prevent miscalculation and war.

Mr. ISSA. And wasn't it true during the entire cold war president after president of both parties and secretary after secretary had to, and did, retain relations with the Soviet Union up to and including President Reagan's famous negotiations that essentially led to the end of the cold war?

Secretary RUBIO. If there had not been communications between the U.S. and Russia in 1961, the war could have—the world could have ended during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Mr. ISSA. Now, on that list behind me there is a lot of taking and combining, and so on. But I have two things I want to ask you

about. One is, do you have a vision for OBO that would cause it to catch up and to reach a point where our embassies, consulates, and other facilities would never again lead to something like we have had at Benghazi and other occurrences where substandard facilities led to the loss of life?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, we—absolutely. It is our priority. In fact, we—every single day we have a team that watches our mission posture around the world, not just because of the physical layout but what the conditions are on the ground. Remember, in many of these posts, in many cases we are very dependent on local forces and their ability to protect from the perimeter, what they are willing to offer.

And so, as you recall, in Benghazi one of the challenges we faced is we relied on local militias to provide perimeter security. When they abandoned their post, it left the consulate vulnerable, and ultimately led to loss of life.

So as part of our analysis, clearly, the physical layout and the protection, it is something we have watched very closely in places like Somalia where we are lacking overhead protection in some cases, but also we are always looking at the capability and willingness of local liaison partners on the ground from the host government to provide their end of it.

The less security they are able to provide us assurances on, the more nervous and concerned we become about our force posture or about our presence in any given country.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Secretary, as you recall, during the first Trump Administration the President nominated me for the Trade Development Agency. And I kindly appreciate the fact that you were willing to support me, if I had ever gotten the actual vote. It is a small organization, a small part of our outreach to compete against Belt and Road. USAID could be part of that. Obviously, EXIM Bank, a host of other entities, could be part of it.

But, in your opinion today, even with the changes you have made, are we or are we not positioned to properly address, to provide complete packages, to compete against Belt and Road?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, first of all, Belt and Road is largely a series of loans and other traps that are provided that you hire Chinese companies to come into your country and build a road or build a bridge or build a stadium or build whatever they want. That is actually not comparable to USAID, which is more humanitarian and development assistance, but it is in the form of a grant. That is more loaning on their part.

I think the two entities that are best positioned to act as alternatives are the Development Finance Corporation, which is currently on the—potentially could be expanded, in my view, and then Millennium, which is undergoing a review for improvements. But I think both of these offer better alternatives in terms of comparison to or a way to compete against Belt and Road initiative.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I yield back.

Chairman MAST. The chair now recognizes Representative Bera.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this inspector general report about the impact of USAID in——

Chairman MAST. So ordered.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix:]

Mr. BERA. Mr. Secretary, I did not get the chance to know you while you were in the Senate. But, like you did, I also traveled a lot to Africa, have seen firsthand the gratitude of lives that we have saved. After the Ebola crisis in 2014, had a chance to visit villages in Sierra Leone and just the joy and thanks to the United States.

In 2015, you stated this, "And, again, foreign aid is less than 1 percent of our budget, but foreign aid can make a difference when properly used. And if you ever have a chance, travel to the African continent, and you will meet people who are alive today because the American taxpayer funded antiviral HIV medications that kept them alive. It will not be easy to radicalize people who are alive because the American taxpayer saved their lives and the lives of their children."

Do you still stand by that statement?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. We are still going to do foreign aid.

Mr. BERA. Right. So that is incredibly important. As a young doctor in the 1990's, I took care of a lot of people that were dying of HIV and AIDS. It is a painful death. What I hear on the ground in Africa is that these medications aren't getting to folks, that, you know, some of the folks that deliver the medications aren't getting to folks and people are dying.

We need to do what we did under President Bush with PEPFAR. We saved over 25 million lives. Nearly 8 million babies are alive today because we prevented them from getting HIV/AIDS. I want to work with you to make sure we continue doing that. That is the goodness of the American people.

I am a little bit older than some of the people on this committee. I grew up looking at pictures of kids that were starving in the 1980's. Part of the reason why I became a doctor, part of the reason why I am on this committee, and why I focus so much on health, nutrition, food aid, is because of pictures like that that are embedded in my mind as a kid.

We came together as a country. Part of what moral clarity of the United States is, is we are a country of abundance. President Trump may not think this is in our national security interest, but I think it is in our faith interest. It is who we are as a spiritual Nation, as a faith-based Nation. We worry about that. We care about relieving starvation, and so forth.

We have got to do more because I talk to the faith-based groups; I talk to our implementing partners; I read the news stories. I do not want to see more pictures like this coming out, you know, and I am definitely afraid in the next 30 days, 60 days, 2 years, 4 years, we are going to see more death and starvation because nobody else can do what we do as the United States of America.

I would like your commitment that you will work with us to make sure we continue providing food aid, that we continue doing what we do best based on our moral clarity. Can I have your commitment on that?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. In fact, that is why we are going to have a humanitarian fund within the Department of State that is going

to provide the humanitarian assistance that you have outlined. And we are still going to be by far the largest donor in the world to humanitarian assistance.

Mr. BERA. And you will continue to work with this committee, work with us, in a bipartisan way, in a bicameral way, to do what we do best. Nobody can do what the United States does.

Secretary RUBIO. That is my hope, to be able to continue to work with you in that way. We want to see humanitarian aid. We are going to do more of it than anybody on the planet.

Mr. *Bera*. Right. Let's save lives.

With that, let me yield the remainder of my time to my colleague from Pennsylvania, Ms. Dean.

Ms. DEAN. I thank you, Representative Bera, and God bless Gerry Connolly. Mr. Secretary, you and I had the great privilege this past Sunday of traveling to the installation of Pope Leo, where he encouraged us to choose love, and help the world's poorest. He suggests we should get proximate to the suffering.

If I were to tell you, Mr. Secretary, that outside that door was a 3-year old little girl starving like that photograph, ribs protruding, weak, unable to speak, what would you do?

Secretary RUBIO. Whatever anybody would do, I would try to help her.

Ms. DEAN. I agree, I would too.

Secretary RUBIO. And that is what we do more than anybody in the world.

Ms. DEAN. Anybody would do that, we would go out that door and help that little child. It is your humanity that calls you to do that, to save a single life. Mr. Secretary, Gaza is starving. As of last week the U.N. has confirmed, that is the United Nations, has confirmed at least 57 children have already died of malnutrition, and 14,000 more are on the brink of starvation.

Food sits just beyond the border. For days, for weeks it was cut-off—please hold the clock for me. Reclaiming my time, I understand they are upset. For days, for weeks—I ask that I could reclaim some of that time that was just interrupted?

Chairman MAST. We will give you 5 seconds.

Ms. DEAN. Five?

Chairman MAST. Additional.

Ms. DEAN. Innocent children are dying. Mr. Secretary, Pope Leo has called for an end to the blockade, to humanitarian aid, which began by Mr. Netanyahu March 2. He said, the pope said the price is being paid by children, the elderly, and the sick. Secretary Rubio, I call upon you, and I ask for your affirmation of this. Stand by our faith, by the call of the pope to save the children desperate for food and water.

Babies who have no way to feed themselves, mothers who have to watch them die. Stand by the Jewish faith, their teaching tells us to save a single life is to save the whole universe. Will you commit to getting a surge of aid into Gaza now——

Chairman MAST. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Representative Burchett from Tennessee.

Ms. DEAN. Maybe the Secretary could answer? Mr. Chairman, could the Secretary answer my question? It is a yes or no.

Chairman MAST. I don't think you have a question out, and I gave you additional time.

The chair recognizes Representative Burchett from Tennessee.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Secretary, how do you plan to ensure that future foreign assistance funding decisions are aligned with the President, and are not co-opted or watered down by entrenched Foreign Service bureaucrats?

Secretary RUBIO. I am going to get to your question. If I could just take 5 seconds, we have asked the Israelis, and I think they have acknowledged this publicly, to allow more aid to flow. I actually met with the World Food Program in Rome this weekend while I was there. We believe they have a system in place for distribution, we will continue to urge them to do so. And in fact, we expect more aid will begin to flow rapidly over the next few days into Gaza.

Ms. DEAN. I thank you.

Secretary RUBIO. As far as your question about entrenched Foreign Service officers, actually I want to be fair here, I have found the Foreign Service officers, by and large, the professional Foreign Service officers to be very competent, professional, wanting to deliver on the mission. And to the extent they are frustrated in many cases is that they feel impeded by bureaucracy, or by layers and layers of bureaucracy.

People don't join the Foreign Service to get rich, they know they are doing it for service, and it is rewarding. Like in any organization, you are going to have people that stand in the way, or are not aligned with the mission, and it is our responsibility to ensure that those people are not in a position to impede us. But we can't do the work at the State Department without our professional Foreign Service officers, and frankly, they are the ones we are empowering.

And so ultimately what we want to return to however, is a Foreign Service officer corps that is promoted and rewarded on the basis of merit, on how well you do your job. And sometimes by the way, that means promoting someone who maybe doesn't have as many years' experience. Maybe they have only been there 10 years instead of twenty, but they are really good, and if you don't promote them we are going to lose them to the private sector or some other endeavor.

So, ultimately it resides upon us, those of us in these positions, to ensure that our agencies are delivering on the President's foreign policy. The State Department is not an independent branch of government, we are part of the Executive. And our job is to help the President formulate foreign policy and execute on it, and we are trying to give you a structure in this reorganization to do that.

Mr. BURCHETT. You could have just said put the best player in, coach, that would have covered it. And I appreciate your answer, brother. Moving on, will the State Department classify the Taliban as a foreign terrorist organization?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I believe that classification is now once again under review. As you know, we have had success in the last few weeks in getting some Americans that were detained released. But we will have some decisions to make, that designation ultimately will be based on a holistic approach to what we think our future policy is going to be with regards to Afghanistan.

We are clearly aware of who they are and what they have done in the past. We would like to see more cooperation from them on Al Qaeda and other elements in the country that we would like to see targeted. So, I think that is part of a tool set the President has as leverage to increase cooperation on their part.

Mr. BURCHETT. Can we ensure that America won't be attacked by the Taliban or any of these other terrorist groups that are training or based in Afghanistan?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, that is what we need to ensure every single day, and obviously DOD holds that primary responsibility. And there is a reason why we don't have a diplomatic presence in Afghanistan, because we do not feel at this point like we could appropriately secure our personnel. But the President is keenly aware of the situation there, he was very involved in negotiating in his first presidency for a deal that kept Americans safe.

And I think he is interested in arriving at one again to ensure Afghanistan never becomes a launchpad for external operations against Americans anywhere in the world, especially the homeland.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you. Also I have been working on a piece of legislation, House Resolution 260, for a couple of years, it basically defunds the Taliban. We found out that a fellow named Legend who fought on our side, and another guy, Shawn Ryan, Navy SEAL, that they are collecting around $40 million a week is what we have been told, and possibly up to a point of five billion from some State Department documents.

I am wondering if you all will support that bill, and what it does, it aims to stop U.S. tax dollars from benefiting the Taliban.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I haven't seen the bill, I certainly support the intent that you have outlined. And I also would say the President has issued an order which we have followed to suspend any aid that could possibly reach the hands of the Taliban, and that has been implemented.

Mr. BURCHETT. We were told that it possibly is, and the President has voiced support of this legislation, and I would hope that you would review that. That is something that has been out for a while, and it needs to be stopped, put to rest at some point. I have also invited President Saleh of Afghanistan to meet with me and my colleagues, and I am wondering if you all will facilitate his entry into the country to meet with us.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, ultimately that will require a decision and a determination upon whether a visa should be granted for that visit. We are certainly happy to, if you have got an engagement that you think would be important, and further the national interest, it is certainly something we would consider in terms of making that decision. We have granted visas in the past to people that we are not necessarily enamored with, because they are coming to the United Nations, or some other purpose.

So, we would want to work with you to learn more about the context of that visit, and we would consider it.

Mr. BURCHETT. Sure. I would remind you, and this body, and the folks that are listening and watching this, that $40 million may not be a whole heck of a lot to people in Washington, DC, but I can assure in East Tennessee, that is a whole lot of money that we are probably providing our enemies every dadgum week, I would ap-

preciate your all's assistance with that. You all have been great, you have accepted our——

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Representative Castro from Texas.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Chairman. And thank you, Secretary, thank you for your testimony. I want to say at the beginning that I think that in terms of roles in the cabinet, coming into your job, I think you are the most qualified cabinet member in a cabinet that I think has otherwise been incompetent and unqualified. You and I are obviously of different political parties, but we share kind of a similar story.

My grandmother, Victoria Castro, came to this country when she was six or 7 years old as an orphan, because both her parents had died after the Mexican Revolution, and the closest relatives who could take her in were not in Mexico, they were in San Antonio. And when my grandmother came to Eagle Pass, Texas, the manifest that allowed her to come, there was a question that was asked on that document.

The question said purpose for visit, and her relatives that were bringing her, they wrote in to live, that she was coming to live. You have an incredible family story of your parents and your grandfather coming from Cuba in the 1950's and maybe early 1960's, and a similar background of helping you and your siblings pursue their American dreams, just like my grandmother did for my mom, and for us.

But I feel like today under the Trump administration our grandparents may have ended up in a gulag, or banished in Guantanamo. Or like the girl that I visited with, who was a U.S. citizen in Mexico a few weeks ago with a brain tumor having her seizure medication seized at a CBP inland port. And her mom, who is undocumented Mexican, and her caretaker 24 hours a day, not allowed to come back with her to get treatment for her condition.

I want to ask you specifically about a policy decision where on February 5, DHS Secretary Noem rescinded temporary protected status for Venezuelans. This same thing was used for 700,000 Cubans in the 1960's and 70's. And she stated that in consultation with the Department of State, assessed conditions in Venezuela, and that there are quote "Notable improvements in several areas such as the economy, public health, and crime that allow for these nationals to be safely returned to their home countries."

And you said as recently as a few years ago that returning and failing to renew TPS for Venezuelans would be quote "Very real death sentence for countless Venezuelans who have fled their country." That was a few years ago. And so I wanted to ask you, do you believe after everything that Maduro has done, and you and I have both condemned him as I think almost everybody on this dais has, that TPS recipients forced to return to Venezuela will truly be safe in that country?

And how do you justify the decision to send 350,000 people to Venezuela right now?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, 350,000 people have not been sent to Venezuela. I think you are referring to the TPS cancellation of the temporary status. So, two points, No. 1 is unfortunately that blanket approval of TPS gave TPS, including to people that frankly we

should not have allowed in this country irrespective of what part of the world they came from.

No. 2 is the hope that now people who have received TPS will apply through the asylum process, and I believe many of them if not most of them will have very credible asylum claims to make for the reason you have just outlined. I think that problematic is that when you do a blanket TPS, No. 1 it is supposed to be temporary, none of these TPSes ever go away.

But No. 2, when you do a blanket, especially in a mass migration event, it is going to protect and cover people that frankly we should not have allowed into this country. The overwhelming majority——

Mr. CASTRO. I guess, because look, we are both part of the same Latino community, you are not saying that all 350,000 people are gang members, are you?

Secretary RUBIO. Of course not, the majority are not, but if 1,000 of them are, we have got a big problem.

Mr. CASTRO. Well, yes, but so because there is a very small group who are criminals, just like any group of Americans, you are saying that none of them get any due process, they are just automatically expelled?

Secretary RUBIO. No, they have the right——

Mr. CASTRO. No review, no nothing for any of their cases?

Secretary RUBIO. Well again, it is not my department, we don't do asylum claims, but I can tell you that they can apply for asylum——

Mr. CASTRO. Well, but she said she consulted with you, she said that it was her decision and your decision, and a few years ago you said it was a death sentence.

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, but the problem is the previous administration did a terrible job of vetting applicants for TPS, they just blanket approved it, so now——

Mr. CASTRO. They did things that have been done in other administrations before, Republican and Democrat.

Secretary RUBIO. But never in this mass migration event. Look, the bottom line is of course the overwhelming majority of them are not gang members, and they will be able to apply for asylum, and they have a very credible claim. But there are some that are, and they need to be removed from our country.

Mr. CASTRO. I have to yield remaining time to Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you for that, Representative Castro. I have a quick question, the World Cup and the Olympics are being hosted in both red and in blue districts across this country, but they are not going to be successful unless we get visas to all of the folks that are participating. This is a bipartisan priority, I just sent a letter to you, along with Representative Kim, and 50 other colleagues.

I am glad that the President has directed this administration to make this a success in that spirit of cooperation. Are you committing to working with me to ensuring that these games are a success, and that we are getting visas to those who need it?

Secretary RUBIO. One hundred percent.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you.

Chairman Mast. The chair now recognizes Representative Perry.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, great to see you, thanks for being here. I want to talk to you about the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The claims are fantastic and horrific at the same time, longstanding of mismanagement, of collusion with Hamas, and the terrorist organization, and terrorists in Hamas.

The using of American tax dollars to promote terrorism, antisemitism, violence, rampant corruption throughout the United Nation Relief and Works Agency, and ties to Hamas. The simple question for you as our representative in the administration for all the taxpayers not only in the Tenth District of Pennsylvania.

But all across the country who find it intolerable that their tax money goes to support terrorism and the wanton killing of the Jewish people in the State of Israel, what concrete steps is this administration, or are you vowing to take regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency?

Secretary RUBIO. We are not working with them anymore. I mean——

Mr. Perry. Are they going to continue to receive funding, is really the answer.

Secretary RUBIO. No, I mean we are done with that, we are not distributing anymore aid to that organization, especially because of the links in Gaza that you have outlined that have now been well documented.

Mr. Perry. And what is the administration doing vis a vis other countries that wish to continue to support them? What is the United States doing with our clout, with our leadership role in trying to make sure that UNRWA no longer exists? Because it is a tool of Hamas.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, we have made very clear we are done cooperating with them on this work, and we are not going to be involved in it. Obviously other countries have sovereign decisions they make, I take your point that you want us to use our pressure. But the truth of the matter is no country contributes as much to these efforts as we do.

And as a result I think that gives us tremendous leverage to potentially find and create alternatives for the distribution of aid, and that is what we are working on actively now. It is one of the impediments to getting aid into Gaza as we speak, we want to find alternatives that are reliable, that will actually reach the people, but will not wind up in the hands of Hamas.

Who then turns it around and sells it at exorbitant prices on the black market to enrich themselves after they feed themselves. So, we share your sentiments on this completely.

Mr. Perry. Appreciate your answer and your dedication to that. Again, the American taxpayers are sick of paying for terrorism. Let's turn to the State Department bureaucratic loyalty, and my concern over a long period of time, the State Department co-opted in the 1930's by many communists, it is well documented. If you know the history, let's be blunt, some of these people still continue to act like communists, sabotaging our institutions, and selling out our country.

I am wondering, frankly, what can be done about that to align the State Department with the goals of not only this administra-

tion, but the goals of the American people to promote America, and Americanism.

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, well I think the first starts with what I have said from the very beginning of this hearing, and that is that the goal of our foreign policy is to further our national interests. You have to define what the national interest is, and then you have to make sure that the policies that you are pursuing are in furtherance of the national interests.

Not the global interests, not the international order, but what is in the interest of the United States? Sometimes cooperating with the global order is in the national interest, many times, increasingly it is not. As you see, these international institutions oftentimes have become places where we give all the money, and then they work against us, and it is used as a forum for anti-Americanism.

The second point is, and that is part of the reorganization, and this is an important point, and I hear this in some of the criticisms, I don't know if people fully understand I have made this point already. The Department of State is not another branch of government, we work for the President of the United States. The people elected the President, the President sets the foreign policy.

Our job is to advise and provide options, but ultimately our job is to execute on the foreign policy of the President. And we are trying to organize the State Department to be able to do that as efficiently and as effectively as possible without having to check 40 boxes in a memo where someone you have never heard of and I have never heard of but happens to work at the State Department has a veto power over our ability to pursue a Presidential directive.

Now that will be true for this administration, and frankly it will be true for the next administration, be it a Republican or Democrat one. But that is the way our republic functions. In our republic, the Executive branch is headed by the President, who is elected by the people through the electoral college, and our job is to deliver on the President's agenda.

That is what I am proud to do, and that is what we are going to continue to do, and that is the kind of State Department we are building to deliver on.

Mr. Perry. Appreciate that. And finally, Mr. Secretary, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, it has been over 20 years since we launched this program, and we poured billions of dollars into it, and while it has definitely saved lives, and we certainly appreciate that, and we love that, what is the future? And when do we transition full responsibility to the African nations to manage their own health programs as we struggle to manage our own, and pay for our own in the United States of America?

Secretary RUBIO. First of all, 85 percent of recipients under PEPFAR are currently still receiving their assistance. The second point you make is an important one, and as the best foreign aid is foreign aid that ends, and it ends because you have either solved the problem, or because you are giving capacity to your local partners to solve the problem.

And I do believe there needs to be a metric in PEPFAR, and beyond that in all of our foreign aid, to ensure that at some point it ends, because the problem was solved, or because the local partner

now has the capacity to handle it on their own. We are a generous people, but we cannot be responsible for every problem on this planet. We can't afford it, and frankly in this day and age, we have many priorities we need to balance if we are going to forward the national interest.

Mr. Perry. Thank you.

Chairman Mast. The chair recognizes Representative Titus.

Ms. Titus. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Mr. Secretary. I keep hearing you say your job is to carry out the mission of the Executive branch, and the agenda of the President. It is kind of hard to figure out what the President's foreign policy is. It jumps around from Gaza being a resort area, to we are going to help you Ukraine or we are not, we are going to have tariffs on China or we are not.

We are meddling in the Romanian election, I don't know how you figure out what the agenda is. Also you say you want to make the State Department stronger, but everything we have seen coming from you all is that you are dead set on kind of killing it, or at least undermining American interest. I think you have proposed an 84 percent budget cut, plans for widespread diplomatic closures, laying off staff across the board.

I don't see how any of those things really makes us stronger, and delivers for the American people. Now, I believe that jeopardizes our national security, but I want to ask you something a little more arcane, a little more specific to my district that has to do with some economic investments, and that is about tourism. We have been working very hard to improve the Visa services over the last few years.

It seems to me what you are doing is going to undercut that and move us backward. We are already seeing this as a problem in Las Vegas, where tourists are down by 8 percent just in a few short months, and this problem is going to come more acute as we look to host the Olympics, and we host the World Cup. So, could I just ask you, are you planning to cut the Consular Affairs Bureau that does the visas by 15 percent like we are hearing?

Secretary RUBIO. No, Consular Affairs may actually be expanded, and in fact we are looking for ways to do double shifts at some of our embassies around the world because of the visa requirements. For example, if you haven't applied for a visa from Colombia already, you probably won't get here in time for the World Cup unless we go to double shifts.

So, we have even talked about reassigning Foreign Service officers, many of who are trained early in their career in consular services, to provide 24 hour presence in some of our embassies and consulates around the world just to handle the visa load for things like the FIFA World Cup, the FIFA Club Cup, and then the Olympics 2 years behind it. And in fact—go ahead.

Ms. Titus. How are you going to do that with an 84 percent budget cut?

Secretary RUBIO. There is no 84 percent, I think you are referring to USAID, when it comes to the State Department——

Ms. Titus. I know that is part of it, but just generally.

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, but when it comes to the State Department, our consular services actually intent on ramping up efforts

because of the reasons that I have just outlined below, because of the reasons I just outlined earlier. And we recognize that as a top priority. We want it to be a success, it is a priority for the President.

And I think there are good numbers, because it is the same division that handles it, we are setting records in the numbers of passports that are being processed, same group of people. So, it shows that our systems are improving. And finally we are looking at ways of infusing technology and AI to even further, and rapidly increase that process even further.

Particularly for people who have had visas in the past, so we are just restoring visas, we can move much quicker on many of those.

Ms. Titus. Well, I am glad to hear you say that, but I want to look and see what you do, not just what you say. Because when you talk about cutting budgets, talk about cutting personnel, talk about closing embassies and consulates, I don't know how you can increase the visa process, or make it quicker.

Secretary RUBIO. There is no proposal at this time to close embassies or consulates. That has been media reporting because people like to leak lies, but there is no such work.

Ms. Titus. So, that is not happening?

Secretary RUBIO. None are proposed, and I think I would know.

Ms. Titus. Well, OK, let's check that out and see where that information is coming from. If I could switch just a little bit to Afghanistan, you have heard a little bit about that, I introduced legislation to authorize the CARE Act, the Coordination for Afghan Relocation Effort, you voted for that, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Mast voted for that. We called for this to be created, and had an appointment made.

I wonder can you tell us what is happening with that, to help us serve these Afghan refugees, are you wearing that hat too, or is there somebody else that you are going to appoint to that position?

Secretary RUBIO. That is primarily a DHS responsibility for the intake of people into our country. I can certainly take that back and give you information on what progress they have made in that regard. But I will also tell you that one of the things we are tackling right now, is we have to be able to properly vet anyone who comes into this country, given the mass migration events we confronted over the last 3 years.

Ms. Titus. I suspect these people are vetted as much or more than just about anybody else coming into the country as refugees.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, some of them, they include dependents, and in many cases a higher level of vetting is necessary because they are coming from countries where we don't have a lot of information. Not every country keeps, including Afghanistan, has perfect records. Some of them, we know them because they have worked with us in the past, others we just have limited information on them.

Ms. Titus. So, but we are going to continue with this Afghan Relocation Effort, and this CARE Office, is what you are committing to me?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, we are going to comply with the statutory requirements, but we also have to be more careful about who we let into this country.

Ms. Titus. Well, I didn't say that, I know we have to be careful, but I am just saying we need to continue with that effort. You voted for it, Mr. Mast voted for it, but I don't see any progress on it, I hear just the opposite. So, I appreciate that commitment.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair now recognizes Representative Jackson.

Mr. Jackson of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Chairman Mast for holding this crucial hearing, and allowing Secretary Rubio to highlight the overwhelming successes accomplished so far in the Trump administration. Secretary Rubio, thank you for being here today, and for the incredible work that you and the Department are doing, we are really proud of it, thank you.

I want to echo your opening statement, America is back. From bringing home hostages held in Gaza, initiating a peace agreement between the DRC and Rwanda, countering China's influence around the world, and much, much more, we are back. Thanks to the great work of President Trump and your great leadership, the United States is restoring its place on the world stage.

No longer will the United States refuse to engage in foreign policy and diplomacy, but rather we will lead with peace through strength. I have traveled a lot recently via my various committees, including this one, throughout the continent of Africa. And one thing I have seen is that we really neglected Africa. We have spent a lot of money, and wasted a lot of money there in my mind, with no strategic thought whatsoever into how we are spending this money.

I have a question for you regarding South Africa. South Africa has withdrawn from America and our allies in recent years, while increasing diplomatic relationships with our foreign adversaries, deepening cooperation with China, attacking our greatest ally, Israel, at the International Court of Justice, downgrading Taiwan's diplomatic presence, and condoning violence and race based persecution against minorities.

I fully support President Trump's executive order to bolster the administration's efforts in combating the egregious actions taken by South Africa. To support the administration's efforts I recently introduced the U.S. South Africa Bilateral Relations Review Act, which would conduct a full review of our relationship with the Republic of South Africa, and allow for the use of targeted sanctions against corrupt officials in the African National Congress.

Secretary Rubio, have you seen South Africa align with our adversaries like China, Iran, and Russia? And do you believe a full review of our bilateral relationship would be beneficial in the U.S.'s posture and strategy toward this country?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes on your first two questions, and an interesting topic, and maybe even as we speak the President is actually meeting with the president of South Africa, who requested that meeting, and it will be happening today. Obviously I am here with you today, otherwise I would be at that. So, I imagine these topics will be raised there as well.

Mr. Jackson of Texas. Thank you, sir, I appreciate that.

And with that, I am going to yield the remainder of my time to my colleague Mr. Mackenzie.

Mr. Mackenzie. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, in your opening remarks you mentioned Syria, and how sanctions relief was a necessary step to help Syria's interim authorities stave off imminent collapse of the country. Can you expand on how sanctions relief is being used to advance U.S. policy objectives, and also discuss potentially what conditions have been placed on Syria's interim authorities for that sanctions relief?

Including but not limited to things like protection of religious minority groups and counter terrorism cooperation?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. Well, first of all let me say that Syria is, in many cases when it comes to stability, the most important country in that region, and the reason, I will tell you this, if Syria is unstable, the region becomes unstable. So, we have an opportunity now hopefully to see a government, would hope the formation of a government, then the only kind of government that can work in Syria is one that respects and includes all the different groups.

Which by the way, that is one of the advantages of Syria, there is such a thing as a Syrian national identity, and you can build on it. It is an identity that until recently included close cooperation with Alawites, and Druze, and Christians, and Sunni, and Kurds. It has been a society that has existed this way until Assad divided them against each other for his own purposes.

A civil war broke out, ISIS erupted, foreign fighters poured in, and all kinds of instability ensued. So, what we have now is a transitional authority led by some people that frankly have troubling previous histories. That said, they have said they have no interest in a war with Israel, they have no interest in becoming a playground to export revolution.

What they want is to build a country, that is what they are claiming. And that is what we are willing to help them do if that is what they are serious about doing. So, what sanctions relief, as it has been proposed by the President, allows immediately is for partner nations in the region to be able to provide them the aid they need to do things like provide a government, provide municipal services, improve their telecommunication systems.

All of the sorts of things you need to build a nation State, and show the people of Syria there is a path forward toward progress. Our belief is failure to do that will quickly devolve into civil war. ISIS will grow in strength and power, pro-Iranian groups that are being fomented will increase their activities to destabilize, and then you have got a big problem on your hands.

Because now you have Syria once again becoming a playground for foreign fighters, jihadists, terrorists, and the like that threaten not just Israel, not just their neighbors, but ultimately the United States. I will say why it furthers national interest. Again, this is not going to be easy, no one should pretend this is going to be easy because it is not.

But if Syria could somehow be stabilized now and for the foreseeable future, what it would mean for Lebanon, what it would mean for Jordan, what it would mean for Israel, and what it would mean for the broader stability of the region is extraordinary. It is a historic opportunity we hope comes to fruition. We are going to do everything we can to make it succeed, we hope that it does.

But it does have to be conditioned on them continuing to live by the commitments I have just outlined that they have made verbally. Now we need to see it in action.

Mr. Mackenzie. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair recognizes Representative Lieu.

Mr. Lieu. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Secretary Rubio, thank you for being here today. As a member of the Legislative branch, I don't have a special exemption to violate the law. You would agree with me, wouldn't you, that in America no one is above the law?

Secretary RUBIO. Of course.

Mr. Lieu. OK. And in our system of government it is Congress that makes the laws, the Executive branch that executes the laws, and the Judicial branch when there is a dispute, that says what the law is, is that right?

Secretary RUBIO. Within the context of separation of powers, yes.

Mr. Lieu. OK. And the reason that due process is so fundamental to America is before put the entire weight of the Federal Government and snatch someone off the street, we might want to ask hey, do you have something to say about that? Might we have the wrong person? And in the case of Mr. Garcia, the Trump administration admitted in court that they mistakenly deported him to El Salvador.

The Supreme Court, in a nine zero decision, said that the Trump administration has to facilitate getting him back. Do you believe the administration has to follow that Supreme Court order?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I don't believe he was wrongfully deported, he is an El Salvadorian citizen illegally in the United States.

Mr. Lieu. That is not my question. Do you believe that the Trump administration has to follow the Supreme Court nine zero unanimous decision?

Secretary RUBIO. Within the context of separation of powers. Though no court can tell me how to conduct foreign policy, they can't tell me what I have to say to a president of another country, nor do I need to tell them what I told the president of another country, because I can't conduct foreign policy——

Mr. Lieu. I am just asking you, do you believe the Trump administration has to follow the unanimous Supreme Court decision?

Secretary RUBIO. I believe we are following it.

Mr. Lieu. OK, so my next question is what steps have you or the State Department taken to facilitate the return of Mr. Garcia, who was mistakenly deported to El Salvador?

Secretary RUBIO. The conduct of our foreign policy is an Executive function, and how I conduct it, I don't need to share with you, and I don't need to share with the court.

Mr. Lieu. Well, let me ask you this. Have you, or the State Department taken any steps to facilitate the return——

Secretary RUBIO. We have taken steps, but I am not going to tell you what they are, and I don't have to, because we conduct the foreign policy of the United States. And I can't conduct diplomacy with a foreign leader if I come to committees and tell you what they said to me, what I said to them, and more certainly, a court can't tell me to say that either.

Mr. Lieu. So, you have taken steps to facilitate Mr. Garcia's return, and——

Secretary RUBIO. We have made those assertions in court, and we have complied.

Mr. Lieu. I thank you, I appreciate that. I would like to ask you now about Ukraine. On August 24, 2022, you tweeted the following. In the past 6 months since Putin's criminal invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainians have shown incredible bravery and strength as they fight to defend their homeland. On Ukraine's independence day, the free world applauds their courage, and celebrates Ukraine's sovereignty.

And then also in 2022, you said the people of Ukraine are tough people who will never accept being ruled by Putin. I want to ask you, I assume you continue to believe what you said in 2022, right? That we should celebrate Ukraine's sovereignty, and that the people of Ukraine would never accept being ruled by Putin, right?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, that is why we are trying to end the war.

Mr. Lieu. All right. On April 30, 2018, you tweeted glad to see State Department confirmed delivery of Javelin anti-tank missiles to Ukraine. The U.S. should continue empowering Ukraine and other allies to defend against the threat of Russian aggression. You would agree with your prior statement, that the U.S. should continue to support Ukraine against Russian aggression, right?

Secretary RUBIO. We have supported them more than anyone in the world.

Mr. Lieu. Unfortunately, it appears Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth went rogue, and decided unilaterally to stop support for Ukraine earlier this year. Various news organizations reported that Secretary Hegseth paused military support to Ukraine without President Trump's knowledge. I'm going to read to you from one article dated May 6.

Quote "Pete Hegseth canceled military aid flights to Ukraine just a week into Trump's second term without the President even knowing according to Reuters. The order initially sparked mass confusion within the administration as national security figures in the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department couldn't figure out who ordered the halt in flights. This is yet another example of the chaos and lack of cohesion that Hegseth has brought to the Pentagon from day one."

Did Secretary Hegseth tell you before he ordered the halt in flights to Ukraine of military weapons?

Secretary RUBIO. I can't comment on that because I don't remember that, I don't remember ever hearing that, what you are claiming now.

Mr. Lieu. So, your understanding is he never told you he was going to halt these flights?

Secretary RUBIO. I just know we are providing them assistance now, but the war ultimately has to end.

Mr. Lieu. In 2016 you stated the following. From his repression of the Russian people, and assassination of his critics, to his dangerous invasion of Ukraine in the occupation of Crimea, to his threats against our NATO allies in Central and Eastern Europe, to the war crimes committed by Russian forces, Putin's Russia is a

threat to global stability. You would agree with your prior statement, right? That Putin's Russia is a threat to global stability?

Secretary RUBIO. I would agree that in my role as Secretary of State my job is to bring Russia to the table to end the war, and that is what we are trying to do right now. We are trying to end a war so that more people don't die.

Mr. Lieu. Thank you. And trying to end the war, I simply note that Putin on Palm Sunday launched a barrage of missiles, killed a bunch of civilians right before his conversation with Trump recently, he launched a bunch of missiles, killed a bunch of civilians. So, clearly Putin is giving the middle finger to you, and to the President. I urge you to defeat Putin on the battlefield, that is the only way to get him to the negotiation table.

I yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair now recognizes Representative Kim.

Mr. Kim. Thank you, Chairman. Secretary Rubio, thank you so much for coming to our committee. Before I ask my questions, I would like to extend my condolences and prayer to Representative Connolly's family and his loved ones. The President has said repeatedly that economic policy is foreign policy, and he is matching that statement with his actions.

From $100 billion investment in the United States from TSMC, and reshoring of more than $55 billion in private sector investment commitments through the recent historic trade deal with the U.K., and successful tariff negotiations with more than 50 countries. I agree that economic policy is foreign policy, and I strongly believe that the State Department should be equipped with a robust economic toolkit to secure greater market access for American businesses, and protect them from predatory foreign competition.

But unfortunately the Department's economic statecraft policies, of which I myself Committee on East Asia and the Pacific have recently had a hearing on this issue, that in recent years it has not been effective in meeting those goals, in ensuring U.S. leadership on the international stage. So, Secretary Rubio, what do you think has prevented the Department from producing results that Americans desire, and what additional tools are needed to implement the President's commitment to make economic statecraft a focal point of our foreign policy?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you have asked one of the questions that is critical to our reorganization. That is why it is so important that even economic affairs be prioritized at the level of the embassy and the regional bureaus, because again, the economic opportunities may vary from region to region. I would say one of the issues that has held us back is on energy. It is by far the No. 1 need around the world.

Not simply because you can't develop an economy without energy, you can't even keep pace with the transformation of our economy without energy. AI alone will consume, in its production both of semiconductors, and ultimately of the equipment required for AI, AI alone will require a consumption of energy far beyond what the world is capable of generating today.

The countries that are going to succeed and win in the race on AI and higher technology are the ones who can produce reliable, affordable energy over a sustained period of time and in sufficient

loads. So, countries all over the world need more energy, and that has been held back by the fact that we are telling people you can have energy, but it has to be windmills and solar panels.

We have to be able to use things like LNG, like nuclear energy, and others. And we are open to other things, hydroelectric is very viable in some places, in some places not much. But I think energy has to be at the core of our economic opportunities because countries around the world are asking for it.

Mr. Kim. Thank you, Secretary RUBIO. I want to talk about another issue that is very important to me, and to you. When you were in the Senate, you were the lead Senate champion on the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization bill, which I am trying to champion on the House side. The critical legislation calls for appointing a special envoy on North Korean human rights.

So, we want to make sure that that position is not left vacant. So, can you talk about if you have plans to appoint someone to fill that position for North Korean issues? It is very important to me, and to——

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, and obviously that is going through the process of Presidential personnel for the appointment process to find the right person, make sure the vetting is cleared, and so forth. We have prioritized initially appointment of assistant secretaries and other Senate confirmed positions. I know all of you would want to see more government officials appearing before you, we have got to get them confirmed by the Senate.

We just now have begun to make some progress, I got a deputy 2 months ago, we just got another deputy for management just a few days ago, and we are hoping this week we will get some more of those Senate confirmed positions. So, we are working through it, but obviously our intention is to have someone as the statute requires.

Mr. Kim. And make sure that the advocating for North Korean human rights issues becomes on the top burner of the issues. Thank you so much.

I am going to yield the balance of my time to Representative Moylan from Guam.

Mr. Moylan. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, just got about a minute here, just to elaborate a little bit more, I am really interested in your diplomacy approach for local U.S. economics, and local government investment, especially in the Indo-PACOM area, and giving some money back to the government there. We have a Guam Economic Development Authority, which would be really helpful if they were part of this. Please expand.

Secretary RUBIO. We have a unit that deals with subnational diplomacy, which of course this would become a priority for them as well. And again, I hate to be a broken record on this, but it is just another example of why driving policymaking from these global functional bureaus down to our regional bureaus and our embassies, and our regional presence will allow us to identify unique opportunities, whether it is in the Pacific region, or in some cases other parts of the world.

It highlights, it allows these issues to be highlighted, and us to move quickly on actioning it.

Mr. Moylan. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I yield back, thank you.

Chairman Mast. The chair recognizes Representative Jacobs.

Ms. Jacobs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I want to turn to the war in Sudan. This is, as you know, the world's largest displacement and humanitarian crisis, half a million people are facing famine. I saw firsthand the suffering when I visited Sudanese refugees in Chad. Earlier this year, and again yesterday, you reiterated that the rapid support forces, a militia, is committing a genocide in Sudan, is that correct?

Secretary RUBIO. We are very concerned about what both sides are doing frankly, but the RSF in particular.

Ms. Jacobs. Correct, I agree with that. You also said as part of that, that all of our engagement with the UAE, we need to raise the fact that they are openly supporting an entity that is carrying out a genocide, and yet President Trump continues to arm the UAE, in fact he just blew through Ranking Member Meeks' congressional hold on over $1 billion in arms sales, ignoring this committee's longstanding role as an independent check on major arms sales.

And we can have a policy debate here about the merits of continuing to arm the UAE or not despite this genocide, I had that same conversation with Secretary Blinken, but actually I want to talk about the events that led up to that decision. So, on April 30 the Trump Organization, which Donald Trump still owns, unveiled plans to build an 80-story Trump Tower in Dubai.

Then on May 1, Trump's crypto company, World Liberty Financial, secured a $2 billion deal with an Emirati company with deep ties to the government. And only 11 days later on May 12, your department notified our committee that it would ignore Ranking Member Meeks' holds on UAE arms sales.

Secretary Rubio, we have a President who is personally profiting from a deal with a foreign government backed company at the same time he is selling lethal weapons to that same government. Isn't that a clear conflict of interest?

Secretary RUBIO. I think no matter who is President, they would have to deal with the UAE, we have to. They are a member——

Ms. Jacobs. That is not my question. We can have a policy debate about how we should engage with the UAE, I just visited there a few weeks ago——

Secretary RUBIO. You are making claims about corruption, and I am answering that any President in the United States, I don't care who the President is, would have to deal with UAE. They are a member of the Abraham Accords, No. 1, they have been incredibly cooperative on a bunch of other issues. We don't agree with them 100 percent, we have concerns about some of the things they do.

But this is called the balancing of foreign policy, it is in our national interest to have a good relationship with UAE, despite the fact that there are things they do we don't like.

Ms. Jacobs. Secretary Rubio, I don't disagree with you, I just visited the UAE a couple weeks ago, and had these very same conversations there, but I don't think this is a complicated question. President Trump is personally profiting from a deal with a foreign government while selling weapons to that same government who is

enabling a genocide. Policy aside, are you really saying you don't think this is a conflict of interest?

Secretary RUBIO. No, you are making claims. The President's family owns a business, and they can conduct business anywhere in the world they want. The President has never once raised business deals in UAE when talking about it. Any President would have to have a relationship with UAE, the previous administration had one too.

Ms. Jacobs. Secretary Rubio, that is just silly, President Trump has retained his ownership of these companies, and I have an image right here from World Liberty Financial's website. So, the idea that President Trump is not the face of the brand of this company, on top of benefiting from them, and it literally says on the website that Mr. Trump and his family members own a 60 percent stake in this company, that is silly.

So, we can talk about the policy, but that is not what I am asking you. I am asking you a very simple question. Do you believe it is a conflict of interest to have a President personally profiting from a deal with a foreign government while selling weapons to that same government, and who is enabling a genocide?

Secretary RUBIO. I don't accept the premise of your question. I think this has nothing to do with personally benefiting from anything. This has to do with the fact that in order to conduct foreign policy in the Middle East, you are going to have to deal with the UAE. And we are going to have to have deals in place with the UAE.

Ms. Jacobs. Mr. Secretary, this is a clear conflict of interest, and anyone with any common sense can see that. The President is personally benefiting from billions of dollars of deals, and he doesn't care at all about the people of Sudan who are experiencing famine and genocide. It is shocking to me that you can't admit that, it is clear that you seem more concerned about staying in Trump's good graces than sticking up for human rights and American values that you once were a champion for.

Secretary RUBIO. That is an accusation you make about good graces.

Ms. Jacobs. With that I am going to yield the remainder of my time to Representative Olszewski.

Secretary RUBIO. We have to conduct the foreign policy, while you make these claims about staying in good graces, you accuse people of being corrupt, it is false.

Mr. Olszewski. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary RUBIO. We have to deal with UAE, we have to——

Mr. Olszewski. A softball for you, yes or no, since I don't have a lot of time, and I would appreciate it if the chairman gives me a few seconds back. Softball for you, would you, yes or no, as Secretary, find it outrageous for you to solicit or accept a $200,000 Rolls-Royce from a foreign government for personal or State Department use?

Secretary RUBIO. That offer has never been made to me.

Mr. Olszewski. Yes, so you would reject that offer?

Secretary RUBIO. The offer of a Rolls-Royce?

Mr. Olszewski. Yes.

Secretary RUBIO. I don't understand the purpose of that question, that is a silly question.

Mr. Olszewski. The fact that you can't answer the question, Mr. Secretary——

Secretary RUBIO. I just answered, I said it is silly.

Mr. Olszewski. Because you would accept it, or not?

Secretary RUBIO. Of course not. Who would accept it? No one has given—what are you equating that to?

Mr. Olszewski. Well, then I think you should maybe perhaps—Mr. Secretary, reclaiming my time, I think you are an honorable man by most accounts, but the man that you work for doesn't. And the fact that he is soliciting and accepting a $400 million plane is problematic, and you should know about it, it came up in a Senate hearing. You should read about it, add it to your reading.

Because it is problematic for foreign policy, it adds to the corruption that my colleague just said, and I hope you speak out against it, thank you.

Chairman Mast. The gentleman's time is expired, the gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Representative Huizenga.

Mr. Huizenga. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Secretary Rubio, good to see you again. I am going to try to quickly move through a couple of issues. My district consists of Southwest Michigan, including Battle Creek, where we have a large Burmese diaspora, and they have a lot of friends and family who are still back in Burma, Myanmar, that are dealing with brutal military junta.

And they are literally waging a war of terror and genocide on those folks. I have introduced a bipartisan bill, H.R. 3190, the BRAVE Burma Act to target the military junta's revenues, specifically in implementing full blocking sanctions on Myanma oil and gas enterprises, Myanma economic bank, the MEB, and entities operating within the jet fuel sector, which is where they get most of their revenue.

This is the same question I asked Secretary Bessant, are you willing to work with us in my office to implement this particular bill?

Secretary RUBIO. Absolutely, if you pass legislation it is our job to implement it.

Mr. Huizenga. Right. I want to move on, in my subcommittee, I am on the South Central Asia Subcommittee, but I am also dealing with our family of State Department as we are doing this reauthorization, and a couple of weeks ago we had a hearing where we had the truth czarina, Ms. Jankowicz participated in, and we know that the CCP has been pouring billions of dollars into propaganda and censorship around the world.

And I am actually introducing a bill, Restoring American Freedom Act, that would codify the trump EO on censorship, but I want to know, what is your strategy to push back on China, defend literally speech and the truth?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think the first thing is we need to be strong defenders of free speech everywhere in the world, and anywhere in the world where it is being threatened, including, sadly, parts of Europe, where we are seeing truth, and we are seeing free speech now being endangered. The second point I would make

about it is, and we have done this in our own department, we had an entity in our own department, the Global Engagement Center.

That was involved frankly, in identifying Americans, and they would pass this information onto these NGO's that were not part of government, and they would use them then in targeting Americans to try to silence them, or brand them, or harass them. The State Department should not be engaged in that, and we closed that center.

Mr. Huizenga. That was going to be my followup, to make sure that that is not happening. That is the idea of codifying the Trump EO, which is why I am moving forward on that. Real quickly, Mr. Burchett back over here was talking about Afghanistan, and his bill which is a report bill, I think goes hand in glove with a bill that I have introduced.

Which would require a restriction of all U.S. tax dollars that are being paid in Afghanistan for things such as fees, and fines, and taxes. U.S. taxpayers paying taxes to the Taliban in Afghanistan, and so I would love, if you want to make a quick comment on that about the necessity to end that, I think this is something that we need to do.

Secretary RUBIO. Well we have, at the President's direction, we have ended virtually if not all of the aid programs that would fall in the hands or benefit the Taliban. Beyond that, there may be some other ways that they are collecting funds that may require statutory authority to do. And so, we would welcome that.

Mr. Huizenga. Great, and we will followup with your team on specifically that piece of legislation.

At this time I want to recognize Mr. Zinke for the remainder of my time.

Mr. Zinke. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, great always to see you. I have deep concerns about our ability to provide effective and timely military capability to our allies through the FMS program. I find myself the chair of a working group, and it is probably worse than both of us have thought. It is in need of reform, I am glad to say it is a bipartisan effort both sides are working on.

And Mr. Secretary, I just need your commitment that you will prioritize this. Because the President's recent trip to the Middle East would suggest there is a lot of FMS that is coming our way, and we are not in a position to make sure that we fulfill the President's objectives in that. So, I just would need a commitment, sir, that you will help us, and spend some time with us to wander through this, and get it fixed.

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, it is among one of our leading priorities of reorganization and reform, to remove that process so it moves quicker, and moves faster. We get so many complaints, every bilateral engagement we have is someone complaining about some sale, or even a financing deal that has been in place for 5 years, and has not yet been delivered, or has not yet been approved through the process, so we have got to reform that system.

And frankly, the other impediment we have with foreign military sales is our industrial capacity to build munitions quickly enough to deliver for our own needs, but also for the commitments we have made to our partners. So, that needs to be improved, and that can

be improved if we have a faster system that is delivering on these contracts.

Mr. Zinke. I would agree, and I would say our military supply system in this country would not exist if it wasn't for foreign military sales. So, with that, thank you for serving again, I appreciate you being here.

Secretary RUBIO. Thank you.

Mr. McCaul.

[Presiding.] The gentleman yields.

The chair recognizes Ms. Cherfilus-McCormick.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Rubio, for being here. My question is about Jordan. Jordan is a close U.S. partner, and continues to struggle with economic challenges and lingering extremist threats. Furthermore, the global assistance freeze continues to have a negative impact on Jordan, despite the administration's granting several waivers for military assistance as millions of dollars for economic assistance remains suspended.

This not only impacts Jordan, but also the security of Israel. A weakened Jordan means a weakened Israel. Jordan has also been a leader in getting humanitarian aid to Gaza. What is the status of U.S. economic assistance to Jordan, including the already congressionally appropriated funds.

Secretary RUBIO. When it comes to Jordan, the remaining issues in the economic space for them, because they were initially exempted from even the freeze, and there was however a hold up on a number of programs involving water, particularly desal, and we have approved those. There were two that were somehow not moving through the system, those have now been approved.

And I think very shortly, if not this week, early part of next week we should see that program flowing. We have been in close touch with the Jordanians on it, it has been a source of frustration for them, and frankly for me. But ultimately we are going to get all those programs online if they are not online already.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. Thank you. I wanted to shift over to the western hemisphere. As senator we worked together several times, and I thank you for visiting the island of Hispaniola, specifically Haiti and Dominican Republic within the first moments of being in your position. The recent designation of Haitian gangs as foreign terrorist organization sends a clear signal that their actions are unacceptable and we won't be approving of them.

But I have some concerns, and we sent a letter over with Ranking Member Meeks about making sure that it is actually punishing the gangs, and not punishing the people. Specifically we want to make sure that the humanitarian aid that is needed for Haiti actually gets into Haiti. Have you had any kind of steps you are taking to mitigate that?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. So, we think that designating them was important because as both you and I know, there are individuals, including living in our home State, who are in cahoots with some of these gangs. And we can talk broader about the Haiti problem, because it is something I feel very passionately about.

But on the point you are trying to touch on, and let's be frank here, we are concerned that humanitarian groups, in order to dis-

tribute humanitarian aid, are often charged, for lack of a better term, tolls. You have got to pay the money to let them go. Well, that makes them subject to sanctions because they paid somebody money to let them go through.

That is not the intent of these sanctions, and we don't intend to punish them. The fundamental challenge we have in Haiti is that none of our existing international mechanisms are built for this problem set. Our international mechanisms are largely built to keep warring factions, ideological factions, tribal factions, political movements from each other.

This is a country that is being threatened by 35 to 40,000 members of a coalition of criminal enterprises, it is basically controlled by organized crime, it is a very different mission set. So, we are undertaking right now, a substantial review across the agency of what options exist to tackle a country that is being taken over by a mafia for lack of a better term.

They don't care about governing the country, they just want to control territory, so there is no government. There is no one to—like allowing the mafia to take over the five boroughs of New York, that is what they are thinking. So, I also want to make one more point. Why do we have an OAS if the OAS can't put together a mission to handle the most critical region in our hemisphere?

And we are going to challenge the OAS, let's build a mission with regional partners to confront this. We are grateful to the Kenyans, but this is a regional problem and it should have a regional solution.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. That takes me to my next question also when it comes to Haiti. There is an underlying June deadline when it comes to the MSS. Could you please tell us any way you are trying to handle that?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, we are going to continue to be supportive of that mission for two reasons. No. 1, because it is the only mission. And No. 2, because of the Kenyans, and they have been very brave in their willingness to do it, and No. 3, because who is going to join a future mission if the previous mission was abandoned.

But we don't believe the MSS mission is going to solve this problem. It could be part of the answer, but it won't alone be the answer.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. I have a lot of questions, so I am going to run through. The next one I wanted to ask you is also the biggest issue we saw with the mission is their inability to actually fight the actual gangs. Is there going to be any amendment or changes to give them the ability to fight, or is there another option you are pursuing?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think there is two limitations, one is the mandate that has been provided to them to be defensive in posture. Unless you go out after these—just to be frank, these 30, 40,000 gang members have to be eliminated, put in jail, eliminated, you have got to get rid of them. As long as they are around you won't be able to have stability in the country.

The other is capacity, they have had complaints about some of the equipment they have been provided. So, it is a combination of not having a force posture, not having the legal authority, and not

having the appropriate equipment, they claim, to be able to conduct some of these missions.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. And my last, since I have 1 minute, I wanted to turn toward Africa. I am happy you talked about energy security. Specifically when it comes to energy security, we have to make a forward movement when it comes to Africa because they have so many minerals, but I am afraid some of these, our diplomatic footprint has been reduced. And I am happy to hear that the U.S. State Department is going to have a six point plan to bolster trade.

But I still have concerns, so I wanted to ask you a few questions, and see if you would be able or willing to support this. Increasing funding to support commercial diplomacy, would you support that?

Secretary RUBIO. We want to increase commercial diplomacy, I don't know if we need more funding to do it. But we certainly want to make it a higher priority.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. And also increasing funding for financial institutions to support projects and de-risk those economies. There are many different companies who would like to invest, and help us build that footprint by having more economic relationships with Africa, so we can have more of a partnership in trade. Would you support increasing funds to those financial institutions?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I actually think those would lend themselves to both the Development and Finance Corporation, and potentially Millennium Challenge Grant opportunities outside of the traditional aid. I think Africa is looking for development, they are not looking for charity. And by the way, we have not reduced any diplomatic footprint other than in the DRC, we had to remove some people because of riots outside of our embassy.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. So, my understanding is that you guys——

Chairman Mast.

[Presiding.] The gentlelady's time is expired.

Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick. Thank you so much for your time.

I yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair now recognizes Representative Baird.

Mr. Baird. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you, and appreciate all that you are doing.

Secretary RUBIO. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Baird. But my question is going to focus on China. They have spent over two decades expanding their economic and political influence across Africa. So, becoming the continent's top trading partner, and a dominant force in sectors that I think are critical to the United States interest, particularly in agriculture and critical minerals.

So, I guess just to ask you, you covered part of that in your last answer, but I really want to know what part agriculture can play in advancing the U.S. political influence, economic partnerships, and national security in the face of China's growing presence.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think the one point that I would make is are there opportunities for us to improve the agricultural capacity of many of our partner nations, including in Africa. There is certainly things you can export, and in some markets that would make sense. But we are looking for opportunities to leverage both

technologies and advances to allow more productivity in the agricultural sector.

And that is what these countries want, particularly in Africa what they will tell you repeatedly, over and over again, is they are not interested in aid, they are interested in development, they want our assistance to develop, and to develop capabilities. And we do think that there are advances in agriculture, and it is one of the things we have worked, and are increasingly working with the Department of Agriculture on.

Is how can we get some of our best practices, some of our scientific innovations that have been advanced by our agricultural sector in the United States, and provide them perhaps in partnership with some of these nation states so that they can provide their own native, home grown agricultural capabilities. We think that would be a huge advantage to many of these countries, and many of them expressed interest in being a part of that sort of consortium.

Mr. Baird. I couldn't agree with you more. I think they have the resources, I am talking about the land, and some of the other resources that are necessary for agriculture, but they just don't have the understanding of the technology that is used in agriculture today. So, very good. So, how can the restructured Department of State reassert American leadership in Africa?

Particularly through strategic investment, you were talking about investment earlier with the investment fund, would you care to?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes. So, what we would look to for our missions on the ground at the embassy level, and ultimately through the regional bureaus, help us to identify, because in every particular country the opportunity is going to look different. So, as an example, we are still engaged in the DRC Rwanda negotiations, and our hope to prevent—we have gotten them to the table to sign a memorandum.

But we hope they ultimately will cut a peace deal, but part of that is the ability to have American companies go in, and in an ecologically responsible way, allow the country to benefit from its mineral rights, and from its mineral wealth. So, we want to be able to do that. So, embassies would identify this opportunity, they would identify this as a priority, and we would empower them to pursue it.

And to connect them with American companies that can help in that sector. So, I think that is what the restructuring is really helpful for, is it will allow at the individual country level for our embassies and its leadership to identify the unique opportunities that exist in one country versus another country. I think in the past this has sort of been handled as a global thing, as opposed to try to specify it down to the regional and local level.

We think we are going to get better results that way, because every country is unique, and every sector opportunity in every country is unique.

Mr. Baird. One last question, it kind of continues on in the same vein. But you know as your department goes under reorganization, what steps can be taken to ensure that these programs, the research, I am talking about research, are not only maintained, but

also guided by appropriate expertise, proper oversight, and a clear strategy that priorities measurable results and returns for U.S. taxpayers.

And what I am talking about is the investment in research, and agricultural research, and I am thinking about some of the diseases we have around the world that impact our poultry and livestock. The avian flu, the screw worm, some of that sort of thing. So, we have got about 46 seconds.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think the answer to that is these programs ultimately have to be judged by the outcomes, and by what they are producing. Every single year you have to ensure that the dollar you are investing is having a return on it. And if a program goes a couple years, it may have a beautiful title, it may sound really noble, but it is not producing a result or an outcome for you.

Not just in the agricultural space, but in any space, we have to walk away from the program, no matter what it is titled. We have a lot of programs that have great titles, but have not resulted in any measurable positive outcome for 20 years.

Mr. Baird. Thank you very much, I couldn't agree with you more.

Chairman Mast. The chair now recognizes Representative Moscowitz.

Mr. Moscowitz. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First let me extend my condolences to the Connolly family. Gerry's wit will be missed in this Congress. And so, in the spirit of Gerry, let me say, Mr. Secretary, that I am deeply disappointed, and find your performance as the national archivist extremely underwhelming.

And just for the record, we don't get to confirm here in Congress, but if we did I would have voted against your confirmation as the national archivist.

Secretary RUBIO. That vote never happened, so.

Mr. Moscowitz. I know. I want to talk about Iran for a second. I am deeply concerned about the language that I am seeing from the isolationist wing of the party. And I have been kind of shocked that the administration seems to be tougher on Canada, Greenland than they are on Iran. The ayatollah insults our President, if the language coming from the ayatollah was coming from Canada, or Greenland, or the E.U., the President wouldn't stand for it, yet he allows it from the ayatollah.

Is it your recommendation, I understand that you can't guarantee what Trump would or would not do, but is your recommendation to the President that he sign no deal that allows Iran to keep enrichment?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, here is the answer to that question, is the President has made clear that Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. He has also been clear, and I think you have seen this in statements over the weekend for example that Ambassador Witkoff did on television and the like, that if you have an enrichment capability at any level, you are but steps away from nuclear weapons. So, I think that is why the no enrichment piece is so important.

Mr. Moscowitz. Of course, and that was the issues that many people had with the JCPOA, is they felt that it kept the enrichment capability, along with ballistic missile capability, which Iran now has a delivery system. And so what I am trying to figure out is there are many players in this, and I am going to ask about

those, but is it your recommendation, should the President ask of it, I assume he would. Is it your recommendation to the President that he sign no deal that keeps their ability to enrich?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, and he doesn't need that recommendation because he has already said that.

Mr. Moscowitz. OK. Is it the vice president's position in your conversations with VP Vance that he also does not believe Iran should have any enrichment capability?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I am not going to describe our conversations, but I can tell you the vice president is completely aligned with the President in his foreign policy.

Mr. Moscowitz. So, that is his position then?

Secretary RUBIO. The position that they shouldn't have enrichment?

Mr. Moscowitz. Yes, is that the vice president——

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, if they have enrichment, then they will have a weapon, or at least they will be near, and everybody in the administration has been consistent on that.

Mr. Moscowitz. What about Mr. Witkoff, is it his position that Iran should not be able to have any enrichment capabilities as part of any deal?

Secretary RUBIO. He has said so in public interviews as recently as this weekend. But this is not an enrichment deal, at what level gets to keep enrichment, what they have said is if Iran wants a civil nuclear program, if they want to have nuclear energy, there is ways to do it, other countries have done it without enrichment. That opportunity is available to Iran if they seek it. They haven't been interested in it because they want to keep enrichment, that is the crux of what we are facing here.

Mr. Moscowitz. So, any deal with the Trump administration is not going to look anything like JCPOA, is that your position?

Secretary RUBIO. The Trump administration has been very clear that Iran will not get to enrich, because if they enrich they are a threshold nuclear power.

Mr. Moscowitz. OK, I want to shift for a second. There was just a leak that is now national news that Israel is poised to strike Iran. Where did that leak come from in the administration, do we know what department leaked that, is that being looked into?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I am not aware of the leak that you are discussing, obviously I wouldn't discuss intelligence matters, even verify whether it is even true. I also don't think it is a mystery though, irrespective, I am not talking about the leak, I am talking about the news story that Israel has made clear that they retain the option of action to limit Iran from ever gaining a nuclear capability.

I don't think that is a mystery, but I wouldn't comment, if I had read the article I wouldn't comment on intelligence matters, confirm or deny them. As far as leaks are concerned, I don't know, I read stuff in the news every single day that I look at and say I don't know where these people are coming up with this.

Mr. Moscowitz. Well, I mean they are giving polygraph tests in FEMA to determine where leaks are coming from. That has been well reported and not disputed by anyone in the administration, that they are literally going to employee, employee, sitting them

down, putting them up to a polygraph, putting them up to an oxygen monitor, trying to test their heart rate to figure out if they are leaking to the media.

Is that sort of same application that is happening in FEMA going to be applied to the national security team, and to the State Department to figure out who is leaking whether——

Secretary RUBIO. As far as I am aware we have not conducted any polygraph test at the Department of State, maybe we should, but we haven't.

Mr. Moscowitz. OK. So, I just want to be clear, because there is a lot of confusion depending on the day, the week, and a lot of the reporting that is coming out. Is that any Iran deal, is it your recommendation that that should go to Congress to approve?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I actually think the law requires it. If you recall, we passed legislation here a few years ago, and it requires that Congress has a right to weigh in on any deal, and could actually reverse any deal. I forgot the acronym for the bill, but it was one that was passed a few years ago, and I was in the Senate when it passed, it was after JCPOA.

Mr. Moscowitz. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair now recognizes Representative Barr.

Mr. Barr. Secretary Rubio, thank you for your leadership in refocusing American diplomacy toward the national interest, not just toward what might make us feel good, and what might be actually counterproductive to the national interest in the name of humanitarian goals.

Last year the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party found that five venture capital firms funneled more than $1.9 billion into artificial intelligence companies that support China's human rights abuses, or military modernization. And at least another $1.2 billion went into the PRC's semiconductor industry. Recently there was another $75 million venture capital investment into a Chinese artificial intelligence firm, Manis.

Do you agree that controls on American investments or non-U.S. investments into the Chinese military industrial complex companies are necessary to protect our national security?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, and I would further say that because of the military commercial fusion in China, virtually any company that is owned and controlled under Chinese national security laws are basically extensions of the Chinese military.

Mr. Barr. In February as you well know, President Trump issued a national security memorandum titled quote "America First Investment Policy." And that memorandum directs Federal agencies to address outbound investments, and targets both entities and sensitive technologies. My bill, the Fight China Act, which I introduced with Senator Cornyn, aligns with this memorandum.

And this legislation builds upon my legislation in previous Congresses that authorized OFAC to impose SDN sanctions on CMIC companies. Do you agree that this new bill that Senator Cornyn and I introduced, that has an approach that not only authorizes sanctions on the Treasury CMIC list, but that also restricts investment into these clearly identified sensitive technologies, that having that supplement to legislation is important to get at these nonlisted projects in China?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, again, I haven't seen the bill, but I think the concept you are outlining is in full alignment with the President's executive order. And that is to both look at individual companies that are being invest in, but also specific technologies at the cutting edge in particular, and especially those that have applications that could be contrary to our national security if in the wrong hands, and certainly the Chinese Communist Party would be the wrong hands.

Mr. Barr. Yes, I am concerned that if we rely exclusively on entity lists that we are going to be missing venture capital and private equity investments in non-public companies in China that never the less threaten our national security. If they can go on a list for clarity, great, and I want a red light green light approach to provide the private sector with clarity and certainty.

But I do think we are under inclusive if we just rely on publicly traded entities on these lists. Let me ask you a question about the border work, Secretary RUBIO. Obviously you have had great success, border crossings are down by 95 percent, 65,000 dangerous illegal immigrants, including 2,288 gang members from Tren de Aragua, MS–13, and other gangs have been arrested.

How is it that after only 4 months in office we have seen President Trump retake operational control of the border and return these criminal migrants to their countries of origin when the previous administration told the American people time and time again we had to have comprehensive bipartisan immigration reform, their hands were tied?

Secretary RUBIO. Because under the previous administration it was abundantly clear that if you got into this country, your chances of being able to stay were very high, whether you got in illegally or legally. Under the current administration it is clear that if you get into this country unlawfully, you are going to be removed the way the law requires. It is entirely incentive based.

And the truth of the matter is what we faced over the last few years is not illegal immigration, we have had illegal immigration throughout our history, and every country in the world faces it. What we have had is mass migration, we have had it here, and we have had it in Europe, but we have had it here, a mass migration event.

Which is dangerous, and frankly, nothing humanitarian about mass migration for the migrants, who are often abused along the way. And so, the message has gotten out that we are no longer going to allow you to stay if you enter illegally. Through some legal maneuver, you say magic words, you immediately kick off the asylum process, and you are going to stay for an indeterminate period of time.

And once it became clear that that was no longer the case, the incentive to come was dramatically reduced, and as a result you have seen the border crossing numbers which have given us the most secure border in our lifetime.

Mr. Barr. Well, it is pretty clear that it wasn't legislation we needed, we needed a new Commander in Chief, and a new Secretary of State, and we appreciate and applaud the great work that you all have done.

My time is expired, so I will yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair recognizes Representative Jackson.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. Thank you so much, and we acknowledge that we miss our dear colleague Connolly, I thank him for his years of service. Mr. Speaker, it was 39 years ago here in Washington, DC, I was arrested while protesting against the apartheid government of South Africa's White minority that had a non-minority White for the greater part of the latter half of the 20th century held captive, if you will, in bondage.

With sanctioned racial segregation, and political and economic discrimination against its Black citizens. I believe your policies on South Africa at this point in your career are wrong, precisely because either you do not understand the history of the country, or you have grown indifferent, and I beg that you go to your higher nature.

That being said, I want to ask about President Trump ending U.S. Government support for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility that promotes fairness in hiring, and helps make our national security workforce the strongest it can be. In the name of advancing an anti-woke agenda, he has given himself permission to break the law, attacking congressionally mandated efforts that have enjoyed bipartisan consensus for decades.

I believe not only in diversity as our strength as a country, but in fact our workforce does not reflect our population, then it merits an inquiry into what are the impediments that are leading to that outcome. Would you agree with that latter statement, that diversity is our strength?

Secretary RUBIO. I think unity is our strength, that we are a diverse nation is important, but unity is our strength.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. Well, those words, you would think that they were mine, they actually are recorded from you in your Senate hearing in July 2022. Further, do you believe that following the law is important, yes or no?

Secretary RUBIO. We follow the law every day.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. OK, well you wear so many hats, it must be difficult to keep track of all of the laws that you have supported, but yes, you did vote in favor of the bill. And I want to read a section of the bill that you did support, it is Section 5403 of the 2022 NDAA, it requires that the State Department, to strengthen recruitment of people belonging to underrepresented groups.

I know Mr. Trump has asked you all not to say that as cabinet officials, and I hope you have the guts to tell the President on some matters he is simply wrong. Mandating outreach to universities, employees affinity groups, and expanding paid student internships are among the actions. So, I would like to know, do you stand by strengthening diversity within the ranks of the State Department?

Secretary RUBIO. I stand by hiring the best people to do the job irrespective of their background, their race, color, creed, that is the American way.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. So, you are going against the very law that you had once supported, which I find highly contradictory and hypocritical. I hope that you would have the courage of your convictions, be the Marco Rubio, the senator that we knew, and not the Secretary of State that is now capitulating to that of a tyrant, and

that of Donald Trump. At this point I would like to yield the balance of my time to Hon. Sarah McBride.

Secretary RUBIO. The President is not a tyrant, he was elected by the voters of the United States.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. And I thank you so much for your time.

Secretary RUBIO. The President was elected as far as I recall.

Ms. McBride. Thank you.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. I have yielded my time, sir.

Ms. McBride. Thank you, Representative Jackson, thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us. We have talked a bit about the administration's proposed almost 84 percent cut in the international affairs budget. Not just the USAID budget, but the international affairs budget, which includes the State Department. But I want to hone in on one line in particular, which is a 71 percent cut in the account that includes international disaster assistance.

Now, we got a glimpse into what this reality would look like if this budget was implemented back in March when the administration, when the U.S.'s response to a devastating earthquake in Burma was dwarfed by China's response. I think China's response was about 15 times greater than our response. Now, after that we sent a letter to you that unfortunately we did not get a response to.

Asking several questions about the administration's decisions to essentially turn our back on the people of Burma. Now, as you said, foreign assistance, including international disaster assistance is not a charity, it is a strategic investment. And when we were not there in Burma, it allowed China to fill the void. So, I guess my question is did you advise the President then, or are you advising the President to make decisions that pull the United States back from the world stage, and allow China to play the good cop?

Or launch on the international aid stage, and increase China's soft power?

Secretary RUBIO. China spends, even now, a fraction of what we spend on foreign aid, it is not even close, it is a laughable difference. As far as Burma, the reason why—we did respond to Burma, the problem is that the junta there hates us, and they are pro China, and they were still bombing their own people right after the event happened.

Ms. McBride. As you as a senator——

Chairman Mast. The time has expired.

Mr. Jackson of Illinois. I yield back, Chairman.

Chairman Mast. Representative Davidson is recognized.

Mr. Davidson. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being President Trump's Secretary of State. People back home love you, think you are doing an awesome job, and they would want me to relay that to you, and I certainly feel it as well, so thank you. Secretary Rubio, Ukraine has been one of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid, we have given Ukraine well over $200 billion in aid since the war began, since Russia invaded them.

And I voted against all of it, despite Zelensky's claims that quote "When it is said that Ukraine received 200 billion in support to the army during the war, that is not true, we received about 76 billion, it is significant aid, but it is not 200 billion." And Mr. Secretary, I actually am concerned that President Zelensky is right.

As I chair the Committee on National Security and Illicit Finance, I am highly concerned that there is a lot of illicit finance there. Frankly, Republicans tried hard in the Senate and in the House to get a special inspector general there. But when you see things like that, there is a lot of concern. We know the previous administration wasn't following the money. Will you commit that you are following the money, and can you give us an update?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, obviously all of our aid is going to be analyzed, we have inspector generals, we have a particular inspector general on that account that will look at all that spending, and if we ever identify misappropriation or movements around, then we will certainly address it. But I think the broader point, the one you make, is that we provided extraordinary amounts of assistance to Ukraine.

But this war now has to come to an end, there is no military solution to this war. It only ends in a negotiated settlement, and the sooner it ends, the less people are going to die, the less money is going to be spent, and the less destruction there is going to be, and that is the President's No. 1 priority, end the war once and for all.

For 3 years no one did anything to end it, and he is doing more than anyone ever has, and he is the only one in the world that can. Now, obviously it will take two sides to agree to it, but the President has expended a—and we should be very proud that we have a President that is pursuing peace and not new wars.

Mr. Davidson. I introduced the Define the Mission Act when they first went to war, because normally that is what you do first, tell me what you are trying to accomplish, and then I can tell you whether I agree with the kind of resources you are asking for. We never could pass that, we never got a clear answer from the previous administration, so thank you for leading this effort on behalf of the President to define the mission, that we will help secure a peace.

And one of those big steps was a minerals deal, I want to be clear, that agreement on minerals with Ukraine doesn't include security guarantees, does it?

Secretary RUBIO. There are no military guarantees, correct.

Mr. Davidson. Yes, thank you for that. And I just want to turn now, as the founding chairman of the Greenland Caucus, to another area where we have the opportunity to talk about minerals, not just Arctic security, but Arctic opportunity, and a place where maybe it would make sense to include security guarantees. Can you give us an update on the administration's thinking about Greenland, and the importance of that relationship?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, the administration's view is twofold. No. 1, we respect the sovereignty and self-determination of the people of Greenland in whatever they decide they want to do, and what direction they are going to go. And No. 2, that Greenland is critical to global security because of its location, its geopolitical importance. That is not new, that has been known, and that has been viewed for a very long time.

It is why we have had a military presence there since before World War II, but certainly since then, and during the cold war. It is located in a part of the world, in the Arctic region, that we believe is going to become increasingly important in terms of global

security. And we don't want to see Greenland fall under the influence of China, or Russia, or any other potential adversary.

We want to ensure that it remains safe, and it is strategically important, and that is his primary view. He views it as critically important to global security.

Mr. Davidson. That is well said, Mr. Secretary, thank you for that. And our caucus would love to work with you, and the State Department, and whomever you designate to work with on Greenland issues in particular. We have been in touch with people there, people in Denmark, and really look forward to helping from the legislative perspective, support the administration's objectives there.

You highlight China, and they are working Canada and the European Union to really counter what the U.S. and the administration are trying to do. I am really concerned about that relationship with China. I think one of the cornerstones of American strength is the power of the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency.

As we talk about stable coins, and the future of money, China is trying to counter that, could you talk about the future of money and the role of China?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, obviously China is trying to create an alternative world order that they dominate, and we obviously are not in favor of that, and will not allow that to happen. And one of the best things that we can do is get our own fiscal house in order.

Mr. Davidson. Yes, well said. I think the future of money is one of the most important debates that we are having. China has implemented an Orwellian central bank digital currency, they are trying to impose that on the United States, and unfortunately they have allies. People in our own government that want to build a central bank digital currency, link it to digital ID.

I will submit that we are not going to counter China by being more like China. And I thank the administration for leading with that, saying we are not going to embrace a central bank, central currency here, and working to bolster the strength of the dollar as the world's reserve currency.

Thank you, my time has expired, and I yield back.

Chairman Mast. The chair recognizes Representative Stanton.

Mr. Stanton. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, before I make some remarks I just want to say as was said earlier, Gerry Connolly who we lost today, a great member of this body, a passionate advocate for the people of Virginia, particularly public servants working in the Federal workforce. He was a mentor to so many of us who came into Congress after he started, and just one of the greats, he will be missed dearly.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for being here today. In 2016 you warned quote "The world without American engagement is a world none of us wants to live with." unquote. I couldn't agree more, and I bring it up today because the threat from China has grown, not just due to global shifts outside of our control, but because of political choices by this administration.

Short term moves with no thought for long term consequences. The Chinese Communist Party has spent years claiming America is too divided to lead, and too unstable to trust. When you became Secretary, many of us hoped you would help lead the fight to com-

bat this propaganda, because that is exactly what you did so well serving in the U.S. Senate.

For example, Mr. Chairman, without objection, I would like to submit for the record the August 2023 op-ed written by Senator Rubio on this very subject.

Chairman Mast. Without objection.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

Mr. Stanton. Secretary Rubio, in this op-ed, you wrote that strong credible deterrence against Beijing is the best way to keep quote far flung controversy from impacting our way of life. You added quote "If there is even a hint that the United States will not honor its security commitments, it will encourage Beijing to engage in more hostility to test our resolve."

I thought your framing was especially smart here because you weren't just warning about policy, you were making the case for credibility, and I couldn't agree more with then Senator Rubio. But here you are today as Secretary Rubio presenting a very different record. As Secretary we have seen you defend or be complicit in reckless foreign policy that Senator Rubio once warned against.

Like strategically incoherent tariffs that alienate our allies, alliance breaking decisions that weaken our national security, partnership neglect that isolates us, abandoned commitments that shred our credibility and hand China easy propaganda wins. None of this is deterring China, Mr. Secretary. In fact my concern is that unless we course correct, and fast, this administration is handing Beijing a string of I told you so moments that only strengthen their position.

Look no further than the vice president, in February Vice President Vance took the stage of the Munich Security Conference not to criticize our adversaries, but in a rather stunning moment, to attack our allies. In fact, he literally said quote "The threat that I worry about most about vis a vis Europe is not Russia, it is not China, it is the threat from within." unquote.

And just last month, the Ipsos global poll found that U.S. favorability fell in 26 out of 29 countries in just six short months. It is also the first time in the poll's history that more people now view China, not the United States, as the world's most positive influence. That is not just a perception problem, that is a strategic failure, and the cost of inconsistency.

Speaking of cost, these policies also have Americans on edge as well. In Arizona, my home State, the Phoenix Sky Harbor alone, we have more than $750 million in annual exports at risk. Ship makers in Chandler in my district face increasing costs driven by the unpredictability in supply chain disruptions.

At Arizona State University in my district, we rely on international students for tuition, research, and talent, and they are being run off by the chaotic immigration policy that flies in the face of American values. The so called brain drain is real, and it is tipping the balance of global innovation away from the United States.

The challenge in this next century won't be fought on battlefields, it will be the fight to shape the future, technology, trade,

global trust. And if we keep turning our back on what makes America strong, we risk giving China the upper hand.

I yield the rest of my time to Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you, Representative Stanton. Secretary, in the few seconds I have, I just wanted to go back to something you said earlier about wanting people to stop dying, and I hope that that includes our Afghan allies, 14,000 of whom were fully vetted, and were ready for relocation to the United States, but that has been stopped by this administration, and by you.

And these are including interpreters who were actually in the foxholes with our service men and women helping to keep them alive. I would hope that you would stand by our allies and reverse this ban so that we can protect our national security interests, and also retain credibility that we need with our allies and partners around the world.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Yields back, and I think you left off your list the $100 billion Taiwan semiconductor investment into Arizona.

Now I recognize Representative Lawler.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here, I want to thank you for your leadership in getting Edan Alexander released last week, that is a big step forward. We still have four remaining American hostages being held, all of whom are deceased. I just continue to encourage you, and the administration to continue to lead on that front to get them home.

Last Congress we passed legislation to create a special envoy for the Abraham Accords within the Department of State, the Biden administration refused to fill that position. I know we have the Middle East envoy, but I would ask can you commit to bringing this forward to the President so that we can get this position filled?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, that is in process.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you very much. Obviously the Abraham Accords was one of the most consequential foreign policy initiatives under the first Trump administration, and prior to October 7, I think we were making progress. But since obviously it has somewhat stalled, how critical long term for peace do you believe it is for Saudi Arabia to normalize relations with Israel, and where do you see that in the process?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think it would be a major development, one that I thought was moving in a positive direction until as you said, October 7. I think there is still a willingness to do it, certain conditions or impediments, October 7th being one of them, but the Saudis have continued to express an interest, as have the Israelis in reaching that agreement.

In the meantime, we do have an Abraham Accords Office that is actively working to identify a number of countries who have lined up, and are ready, and I think we may have good news, certainly before the end of this year, of a number of more countries that are willing to join that alliance. The last point I would make is it is also critically important that we do all we can to live up to the commitments made on the part of the United States on behalf of the countries that previously joined the alliance.

Be it the UAE, which is part of the effort for this trip this weekend, it wasn't some of these other nefarious purposes, it is to con-

tinue to strengthen the commitments that were made to the UAE as part of the Abraham Accords, but also Morocco, and other countries such as this. So, I think that this is important that we continue to build on it. But you start building by ensuring that countries that are already a part of it feel like our part of the bargain has been lived up to.

Mr. LAWLER. Agreed. You were a very strong voice against the BDS movement when you were in the Senate, and as you know, there is a loophole in the current anti-boycott law that was signed by President Trump that allows intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations to pressure U.S. companies into supporting boycotts against U.S. allies like Israel.

I have introduced the IGO Anti-Boycott Act to close that loophole, and hold the United Nations to the same standard as foreign governments that is already in law. Would you support closing that loophole?

Secretary RUBIO. Well again, like any legislation I would want to see it, but the concept you have just outlined is one that I think the administration would be very supportive of.

Mr. LAWLER. Appreciate it. I know my colleague Mr. Moscowitz touched on the Iran nuclear framework that is being negotiated. I think we can all agree that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon, and I know you and the administration are working to prevent that, so appreciate your efforts on that.

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, if I could respond, Iran, while they claim to never want a nuclear weapon, if you ask them, they would say we are not interested in a nuclear weapon, we are just interested in enrichment. The problem is that if you can enrich at any level, three point six seven or whatever, you are 80 percent of the way there. All that requires now is a few months or weeks of time to get to the weapons grade.

It makes them a threshold nuclear power. The Iranian position is they want civil nuclear energy. And if they want civil nuclear energy, meaning they want nuclear electricity for their country, nuclear generated electricity, there is a pathway to doing that, multiple countries around the world do it without an enrichment capability.

If on the other hand they want an enrichment capability, then that is—that makes them a threshold nuclear weapons power, and that is an unacceptable outcome. And that is the reason why we have a problem with what they are doing now, and it is the reason why the President is imposing maximum pressure. Every single day an increasing number of sanctions are going on.

And it is the reason, by the way, why the E3, the European 3 are on the verge of instituting snapback sanction provisions against them by October of this year.

Mr. LAWLER. I want to thank you, when it comes to maximum pressure, last Congress you and I led the CHIPS Act, we passed that into law, and this administration has already taken significant steps to enforce the CHIPS Act, as well as the Iran China Energy Sanctions Act to go after the financial institutions facilitating the trade. We previously, in a markup, passed the Enhance Iran Sanctions Act to expand the authorities.

Would you support that effort to continue to provide the administration with enhanced capabilities to crack down on this illicit oil trade?

Secretary RUBIO. Absolutely.

Mr. LAWLER. Very good. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. Representative Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this important hearing today. I too, like many of our colleagues here today, mourn the loss of our dear friend Gerry Connolly, and our thoughts and prayers go to him and his family. Mr. Secretary, there are a couple of different issues I want to touch upon here that have been raised that I would like clarity on.

First of all, would you agree that the transatlantic alliance, the partnership post World War II, has been a hallmark of freedom throughout the world?

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, and it continues to be a strong feature of our foreign policy.

Mr. COSTA. Yes. You said that you had not discussed post closures as it relates to those in Europe as part of your overhaul of the State Department. Four are in France, three in Germany, one in Italy, one in Portugal, and one in Brazil, not Europe, but then I thought you said that no determination has yet been made with those post closures?

Secretary RUBIO. There was an article, some of these are cultural places, I forget the exact ones, but they are not even embassies or consulates, but they are not being closed, but I don't know where these things are coming from. I mean, people are putting stuff out here. Now, listen——

Mr. COSTA. If you could respond with a letter on that point I would appreciate that.

Secretary RUBIO. Sure, well I could tell you this, if we find a post that is wasteful, we will close it, but we have——

Mr. COSTA. The consulate general I know in Portugal is our oldest——

Secretary RUBIO. What is that?

Mr. COSTA. The consulate general post in Portugal is our oldest historically.

Secretary RUBIO. I don't know where that is coming from, I mean, that is a press report.

Mr. COSTA. OK, well we will clear that up later on. Mr. Secretary, America has been the beacon of light for democracy post World War II certainly, and almost every President has been used as a voice of a defender of democratic principles. Do you agree that China and Russia are our adversaries today, along with Iran I might add?

Secretary RUBIO. I think both, well there is no doubt in the case of China seeks to replace us on the world stage as the world's most powerful country. In the case of Russia, they clearly do not support a world order in which the United States plays the role it has currently played, so they are an adversary on that front. In the case of Iran, they are a threat to regional peace. I wouldn't say they are a global threat, but they are an increasing threat.

Mr. COSTA. No, I understand, I would even go further. I consider today, modern day Russia, a syndicate masquerading as a country with a mob boss called Putin. And so, in these negotiations I want to do a comparative analogy. The President has indicated that with Iran, as we have noted, that maximum pressure are the tactics that will be used to engage Iran to ensure that they do not obtain nuclear capability, is that correct?

Secretary RUBIO. Maximum pressure on Iran?

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Secretary RUBIO. That is compelling them to not seek a nuclear weapon?

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Secretary RUBIO. Correct, or the alternative is worse.

Mr. COSTA. Yes. In the negotiations that the President is trying to seek a cease-fire, and a peace between Ukraine and Russia, I would like to ask you why the President has not considered using maximum pressure on Russia to ensure, which we have the ability to do so, sanctions are being considered over in the Senate, additional sanctions, to pressure Russia into a cease-fire mode, and to a peace agreement.

Realizing that they have broken the last three agreements they have had with Ukraine in the last 20 years.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think the President has made clear that he understands clearly he has options with increased sanctions on Russia if necessary, he would prefer that they agree to a peace deal. So, it is a process of trying to encourage them to reach peace. If ultimately that doesn't work, the President has publicly stated, he is very well aware of the sanctions options, the devastating sanctions options that he has available.

Mr. COSTA. And I just want to make sure that we are clear about this, because we have leverage on Russia, and it is not clear to me that we are using it in the same sense that we are using with Iran. And I think frankly, we and our allies must be together in defending democracy. And certainly, Ukraine is a democratic, and intending to be more democratic, wants to join with the west, with the European Union, as well as ultimately with NATO.

And I think Poland, Romania, and the Baltic states are watching very carefully to America's commitment to Ukraine. Let me go on quickly here. The effort was raised in EUCOM, and in Azerbaijan, another country that has not kept its commitments in the Minsk Accord. We tried to get Republican and Democratic administrations to forego the waiver on Section 907 on military aid to Azerbaijan.

Finally last year the Biden administration rightfully refused to issue the waiver. I think it should be permanent. What is your position, and will you commit to not resisting Section 907's waiver again this year that would block military aid to Azerbaijan?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, we haven't made a determination on that yet, because what we are focused on right now is getting them to agree to a peace agreement that does not cause them to invade a neighboring country in Armenia. We would like to prevent that from happening, the President is very committed to preventing wars.

And we have tried to outline to both sides, especially the Azerbaijani side, the tremendous benefits that would come from signing

a peace deal, and not engaging in a war that we would find to be destructive, counterproductive, and the last thing that we need right now in the region.

Mr. COSTA. And Armenia is looking for our help and our support——

Chairman MAST. Representative Kean is recognized.

Mr. COSTA. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you here today, and thank you for joining us. As we evaluate the State Department's budget and posture, we must ensure that its structure, and priorities, and resources are aligned to effectively advance U.S. national interests. That includes ensuring global health assistance is targeted, transparent, and focused on delivering lifesaving care where it is needed most.

PEPFAR has been an incredibly successful global health program over the past 20 years, and it is something that America should be proud of. However, the world has changed in those 20 years, and the U.S. should begin helping other countries take ownership of their HIV prevention and treatment efforts. To ensure success, we should make sure that there are planned, predictable, and negotiated timeframes.

So, in this Committee's efforts to reauthorize the State Department, how can we define in statute the mission of the Bureau of Global Health, Security, and Diplomacy to facilitate transfer of ownership for global health programs to partner countries?

Secretary RUBIO. That is a great question that we would have to collaborate on in terms of statutorily defining what those benchmarks are, but I think the broader point is, is the best foreign aid that comes to end because it has achieved its purpose. In the case of PEPFAR, where today 85 percent of its recipients are still receiving assistance, you want to reach a point in which one of two things happens.

The transmission of the disease stops, but also the partner nation has built the capacity to be able to handle it themselves. Not PEPFAR specific, but many of these programs, what ends up happening is even if they do achieve their initial goals, it now morphs into some new target that is created in order to continue to sustain the program.

So, ideally what you want to see is foreign aid that goes into a country, deals with the acute problem, but ultimately helps the country have the capacity to deal with the chronic problem, to prevent it from becoming a problem, and I think that is the ideal benchmark. You define it through a period of time, through gains year over year, and ultimately designed to increase partner capacity so the day will come where they can self-sustain.

I think many of these countries would like to see that happen. What cannot continue is this open ended spending all across the world on all kinds of things. We just can't do that, we are by far, it's not even close, we are by far the most generous nation on earth on foreign aid by far. And we will continue to be, by far, with no other equal, including China despite all this alarmist stuff.

But at the same time, it has got to be forwarding our national interest, and it cannot be throwing away taxpayer money.

Mr. KEAN. So, recently companies have begun developing novel HIV prevention therapies that last long, and can increase adherence, improving HIV prevention outcomes and reduce costs. As this Committee seeks to reauthorize the State Department, how can we ensure that the Bureau of Global Health, Security, and Diplomacy is encouraged to quickly deploy these American innovations to PEPFAR partner countries?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I think at the statutory front in the reorganization, in fact if you are able to do a reauthorization we can build that into the law, and into the requirements. From a management perspective, this is what we should expect of our people. In essence, every single year when we engage in something, you have to be able to outline how is this in the national interest, how do you measure success, and it has to be analyzed on a regular basis to ensure that it is delivering.

You don't want to be 10 years into a program before you realize you spent all this money on a title that sounds good, but you didn't get the outcome. And now you have got to keep funding it, or someone will come up here and create a protest, or lead an effort. We have this entire thing, I call it the foreign aid industrial complex, of NGO on top of NGO, on top of NGO, on top of NGO who have built this massive, monster complex of foreign aid.

In some cases one project has 15 subcontractors underneath it before it finally reaches a local partner. That is outrageous, we cannot allow that to build, and continue to build in that way.

Mr. KEAN. And then New Jersey boasts an unrivaled biotech industry that provides many products to the PEPFAR program, including HIV diagnostics. As you integrate PEPFAR's functions into the Bureau of Global Health, Security, and Diplomacy, how are you looking to ensure that diagnostics will continue to be a key component of the PEPFAR program?

Secretary RUBIO. That is great insight, that is the kind of input we want to say, and that is the kind of input we want to work with you on, and members of this Committee on. These are the kinds of things that we can build ultimately in an authorization bill, but more importantly in our internal practices. Again, to ensure that when we are providing aid, it is the right aid, and the kind of aid that helps us meet the benchmarks that we have set.

Mr. KEAN. And how does PEPFAR fit into your broader vision of foreign assistance that advances U.S. national security, and global health security objectives?

Secretary RUBIO. It is a program we are proud of, it is one of the first programs we restored after the 90 day pause. Even before that, it is one of the first programs that I have highlighted here today, 85 percent of the recipients are on it, but it does need improvement. The program does need improvement.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. The chair recognizes Representative Amo.

Mr. AMO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Rubio, do you know what this is?

Secretary RUBIO. I am sorry, my LASIK is not as good as it used to be.

Mr. AMO. That is all right, I will explain. This is a ready to use therapeutic food, also known as a RUTF. It is produced in the

United States by Edesia Nutrition in Rhode Island, and Mana Nutrition in Georgia from American grown farm products. A single box that I have right here of this miracle product can save a child of dying of severe, acute malnutrition in only six to 10 weeks.

Now, since January you have promised over and over again that foreign aid freezes will not include lifesaving assistance. RUTFs save the lives of children who are starving around the world. Do you agree that this product is lifesaving aid?

Secretary RUBIO. It can be, yes.

Mr. AMO. Well, Secretary Rubio, the World Food Program estimates that 8,000 children die from hunger every day. Until last Friday over 123,000 RUTF boxes were purchased for Sudan, but were sitting in Rhode Island in a warehouse because of State Department delays. So, my question for you is are you doing everything you can to keep starving children from dying?

Secretary RUBIO. There was no State Department delays to that being deployed, there may have been other delays, but it wasn't State Department.

Mr. AMO. There were State Department delays, and it is clear that you have not done everything you can do to keep these kids from starving, because there——

Secretary RUBIO. There were no State Department delays.

Mr. AMO. There are another 185,000 boxes of RUTFs that the U.S. Government and taxpayers have already paid for sitting in that same warehouse, all because the State Department doesn't have a plan, doesn't have its stuff together to get this rolling. So, I can think of several countries where this aid is desperately needed.

Where these boxes of RUTFs could save hundreds of thousands of children's lives. And these delays have real consequences, not just for starving children, but also jobs at home. I talked to the CEO of Edesia, who said they had to lay off 10 percent of their team due to the lack of payments from the U.S. Government, and the lack of clarity in March.

So, Secretary Rubio, will you commit to making the decisions needed to move the remaining 185,000 boxes of RUTFs to countries that need them by the end of this week?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, I would be interested to learn what those impediments are.

Mr. AMO. Well, we have been talking about this for a while, I have sent you letters since January.

Secretary RUBIO. There is no impediment on our end to distributing that.

Mr. AMO. There are impediments, I am speaking directly to the source——

Secretary RUBIO. There are others, Sudan is a war zone, I mean that is an impediment.

Mr. AMO. Secretary, I am reclaiming my time.

Secretary RUBIO. There are other impediments.

Mr. AMO. This exists as a problem, and you have not acted.

Secretary RUBIO. There is other impediments, that is false.

Mr. AMO. And maybe it is the case that you have too many jobs, because I know it is the case, it must be a lot to be the National

Security Advisor, the national archivist, the head of USAID, that is a lot.

Secretary RUBIO. It is.

Mr. AMO. I understand a lot of footballs, a football player, that is a lot of balls to catch.

Secretary RUBIO. We are all right, we can handle it.

Mr. AMO. But the issue here is we have children who are dying, so will you commit to continuing to fund the production, transportation, and distribution of these domestically produced lifesaving products to save starving children around the world?

Secretary RUBIO. They are approved now.

Mr. AMO. They are not moving. I just told you about 185,000 boxes in Rhode Island, I live there

Secretary RUBIO. And you need to figure out why they are not moving, because it isn't an impediment from us.

Mr. AMO. Sir, you need to figure out, that is actually your job, sir.

Secretary RUBIO. No, it is no impediment from the State Department, there may be logistical impediments that have nothing to do with us.

Mr. AMO. Well, Mr. Secretary, it seems like you will not make the commitment. Sir, it seems like you refuse to make the commitment.

Secretary RUBIO. We do more of that than anybody in the world, and we are going to continue to do it. We are going to continue to do food aid, we are going to do more food aid than any country on the planet times ten.

Mr. AMO. Well that is a lot of talk.

Secretary RUBIO. Those are numbers.

Mr. AMO. Seeing is believing, and there is not to be seeing.

Secretary RUBIO. Those are numbers, those are facts, we do more foreign aid, and more food assistance.

Mr. AMO. Well, I have got numbers, I have got 185,000 boxes that aren't moving. So——

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, but the State Department doesn't move boxes, we authorize them to move, they are authorized——

Mr. AMO. So, Mr. Secretary, I am going to do you a little favor—Mr. Secretary, I am reclaiming my time, sir. I am going to give you a favor.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you ask questions you don't let anybody answer, I am telling you they are allowed to move.

Mr. AMO. I have a question for you, and you are compelled to answer. Why don't you take 10 seconds now to turn to your staff and say let's get this fixed?

Secretary RUBIO. My staff knows that this has been fixed, there is no impediment on the State Department side.

Mr. AMO. Well, then you have not proven that to me. If the people who are affected both here domestically and around the world are not receiving this lifesaving product, this is——

Secretary RUBIO. They are receiving it.

Mr. AMO. Look, you staked your career in the Senate on supporting humanitarian aid, but now you won't make a commitment, or you are saying things have been done that haven't been done——

Secretary RUBIO. I already made a commitment.

Mr. AMO. You have made a commitment?

Secretary RUBIO. We do more food aid than anybody in the world, we are doing more today than anybody in the world.

Mr. AMO. You are talking—Secretary, I am reclaiming my time. You are speaking in generalities, I am talking about specifics.

Secretary RUBIO. I am speaking in specifics, we do more than anybody in the world, and we are doing more than anybody in the world right now at this very moment.

Mr. AMO. Again, that is hyperbole, sir, because this has been disrupted because of your freezing of aid.

Secretary RUBIO. Who does more food aid than the United States?

Mr. AMO. Sir, why are you asking me questions? My job is to ask you questions.

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you are the one that is claiming that we are not, tell me who does more?

Mr. AMO. Secretary, I am reclaiming my time, Secretary, I am reclaiming my time. This is why I am introducing the Rubio Act, so you focus on the one job that the Senate gave you, to serve as our Secretary of State, because you are clearly distracted. After the last few months I understand why President Trump has such colorful nicknames for you.

You are obedient, you are following the rules, you will do anything the President tells you to do without regard for the law, the Constitution, America's security or standing as a leader in the world. Unlike you, I do not fear crossing Donald Trump. I refuse to give up on these children, I will be calling you once a week until you take action to fund RUTF, and actually prove that you are doing this job to make sure you know how many children have died on your watch. Will you pick up my call?

Secretary RUBIO. No children are dying on my watch.

Mr. AMO. Will you pick up my call, sir?

Secretary RUBIO. Pick up your call?

Mr. AMO. When I call you to check in on your progress.

Secretary RUBIO. Our progress is already being maintained, we already do more than everybody in the world.

Chairman MAST. The gentleman's time is expired.

Representative Mills is recognized.

Secretary RUBIO. But he has made some strong accusations here. We are doing more than anybody in the world, that food is being distributed now, and he knows that.

Chairman MAST. Very good. Representative Mills is recognized.

Mr. MILLS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I can tell you I won't be reclaiming any time. Secretary, I will make sure that you have the opportunity to answer questions. I think that you have done an amazing job. I think that well before you actually became Secretary, when you were sitting in the Senate, you proved yourself as a leader in foreign affairs.

I can remember you and I, when we were campaigning in 2022 together, we were at an event with Ron DeSantis in my district, and we sat and talked about foreign policy, and you were one of the most knowledgeable people I have ever met with. So, thank you

for stepping up to the challenge. I also want to go ahead and rebut a couple of things.

Because I believe as you do, that an understanding of history, and the understanding of our seven articles, 27 amendments, and our Constitution is what makes you a good legislator, and a good member of the Federal Government. They keep talking about this $400 million plane gift to Qatar, and you tried to answer this multiple times.

But I want to paint some history here, in 1945 U.S. President FDR gifted a Douglas DC–3 to King Abdulaziz, which marked the beginning of civil aviation in Saudi Arabia. This airplane is nothing more than a reason to complain about the President that knows how to advance U.S. interests, and it is actually more about trying to conflate optics with actual outcomes.

This is a longstanding history, and so I want to just go ahead and let people know what that actually is. Now, as you know, I was one of the first Members of Congress to go to Syria after the fall of the Assad regime, met with the incoming and transitional government, with Al Sharaa, with Al Shaibani, and with his transitional government. I absolutely support the idea of lifting the sanctions on a conditions metrics base.

Which is allowing them to not only rebuild Syria, because for those of us who understand history, the road to Damascus travels through Baghdad, we know there is twin and sister cities, and we know that the stability of Syria ultimately impacts the outcome and the stability of the region. I think that what Al Sharaa has done to show inclusivity and plurality is commendable in the beginning.

I mean, he has one of his ministers who is a female Alawite, who I spoke with, who said I have full authorization, not just window dressing. He has actually talked about the plurality and inclusiveness of the government and its election to guarantee that the Druze, the Alawites, the Christians, the Muslims, and all who are there will actually be a part of the incoming government and elections.

He is also working with Israel to speak right now, where he is blocking weapons transports through Syria into Lebanon from Hashd al Sha'bi, the Iraq Iranian backed militia to try and make attacks against Iran. He is working with Iraq, and the United States, and the CTS teams to help combat ISIS-Daesh, to guarantee that they are still weakened, but also guaranteeing that he has pushed Iran out to make sure it is not proxy State.

It is a historical moment for Syria. Fifty plus years the Russians have had a stronghold under the Assad regime, and I commend you on your support for this, and also the Caesar Act when it passed. Secretary Rubio, I have a question with regards to Iran. We understand that the nuclear negotiations are going on, and there is much to be done.

But could you give us some of the highlights to what these metrics and conditions will be in the administration to guarantee that not only do we see an Iran that is free of nuclear weapons, but a potential change and fall of the Iranian regime?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, anytime these negotiations are ongoing you want to be delicate about what you say, probably because it

upend them. And obviously I remind everybody that no matter the nature of their government, in foreign relations the people on the other side are in politics too, and so they have their own balances that they need to have in terms of what they say publicly.

What I think has been abundantly clear, and the President has said, is No. 1, Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. And he has discussed that there is one way to do it, which is not an ideal way, and the other way to do it is for Iran to agree to a deal. What is a deal that does not allow Iran to get to a nuclear weapon? It is a deal that doesn't just say we commit not to getting a nuclear weapon, and taking them at their word.

But ensure that they do not have the continued capacity to enrich. If they can enrich, then you are basically a threshold nuclear power that at any time can accelerate that process and get to that point. So, that is the goal of these negotiations, to create an incentive model where if they give up their enrichment capability, they will receive some sanctions relief commensurate with it.

That is the hope, that is what we are working on. Because the alternative would be something far more destructive, and we seek to avoid that if possible.

Mr. MILLS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and obviously to stop the funding of the proxy militias like Houthis, like Hamas, like others, which I know that you have been adamant about. I want to switch to Brazil if I may. Mr. Secretary, as you are certainly aware, of the alarming human rights decline in Brazil.

We have seen pervasive censorship, political persecution targeting the entire opposition, including journalists, and ordinary citizens. What they are now doing is imminent politically motivated imprisonment of former President Bolsonaro. This crackdown has extended beyond Brazil's borders, impacting individuals on U.S. soil. The 2023 Financial Times article actually talked about this.

What do you intend to do, and would you be looking at Supreme Court Justice sanctioning of Alexandre de Moraes under the Global Magnitsky Act?

Secretary RUBIO. That is under review right now, and it is a great possibility that will happen.

Mr. MILLS. Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman MAST. The chair recognizes Representative Jayapal.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary Rubio, for being here. On March 21, 2025, the State Department approved the revocation of a student visa for Rumeysa Ozturk, a Turkish citizen who was a graduate student at Tufts University, apparently simply for writing an op-ed. According to an internal State Department memo, you took this action under your discretionary authority to revoke visas.

And soon after you revoked her visa, armed and masked plain clothes officers snatched Ms. Ozturk off the street, and transported her to a prison in Louisiana. Mr. Secretary, do you really think that Ms. Ozturk's op-ed results in a foreign policy consequence for the United States?

Secretary RUBIO. I believe that case involves someone whose visa we never would have granted had we known ahead of time, and now that she is——

Ms. JAYAPAL. I am not asking you that question, I am asking you if you think an op-ed, which——

Secretary RUBIO. It is not an op-ed.

Ms. JAYAPAL. But that is exactly in fact what happened, the State Department wrote a memo concluding that you did not have sufficient grounds to revoke Ms. Ozturk's visa, there was no evidence showing that she had engaged in any activities that were a threat to national security. And in fact in May a Federal court ordered Ms. Ozturk's release from detention.

Noting that the sole basis, sole basis for the Government's detention appeared to be the fact that she co-authored this opinion piece in the Tufts newspaper in March 2024. Where in the Constitution does it say that the Secretary of State can override the First Amendment protections of free speech? Is there a footnote that I missed somewhere?

Secretary RUBIO. There is no constitutional right to a student visa. Student visa is a privilege.

Ms. JAYAPAL. But is there a constitutional right, does it say somewhere that Marco Rubio gets to determine which speech is appropriate, and revoke student visas based on what you think constitutes free speech?

Secretary RUBIO. There is a statute that says the Secretary of State gets to determine whether someone is a threat. We deny visas every day all over the world, and we will keep——

Ms. JAYAPAL. Do you think that the INA, do you think that the Immigration and Nationality Act trumps the Constitution of the United States, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, Congress can always change the law if you want, but I am telling you in the meanwhile I have the authority, I will continue to revoke the visas of these people that come in to tell this country apart because they are on student visas, they are guests.

Ms. JAYAPAL. You said that, Mr. Secretary, let me reclaim my time. Because you are talking about revoking student visas based on what somebody says, and that means that you are trumping the legal supreme—the supreme law of the land, which is the Constitution of the United States.

Secretary RUBIO. No one has the right to a student visa, it is a privilege.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Rubio, why did the administration need to use masked, armed, unidentified agents to whisk somebody off the street, and deny her counsel for almost 24 hours after her arrest?

Secretary RUBIO. Well, you will have to ask the agencies that did that work. I am not responsible for that, I am responsible for revoking the visas of these people that come to tear this country apart, we never should have allowed them in.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Secretary Rubio, I am talking about this particular case where you revoked the student visa of a Turkish citizen who was a graduate student, who wrote an op-ed that you didn't like. And suddenly you allowed for masked men to whisk her off the street. And you have multiple jobs apparently, you are the National Security Advisor as well, so don't tell me it is not your job who snatches her off the street.

Secretary RUBIO. We don't do the snatching, but I can tell you we do the visa revocations, and we are going to keep doing them.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Let me ask you about the national security consequences of masked men on the street snatching people off the streets. If these are legitimate law enforcement agents carrying out proper arrests, why are they hiding their identities?

Secretary RUBIO. Because radical crazies will try to hurt them, we know, and we have seen.

Ms. JAYAPAL. So, you think that U.S. agents who have almost always gone without face coverings even when they are arresting some of the most——

Secretary RUBIO. I can't speak to law enforcement functions, we are not a law enforcement agency.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Some of the country's most dangerous criminals suddenly have so much to fear from a graduate student who wrote an op-ed that they need to be masked, is that accurate?

Secretary RUBIO. Again, that law student was a guest in the United States on a student visa. No one is entitled to a student visa, we deny visas every day, and we will revoke, and continue to revoke visas.

Ms. JAYAPAL. So, you revoked her student visa based on an op-ed which trumps the supreme law of the land, which is the Constitution?

Secretary RUBIO. Someone is coming up here to stir up problems on our campus, we are going to revoke their visa, they are guests.

Ms. JAYAPAL. She didn't do any of that, she wrote an op-ed. She wrote an op-ed, and I am talking to you about her particular case——

Secretary RUBIO. That is her lawyer's claims, and your claims, those are not the facts.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Reclaiming my time, you revoked her student visa——

Secretary RUBIO. Yes, proudly.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Because she wrote an op-ed, would you revoke——

Secretary RUBIO. We will do more, we are going to do more of them.

Ms. JAYAPAL. I have another question for you. Would you revoke the visa of someone in the United States who published claims that quote "Jews are an untrustworthy and dangerous group." Yes or no?

Secretary RUBIO. We will revoke the visa of anyone who is in this country as a guest who is here to stir up trouble.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Are you going to revoke the visa of somebody who made that statement?

Secretary RUBIO. Give me the case, I will look at it. I am looking to get crazy people out of our country.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Well, actually it is not just about revoking, you actually——

Secretary RUBIO. I look forward to revoking the visas of any lunatics we can identify.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Secretary Rubio, excuse me, reclaiming my time. Can you explain to me why the Trump administration granted refugee status to Charl Kleinhaus, the White Afrikaner, who tweeted that exact statement that I just said? There is the case.

Secretary RUBIO. That is not a visa.

Ms. JAYAPAL. You granted that person to enter the United States.

Secretary RUBIO. That is a totally different process, that is someone who applied here through a totally different process. Student visas are a privilege, we deny them all the time, and will revoke them.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Secretary Rubio, you revoked a visa based on an op-ed, and then you allowed for masked men——

Chairman MAST. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Secretary RUBIO. That is your claim, that is inaccurate, that is your claim.

Ms. JAYAPAL. To snatch somebody off the street.

Chairman MAST. Your time has expired.

Secretary RUBIO. That is your claim, that is not accurate.

Chairman MAST. The chair recognizes Ranking Member Meeks for a closing statement.

Mr. MEEKS. I will be brief because this really is a sad day. I want to, in my closing, just say thank you to the men and women of USAID who did their jobs, who have been forgotten about by this administration, and this Secretary of State. When you think about pathogens without passports that could kill millions, it was USAID teams that were on the case to figure out how to strengthen lab surveillance and testing. They no longer can do that.

When you think about more than a decade of gains by authoritarians and oligarchs, USAID teams were building new tools to help independent media survive, and to provide insurance so anti-corruption and NGO's could fight back against specious lawsuits. They have been all wiped out, all of those organizations.

When you think about the extreme weather caused by climate change that was wiping out livestock and farmland, and driving the mass migration of millions, it was USAID teams helping scientists and farmers experiment with different varieties of drought resistant seeds while hustling up private sector partnerships to stay ahead of devastating droughts.

This is who USAID was, this was the same organization that Senator Rubio was supporting, and talking about when he traveled. And to come here today, and to hear his remarks, and not even—well, he did say one good thing. He said that he recognized that most of the people in the State Department, and most of those Foreign Service agents were good people.

They were great people, they served our country well, they deserved more than they have gotten under this administration, and under your leadership as Secretary of State.

And I yield back.

Chairman MAST. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for taking the time with us today. Countless times you were not given the opportunity to respond to things. I am going to take my time from my closing statement, and yield you that time to respond to anything you wish to.

Secretary RUBIO. No, I appreciate it, thank you for the chance to interact with all of you. And obviously I don't agree with some of the assessments, many of the assessments that were made here today, but I am proud of the work we are doing. We are going to

give you, and deliver for our country, a State department that can deliver effective foreign policy in a way that is driven from our regional bureaus.

I keep going to this because it is really important, that is the treasurer of our State Department, is our regional bureaus and our embassies. That is where the action needs to be, and that is where it needs to happen, that is where the best ideas are coming from. The ranking member in his closing remarks said most of the people are good people, they are.

Even some of the people that lost their jobs, we didn't fire them because they were bad people, we fired them because their function was no longer needed, or they were removed. I am proud of the reforms at the State Department. To date I believe there has been less than—we have had some people leave early as they always do, and retire.

But by and large we have only had about 200, less than 200 people removed from positions as a RIF because we closed down the Global Engagement Center and one other bureau. But we have undertaken a very meticulous and careful effort to develop a State Department that is going to be able to deliver results for the American people.

The bottom line is this, we live in an era in which our foreign policy has to be driven by the national interest, what is good for America, what makes us stronger, more prosperous, or safer, that is it, that is our foreign policy. And everything we do, foreign aid, diplomacy, trade deals, arms sales, all of it has to be driven by that consideration. What the answer to that question is, is different in different countries and in different parts of the world.

They just are, that is the way foreign policy has always been, that is the way it needs to be again if it is going to be successful. And that is what we are committed to delivering, and hopefully being able to work with you. We will provide you, we have received all of the input from various members of this committee on both sides of the aisle, we are almost done with our comment period.

We will have our final proposed reorganization that will be available to you in a congressional notification at that point, an official notification, not the preliminary. And then we can continue to work from there. And if in fact you are going to undertake the work of authorizing the State Department, I think that would be phenomenal, we would welcome that, and the opportunity to work with you to create these structures in a permanent and enduring way. Thank you.

Chairman MAST. Thank you again, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MAST. The members of the Committee may have some additional questions for the Secretary, and we ask that you respond to these in writing.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

Chairman MAST. Pursuant to Committee rules, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and comments——

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

Chairman MAST. For the record subject to length limitations. Without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:07 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

Chairman Brian Mast

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Brian J. Mast (R-FL), Chairman

May 14, 2025

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held at 10:00 a.m. in room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/.

DATE:	Wednesday, May 21, 2025
TIME:	10:00 a.m.
LOCATION:	2172 RHOB
SUBJECT:	FY26 State Department Posture: Protecting American Interests
WITNESSES:	The Honorable Marco Rubio Secretary of State U.S. Department of State

*NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

By Direction of the Chair

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202 -226-8467 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* **Date** *May 21, 2025* **Room** *2172 RHOB*

Starting Time *10:00* **Ending Time** *13:07*

Recesses ____ (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Mast, Rep. McCaul

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ■
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ■

Electronically Recorded (taped) ■
Stenographic Record ■

TITLE OF HEARING:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ■ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Attached

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *13:07*

Meg Wagner
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

Committee on Foreign Affairs
119th Congress

ATTENDANCE

Meeting on: FY26 State Department Posture: Protecting American Interests
Date: May 21, 2025

Representative	Present	Absent	Representative	Present	Absent
Chairman Mast	X		RM Meeks	X	
Rep. McCaul	X		Rep. Sherman	X	
Rep. Smith	X		Rep. Connolly		
Rep. Wilson	X		Rep. Keating	X	
Rep. Perry	X		Rep. Bera	X	
Rep. Issa	X		Rep. Castro	X	
Rep. Burchett	X		Rep. Titus	X	
Rep. Green		X	Rep. Lieu	X	
Rep. Barr	X		Rep. Jacobs	X	
Rep. Jackson	X		Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick	X	
Rep. Kim	X		Rep. Stanton	X	
Rep. Salazar	X		Rep. Moskowitz	X	
Rep. Huizenga	X		Rep. Jackson	X	
Rep. Radewagen		X	Rep. Kamlager-Dove	X	
Rep. Davidson	X		Rep. Costa	X	
Rep. Baird	X		Rep. Amo	X	
Rep. Kean	X		Rep. Mfume	X	
Rep. Lawler	X		Rep. Jayapal	X	
Rep. Mills	X		Rep. Latimer	X	
Rep. McCormick	X		Rep. Olszewski	X	
Rep. Self	X		Rep. Johnson	X	
Rep. Zinke	X		Rep. McBride	X	
Rep. Moylan	X		Rep. Schneider	X	
Rep. Luna	X		Rep. Dean	X	
Rep. Shreve	X				
Rep. Biggs	X				
Rep. Baumgartner		X			
Rep. Mackenzie	X				

Statement for the Record
House Foreign Affairs Committee
FY26 State Department Posture: Protecting American Interests
May 21, 2025
Congressman Michael Baumgartner

Mr. Chairman, thank you. Secretary Rubio, welcome.

This hearing comes at a moment of real consequence for American foreign policy. Our rivals are on the move—Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are leveraging every tool of power—conventional, asymmetric, economic, and informational—to undermine the United States and reshape the international order to their advantage.

The question before us is not whether we will compete—it is how we will compete, and how fast we can deliver.

So today, I want to focus on speed, scale, and strategic alignment.

First, on arms sales: I hear regularly from allies and industry that the U.S. Foreign Military Sales process is too slow, too fragmented, and too unpredictable. In an era of great power competition, delay is denial—and bureaucratic inertia is a liability.

Second, on the State Department reorganization: this is an opportunity to modernize how we deliver diplomacy and development. That includes building a more expeditionary foreign service—one that operates forward, not just from capital cities. But reorganization cannot succeed without real cultural change—and a Congress that understands where law can help, and where it may be pushing on a string.

And as we talk about speed and credibility, we cannot ignore the backlog in the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program—particularly at the Chief of Mission stage.

Thousands of Afghan allies who risked their lives alongside U.S. forces are still waiting, often for years, without answers. This isn't just a humanitarian issue—it's a national security credibility issue. If we want to build trusted partnerships in future conflicts, we must demonstrate that America keeps its promises. This budget needs to do more than sustain the program—it needs to fix it.

Third, I want to commend the effort to realign USAID under State, ensuring our foreign assistance efforts are integrated with our diplomatic strategy. But

absorption is not achievement. The success of this transition depends on preserving USAID's field-based expertise and making sure the Department has the resources and capability to deliver.

Fourth, we must not neglect the soft power tools that allow us to contest the information space. As our adversaries flood the globe with disinformation, tools like Middle East Broadcasting Network and Voice of America matter. But they must be effective, accountable, and aligned with the strategic mission.

Finally, I want to understand how this budget and this reorganization align with our competitive strategy globally—because when strategic partners like Colombia pivot toward China's Belt and Road, it signals a credibility gap. That's a gap we can't afford.

Secretary Rubio, I'm grateful for your willingness to take on this transformation. But Congress must be a partner in this work—not an afterthought.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. Agency for International Development

Toayoa Aldridge
Acting Deputy Inspector General
performing the duties of the
Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Written Statement for U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of State

May 20, 2025

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

Thank you for your request to provide a written statement for the subcommittee's hearing on the State Department's Fiscal Year 2026 budget request. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views on the challenges related to the planned realignment and restructuring of U.S.-funded foreign assistance. As an independent oversight agency, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) does not set or direct policy, but our work is designed to inform those who do. We appreciate the subcommittee's historic and ongoing support of our work.

Independent Oversight Role of USAID OIG

Congress created USAID OIG in 1980. For 44 years, USAID OIG has been the only office of inspector general in the Federal government whose sole mission is to oversee U.S.-funded humanitarian and development assistance implemented abroad. Through our dedicated law enforcement professionals, auditors, inspectors, evaluators, and specialized support staff, our experience providing oversight in crisis zones, from South Sudan to Haiti to Ukraine, enables us to offer early warning fraud indicators, lessons learned, and key considerations to Federal agencies designing and implementing new programming overseas.[1]

With an annual budget of less than a quarter of 1 percent of foreign assistance spending, USAID OIG continues to hold bad actors accountable, audit and recover billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars, and generate material improvements to foreign assistance programs and operations. As

[1] For example, as USAID and the Department of State increased humanitarian assistance funding to Gaza last year, we sent an advisory to Congress and the administration that identified challenges in monitoring the aid, vetting recipients for terrorist ties, and overseeing funds administered through United Nations (UN) agencies.

A. Need for New and Comprehensive Standard Award Provisions to Ensure Accountability Over Foreign Assistance Awards

Key to ensuring accountability and oversight of taxpayer-funded foreign assistance is the existence of standard award provisions that U.S.-funded awardees are required to follow. USAID established the extensive Automated Directives System (ADS) to govern all aspects of operational policy and standard award provisions, including pre-award, post-award, and audit requirements. The ADS contained hundreds of chapters dedicated to foreign assistance operations and program management, compared to the Department of State's much leaner provisions. Such ADS provisions were critical for addressing unique considerations and complications posed by different types of implementers (NGOs, contractors, international organizations) and contained useful pre-award certifications designed to identify material risks posed by prospective awardees. These included required certifications concerning whether an NGO seeking U.S. funds had engaged with designated terrorist organizations, required reporting of counter-fraud and compliance measures, and vetting of staff for past participation in terrorist organizations in regions such as Gaza, Lebanon, and Yemen.

The ADS clauses, which in many cases were prompted by USAID OIG recommendations and actual events that jeopardized foreign assistance, also leaned into aggressive mandatory disclosure requirements by implementers, including direct reporting of fraud allegations to USAID OIG at the subawardee level. As the Department of State takes over management of these awards, it will be essential to establish similarly robust standard award provisions, particularly those promoting accountability and oversight. Our suggestions on these clauses and other efforts to expand accountability in foreign assistance are addressed in this memorandum.

B. Holding Implementers Accountable and Recovering Questioned Costs

At the time of this writing, USAID OIG has 320 open recommendations from its audits, inspections, and evaluations of USAID programs and operations. This includes over $54 million in questioned costs that are pending final evaluation by a USAID contracting or agreement officer for recovery back to the U.S. government. Either USAID and/or the Department of State should continue examining these costs and seek remedy for costs determined to be noncompliant with regulations.

Relatedly, the operational dissolution of USAID has included the reduction of personnel in its Suspension and Debarment Office. This has left numerous matters in a pending, unresolved status and has adversely impacted USAID's capability to effectively process new USAID OIG referrals of individuals and entities for government-wide exclusions. USAID OIG refers bad actors for exclusion based upon evidence of fraud, corruption, or diversion to terrorist organizations. Notably, USAID OIG had to refer its unprecedented investigation into the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)—identifying in March numerous individuals associated with Hamas and the October 7 terrorist attacks in Israel—to a different agency for suspension and debarment consideration in order to prevent their recirculation through other U.S.-funded organizations. No action has been taken to date by that agency.

property, such as mobile health clinics, valued at $10 million. Delays in contract and grant closeouts may result in lapses in deobligation, unresolved questioned costs, and contractor claims for which no responsible authority is clearly defined, exposing the U.S. government to protracted legal challenges and financial risks.

Similarly, the expedited drawdown of USAID's overseas presence means early termination of leases for work and living space for Foreign Service Officers and other staff. Additionally, if vehicles and other U.S. government property overseas and domestically, like furniture and IT equipment, are not properly transferred to an approved entity, they will need to be sold at auction, typically returning only cents on the dollar. For example, in April, USAID announced that laid-off staff (nearly 4,000 U.S. direct hires) should keep all government-furnished electronic devices currently in their possession—such as laptops and iPhones—"for convenience." Measures should be in place to ensure and validate that this equipment is appropriately wiped of any sensitive data and not compromised by malign parties.

E. Ensuring Integrity of Information Technology Systems as Data Is Migrated From USAID to the Department of State

Management of existing awards also may be impacted by loss or corruption of data that could occur during the merger. USAID uses systems such as the Global Acquisition and Assistance System, Agency Secure Image and Storage Tracking System, and Phoenix for contract management and payment. The transfer of these systems, as well as personnel and financial systems, to the Department of State must account for data migration risks such as loss or corruption of data. Compromised data risks duplicative, erroneous, or missed payments to awardees.

During any migration and integration process, sensitive data related to the administration of U.S. foreign assistance containing classified or personally identifiable information is vulnerable to unauthorized access, leaks, or breaches undermining system confidentiality and integrity. Data breaches may also result in violations of privacy laws. Just this month, we alerted USAID to concerns regarding access to restricted information technology areas at two missions amid the winding down of USAID operations.

Similarly, to ensure system integrity and continuity of operations, USAID's datacenter facilities, network communications, corporate applications, and use of the usaid.gov domain are essential for securely accessing the Agency's IT resources, which are key to fulfilling ongoing responsibilities. Disruptions or failures during system migration or impacting integration processes could materially impair ongoing operations of systems and services threatening programming that is transferred to State. Further, interruptions to USAID applications and data would also negatively impact USAID OIG's active and prospective criminal investigations and ability to advance high-profile ongoing cases.

Finally, migration of USAID systems into the Department of State presents unique compliance requirements, system integration challenges, and the potential exposure of sensitive data. Processes should also ensure that data sharing, system access, security controls, and data retention activities comply with Federal law and guidance including the Federal Information

programming to the Department of State should be accompanied by policies that establish rigorous vetting of award applicants, increased scrutiny of direct and indirect costs, strong internal oversight, and monitoring directly by Department of State officials or by third-party monitors in nonpermissive areas inaccessible to U.S. personnel.

B. Oversight of Awards to UN and Other Public International Organizations

Any funding channeled through public international organizations, including UN agencies, will require specific and nuanced oversight. For over a decade, USAID OIG has been the primary entity conducting oversight over U.S.-funded foreign assistance implemented by UN agencies, and we have repeatedly worked to publicly identify the challenges to transparency and accountability in the UN system. Our forward-leaning approach has led to various memoranda of understanding with multilateral and bilateral oversight entities aimed at, among other things, ensuring that U.S. investigators can obtain the information they need from UN agencies to assess allegations of misconduct involving U.S.-funds. Such creative solutions to the unique oversight challenges presented by cross-border investigations involving UN agencies are the result of our deep expertise and established relationships with international partners. Retaining such knowledge, access and cooperation is vital to continuing to globally pursue criminals who defraud or corrupt foreign assistance.

C. Importance of Third-Party Monitoring

USAID has long employed third-party monitoring as one of the mechanisms to supplement the Agency's efforts to ensure that projects and activities meet their objectives. However, many, if not all, of USAID's third-party monitoring contracts were terminated following the foreign assistance review. Third-party monitors are frequently used in overseas regions where U.S. officials are unable to safely travel to conduct site visits, such as eastern Ukraine and Gaza. They are also used to ensure that implementers meet applicable award requirements; have effective internal controls in place; and are not compromised by fraud, waste, and abuse. For example, following the recent termination of USAID's third-party monitoring mechanism in Ukraine, USAID cannot verify or monitor the delivery, installation, or use of products, purchases, or services rendered. Additionally, USAID terminated the contractor overseeing U.S. direct budget assistance and the "Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration" loans to the Ukrainian government through the World Bank's PEACE fund. Taxpayers would be well-served by having third-party monitoring mechanisms in place ahead of the transfer of awards to prevent gaps in vital oversight of programs executed in nonpermissive environments.

Conclusion

As the United States undertakes a historic realignment and reorganization of its foreign assistance architecture and programs, USAID OIG's dedicated workforce remains devoted to ensuring oversight and accountability over U.S.-funded assistance. Through our ongoing investigations, audits, and other specialized work, we remain committed to conducting the independent oversight that the American people rely on and deserve.

Trump's Ukraine policy left me no choice but to resign

freep.com/story/opinion/contributors/2025/05/16/trump-ukraine-policy-russia-ambassador-resign/83648993007

Bridget Brink

COMMENTARY

Op-ed contributor

I just came home to Michigan from three years in the toughest job of my life — serving as the American Ambassador to Ukraine — supporting our democratic ally against brutal, unprovoked aggression by Russia.

I have proudly served five presidents — Republicans and Democrats — to make sure the United States is the strongest, greatest country that the world has ever known.

I respect the president's right and responsibility to determine U.S. foreign policy — with proper checks and balances by U.S. Congress. It is the role of America's Foreign Service to execute that policy. Unfortunately, the policy since the beginning of the Trump administration has been to put pressure on the victim, Ukraine, rather than on the aggressor, Russia.

As such, I could no longer in good faith carry out the administration's policy and felt it was my duty to step down. After nearly three decades serving our country, I resigned as our ambassador to Ukraine.

I cannot stand by while a country is invaded, a democracy bombarded, and children killed with impunity. I believe that the only way to secure U.S. interests is to stand up for democracies and to stand against autocrats. Peace at any price is not peace at all — it is appeasement. And history has taught us time and again that appeasement does not lead to safety, security or prosperity. It leads to more war and suffering.

'Pure evil'

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, it has done what can only be described as pure evil: killed thousands of civilians, including 700 children, with missiles and drones that hit their homes and apartments in the dead of night.

It has committed over 150,000 war crimes, abducted 20,000 children from their families, and forced millions of men, women and children to flee into Europe and elsewhere.

For three years I heard the stories, saw the brutality, and felt the pain of families whose sons and daughters were killed and wounded by Russian missiles and drones that hit playgrounds, churches and schools. Over a career spent in conflict zones, I've seen mass

atrocities and wanton destruction first-hand but we have never seen violence so systematic, so widespread and so horrifying in Europe since World War II.

What we do matters

Why does Russia's invasion of Ukraine matter to the United States?

It matters because how we handle this war will speak volumes to our friends as well as our foes. If we allow Putin to redraw borders by force, he won't stop with Ukraine. Taken at his word, Putin's ambition is to resurrect an imperial past — and he can't do that without threatening the security of our NATO allies.

And if Putin succeeds, it sends signals to China that will undermine the security balance in Asia and throughout the world. That will have profound implications for America's safety, security, and prosperity.

Europe is our largest trading partner, with a $1.6 trillion dollar relationship that fuels 16 million jobs on both continents, including right here in Michigan. Maintaining 80 years of peace that came out of the devastation of World War II — and the economic growth, trade, and real jobs that flow from it — is what is at stake for us in Russia's war in Ukraine.

But Russia's war is about more than foreign policy or economics. It's about who we are.

The U.S. must lead the free world

My grandfather, who grew up in Charlotte, Michigan, proudly served our nation as a soldier in World War II while my grandmother supported their only child by renting out rooms in their home in Lansing. My grandparents did not see each other for three year and my mom didn't know her own dad when he came home, but they understood doing what was right.

The America I love, the one our grandparents served, would never stand by and let such horrors happen.

Or give up helping our friends. Or appease the aggressor.

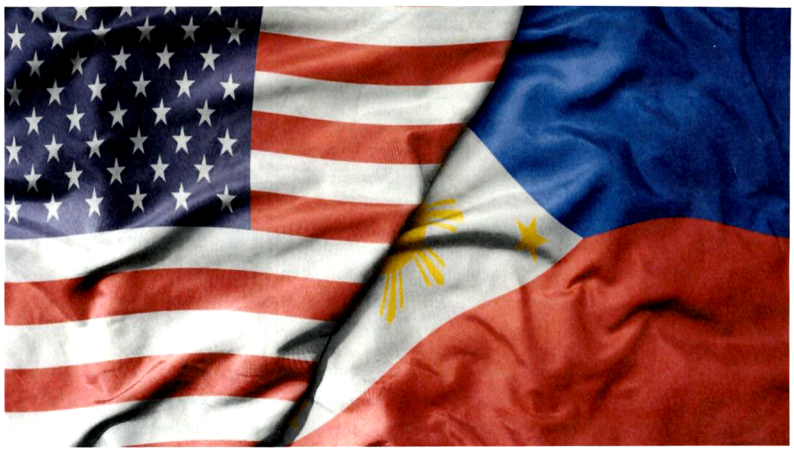
We must hold fast to who we are — a just, generous, and hard-working people, blessed with a democratic and accountable government, the largest free market economy in the world, and the most powerful military in human history. We must show leadership in the face of aggression, not weakness or complicity. When America does not lead the free world, what is at risk is our own success as a nation.

This is the America I love, and was proud to serve every day.

I may no longer be an American diplomat, but I will never stop believing in the need for American leadership to secure our own future and offer the beacon of hope and possibility for every Michigander, every American and so many others around the world.

Bridget Brink, a native of Grand Rapids, resigned as the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine in April after nearly three decades in the U.S. Foreign Service.

Submit a letter to the editor at freep.com/letters, and we may publish it online and in print.



Topic: Philippines
Tags: Alliances, China, Great Power Competition, Indo-Pacific, Philippines, and Rare Earth Minerals

Why the Philippines Matter to America

August 23, 2023 | By: Marco Rubio

SHARE:

"Another day, another obscure controversy on the other side of the world." This is how many Americans view international politics, and who can blame them? Prices are up nearly 16 percent since President Joe Biden took office. For the average household, this means finding an extra $900 every month to maintain their standard of living. And that is to say nothing of the drugs, suicide, and violent crime invading countless communities.

currently harassing Filipinos in their own territory to bully them into accepting Beijing's decree, rather than international law.

This year, the Philippines' president appointed a new military chief who pledged to protect the nation's sovereignty "at all costs." It's an understandable reaction to what many Filipinos view as an existential threat. But Americans should also be concerned with Chinese aggression in the South China Sea.

Simply put, we don't want a totalitarian regime that hates the United States to gain exclusive access to huge stores of rare earth minerals, energy, seafood, and trade in Asia. In addition, we don't want to lose access to the Philippines, which plays a crucial role in the international economy. These islands host the world's largest digital signal processing chips factory. They are also among the world's greatest producers of cobalt and nickel, critical minerals for twenty-first-century supply chains. Our ability to maintain great power status would be severely diminished were they to fall under communist control.

Thankfully, there is no need for the Philippines to stand against China alone. Other Indo-Pacific nations also suffer from Beijing's bullying, and if they band together, the Communist Party may become convinced that the costs of its power grab exceed its potential benefits. Chinese strategists have favored a strategy of "letting barbarians subdue other barbarians" for centuries. They are less eager to fight a united front.

A united front in the Indo-Pacific, however, will not coalesce without firm U.S. support. We should provide that support, not because we want to get mixed up in far-flung controversies, but because deterring Beijing is the best way to keep this far-flung controversy from impacting our way of life.

If there is even a hint that the United States will not honor its security commitments to the Philippines or other treaty allies in Asia, it will encourage Beijing to engage in more hostilities to test our resolve. Americans have enough to worry about already. Adding the breakdown of the post-World War II order in Asia to their plates would mean an awful lot to swallow.

Marco Rubio is the senior U.S. senator from Florida. He is also the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Image: Shutterstock.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA

RONDELI FOUNDATION

Increasing Chinese Influence in Georgia under the Georgian Dream

(May 2025)

As Georgia's relations with the West deteriorate, the Georgian Dream is strengthening its alliances with authoritarian regimes hostile to the United States, such as China. The Georgia-China strategic partnership agreement, signed in 2023, appears to be a turning point in the relationship between the two countries, significantly deepening their cooperation.[1] At the narrative level, China offers political support to the ruling Georgian Dream party by praising its policies of "peace, stability, and development", while Georgian officials increasingly portray China as a strong partner and an alternative to the West.

At the practical level, cooperation has accelerated following the visa-free agreement, with both countries expanding direct flights, resulting in a noticeable rise in Chinese tourist arrivals and an increase in Chinese business activity in Georgia; Georgia has also actively adopted Chinese surveillance technology; Furthermore, the central banks of both countries are actively working to strengthen ties, particularly in monetary policy collaboration, and Chinese payment systems may potentially enter the Georgian market. Most recently, the Georgian Dream announced its plans to introduce the Chinese language into the school curriculum.

I. Increased Economic Relations

In 2013-2024, Georgia's economic relations with China increased significantly:

- Chinese citizens registered 1,893 companies in Georgia, 4 times more than it was before 2013. In 2024, a record 291 new Chinese companies were registered.
- FDI from China increased 5 times compared to 2003 - 2012 and amounted to 600 mln USD. A the same time, FDI peaked in 2014 and has declined since.
- Annual trade turnover with China increased 3 times since 2012 and amounted to 2 bln USD. Ir 2024, China was Georgia's fourth-largest trading partner, accounting for 8.2% of Georgia's overall trade.
- In 2024, a bilateral visa exemption agreement was signed between the Government of Georgia and the Government of China. As a result, visits to Georgia from China increased by 83% in 2024, marking the highest annual growth rate among all countries. The number of visit from China reached 88.6 thousand. There has also been a notable increase in flights from Chinese airlines to Georgia.
- All large scale infrastructure projects in Georgia are being implemented by Chinese companies, including state-owned enterprises.

[1] Civil.ge, *Georgia and China Issue Joint Statement on Strategic Partnership*, July 31, 2023, available here.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA

RONDELI FOUNDATION

II. Cooperation with Chinese Companies that Pose National Security Risk to the United States

Perhaps most alarming is the fact that several Chinese companies operating in Georgia have faced significant scrutiny and restrictions from U.S. authorities due to national security concerns and alleged ties to the Chinese military:

China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC)

China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC), which was awarded the right to build the Anaklia Port by the Georgian Dream,[2] can be found in the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Non-SDN Chinese Military-Industrial Complex Companies List.[3] The Department of Treasury also lists the company in the Non-SDN CMIC List.

The Department of Defense has identified CCCC as a 'Chinese military company' operating directly or indirectly in the United States, in accordance with the statutory requirement of Section 1260H of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated: "*CCCC and its subsidiaries have engaged in corruption, predatory financing, environmental destruction, and other abuses across the world... The PRC must not be allowed to use CCCC and other state-owned enterprises as weapons to impose an expansionist agenda*".[4]

China Railway 23rd Bureau Group

China Railway 23rd Bureau Group is engaged in building the North-South Highway (the main highway that runs through Georgia). According to the World Bank, it is a subsidiary of China Railway Construction Corporation Ltd. (CRCC).[5] China Railway Construction Corporation Limited is included in the U.S. Treasury's NS-CMIC List, subjecting it to investment prohibitions.[6]

In 2020, the United States Department of Defense listed CRCC as a Chinese military company under Section 1260H, indicating its association with China's military-industrial complex.[7]

Huawei

Huawei, a company that has been subjected to multiple sanctions from the United States over the past 5 years, is actively present in Georgia. As of 2020, Georgian Members of Parliament were using 200 Huawei tablets. In 2017, Liang Dongbo, the General Manager of Huawei Tbilisi, stated that up to 75% of the communication and mobile networks in the Georgian market had been built by Huawei.[8]

---

[2] TI Georgia, *The Anaklia port to be built by a Chinese company with suspicious reputation*, June 5, 2024, available here.
[3] Office of Foreign Asset Control, *SDN List entry for China Communications Construction Group (Limited)*, available here.
[4] Civil.ge, *Secretary Mike Pompeo Reaffirms Strategic Partnership in Meeting PM Bakhtadze*, June 12, 2019, available here.
[5] World Bank, *World Bank Group Debars China Railway Construction Corporation Ltd. and two subsidiaries*, June 5, 2019, available here.
[6] Office of Foreign Asset Control, *SDN List entry for China Railway Construction Corporation Limited*, available here.
[7] Office of Foreign Asset Control, *Introduction of Non-SDN Chinese Military-Industrial Complex Companies List*, June 3, 2021, available here.
[8] Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, *US Reduces Cooperation with Georgian Companies that Use HUAWEI Technologies*, September 14, 2020, available here.

The Georgian Dream party has stated that it is eager to explore potential partnerships with the company.[9]

III. Chinese Connections of Georgian Dream founder Bidzina Ivanishvili

It just so happens that Bidzina Ivanishvili, founder of the Georgian Dream and Georgia's shadow ruler, as well as his closest business associate (Ivane Chkhartishvili) and highest level party officials (former Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili) have had personal business ties with another problematic Chinese company **CEFC China Energy**.[10]

CEFC China Energy owns 75% of the Poti Free Industrial Zone LLC. The operation of the Industrial Zone largely depends on the cargo turnover of the biggest sea port of Georgia - Poti Port. Bidzina Ivanishvili and his business associate Ivane Chkhartishvili own 50% of a company that manages the 75% share owned by CEFC China Energy.

In 2017, one of the heads of CEFC, Patrick Ho, was arrested in New York. He was charged with bribing officials in African countries to promote the interests of the Chinese company. CEFC was also accused of trading in weapons and evading sanctions imposed on Iran. At the time when CEFC was already involved in international corruption scandals, in February 2018, Georgia's former Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili was appointed an advisor to the Supervisory Board of the company.

Ivane Chkhartishvili, who is the executive director of the Georgia-China Economic and Cultural Development Centre (founded in 2016), was involved in negotiations on CEFC's entry to Georgia. The Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Georgia-China Economic and Cultural Development Centre jointly founded the Georgia-China Friendship Association, electing Jianjun Zang, the executive director of CEFC China Energy, as its honorary president on 18 October 2016.

IV. Other Major Chinese Companies Operating in Georgia

The majority of the **top 10 Chinese companies in Georgia by turnover** are engaged in infrastructure projects such as building highways, roads, and bridges across the country. These include:

1. **Guizhou Highway Engineering Group Co**, Georgian branch (China: 9152000021441520K)
2. **Sinohydro LLC Corporation**, Georgian branch (China: 911100007109331046)
3. **China Railway 23rd Bureau Group Ltd**, Georgian branch (China: 91510100740338242L)
4. **China Railway Tunnel Group Co, Ltd**, Georgian branch (China: 91410300171075680N)
5. **Hunan Roads and Bridges Construction Group LLC**, Georgian branch (China: 91430000183763763N)
6. **China Geo-Engineering Corporation**, Georgian branch (China: 911100001000009805)
7. **Georgia branch of China Road and Bridge Corporation**, Georgian branch (China: 911100007109338178)
8. **China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd.**, Georgian branch (China: 911100007109351850)

The other companies in the top 10 are:

---

[9] Civic Idea, *The security risks carried by the Chinese tech frontrunner Huawei*, November 23, 2022, available here.
[10] TI Georgia, *Developments around Georgian ports: what is new?*, April 22, 2021, available here.

9. **JSC Hualing International Special Economic Zone** (Owner: Xiaojin Shao, 01092004214, EJ5293184)
10. **JSC BasisBank** (Georgian-based BasisBank has operated since 1993. In 2012, the Chinese Hualing Group purchased 90% of the bank's shares, later increasing its ownership to 92.3%).

Other big Chinese companies in Georgia:

- **China National Technical Import & Export Corporation**
- **China Nuclear Industry 23 Construction Co**, a branch (China: 130000100000296)
- **Eastern Power Corporation LTD**
- **Georgian Huashun International Industrial**, a branch (China: 916500002999347041)
- **Sanqi Construction Engineering Co**, (China: Ni Xiaowei, E11914301)

Some of these companies have been sanctioned by the World Bank or other countries, however not by the United States.

V. Law Enforcement Cooperation

Georgia and China are working to strengthen law enforcement cooperation. Georgian officials have held meetings with representatives of Chinese law enforcement agencies. During a meeting with Georgia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, Vakhtang Gomelauri, the Chinese Ambassador to Georgia, Zhou Qian, stated: "*Exchanges between law enforcement departments are an important part of China-Georgia cooperation, and China is willing to further strengthen pragmatic cooperation with Georgia in areas such as police exchanges and combating transnational crime.*"

VI. Chinese Surveillance Systems

It is also noteworthy that an estimated 70–80% of Georgia's state institutions are equipped with Chinese-made surveillance cameras. The majority of these cameras, operated under state control, are produced by two Chinese companies under international sanctions: **Hikvision** and **Dahua Technology.** Notably, Tbilisi City Hall uses Chinese-developed software, **HikCentral**, to manage and support its Hikvision surveillance systems.

In terms of procurement, the Central Election Commission of Georgia reportedly spent the most on this surveillance equipment, with expenditures totaling 1,709,212 GEL (app. 630,000 USD).

In October, the Chinese government donated X-ray inspection systems to Georgian customs free of charge. The equipment was provided by the Chinese company **Nuctech**. Notably, in 2020, the United States added Nuctech (**Tongfang NucTech Technology Ltd.**) to the Bureau of Industry and Security Entity List, citing national security concerns and thereby restricting exports to the company.

VII. 5G

In 2024, 5G was officially activated in Georgia; however, no public reports were released detailing the network's development or deployment progress. Nonetheless, during a speech highlighting China's projects and achievements in Georgia, the Chinese Ambassador to Georgia stated: "*2024 was a year of numerous significant achievements for Chinese enterprises in Georgia… Bids were won*

successively in the fields of wind energy, photovoltaic, and other new energy sectors. 5G equipment was comprehensively deployed in Georgia…"

VIII. Chinese Banks

In March, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the National Bank of Georgia and the People's Bank of China to expand bilateral cooperation. Under the memorandum, the two central banks agreed to collaborate on monetary policy and to exchange information and expertise in areas such as financial technologies, payment systems, and securities market development.

The agreement also includes plans to implement joint projects and promote the development of banking services between the two countries. A key focus will be the development and modernization of payment infrastructure, with special attention given to enhancing the interconnection of payment systems to enable faster, more efficient, and secure international transactions.

Earlier, in October, the Head of the Financial and Supervisory Technology Development Department at the National Bank of Georgia attended the Financial Street Forum 2024: Fintech Bridging the Digital Divide in China. During the event, the potential for future collaboration between the Chinese Alipay and the Georgian financial market was discussed, including plans to explore regional opportunities.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Ambassador to Georgia emphasized that deeper financial cooperation between the two countries could stimulate trade, investment, and the construction of large-scale projects. He also noted that such cooperation would help enhance the countries' ability to resist external financial risks and strengthen overall economic resilience.

IX. Recent Messaging

Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze has praised China as one of the "best examples of state modernization," emphasizing that China sets a positive example for other global powers. Pro-government figures have occasionally circulated the claim that China could assist Georgia in acting as a mediator for the restoration of its territorial integrity. The Chinese Ambassador also commented on this, stating that China is prepared to play an active role in maintaining peace and stability in the South Caucasus. However, regarding Georgia–Russia relations, he noted that any potential mediation would depend on whether both parties are willing to accept a third-party mediator.

The Chinese Ambassador to Georgia recently stated that China-Georgia relations are currently at their best period in history, adding that "*Georgia's trust in China and its reliance on China in various aspects are continuously increasing, which has created unprecedented opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in various fields.*" He also assured the Georgian side that China would share more experience on the country's governance and modernization.

In addition to the Anaklia port project, the Chinese side has expressed interest in developing a new airport in Vaziani, a site formerly used as a military base. According to the Ambassador, numerous Chinese companies have shown interest, and China will continue to monitor and support the project closely.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current procedure to approve contracts to transport already purchased assistance products, like ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), to the places that need them?

Answer:

For Title II funds, once a grant is signed to an implementing partner, the U.S. government solicits for ocean freight services to transport the RUTF from the manufacturing facility to where it is handed over to the implementing partner to program. Funding is obligated when the U.S. government signs the ocean freight contracts. USAID holds the ocean freight contracts and oversees the shipments from pick-up through delivery to the implementing partner. RUTF can take three months or more to arrive at its final destination after departing the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What changes are you making to ensure that delays in transportation contract approval do not occur?

Answer:

Solicitations for ocean freight will be released immediately following signature of the grants to implementing partners. I will work quickly to establish procedures to prioritize the approval of new contracts and grants necessary to enable the transport and delivery of commodities for life-saving emergency assistance.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current procedure to approve contracts to produce RUTF?

Answer:

The U.S. government has five-year Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) with two U.S. producers for Ready-to-Use Foods (RUFs), including RUTF. The BPAs allow USAID to pre-approve suppliers, allowing for efficient procurement. When a signed grant with an implementing partner requires Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), the USAID contracting officer issues solicitations for which the two RUTF suppliers can submit a bid. Purchase orders are then issued to the suppliers based on factors such as pricing and ability to meet delivery timelines for emergency programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the expected timeline to execute future contracts to produce RUTF?

Answer:

The U.S. government continues to purchase RUTF. Future procurements will take place through purchase orders under the existing Blanket Purchase Agreements with two U.S. RUTF suppliers.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current procedure to approve contracts to distribute RUTF and other emergency food products?

Answer:

RUTF is provided to an implementing partner, which delivers the commodity to therapeutic feeding clinics overseen by a recipient country's Ministry of Health or a humanitarian implementing partner. It is administered as an out-patient treatment program to children. Emergency food aid commodities are distributed directly by implementing partners or sub-grantees. Implementing partners determine a distribution plan targeting the most vulnerable and ensures delivery. All agreements currently require approval by the designated Senior Bureau Official.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current plan and expected timeline to create effective procedures to distribute RUTF to children around the world?

Answer:

I will continue to work with implementing partners to ensure the timely arrival and distribution of nutrition assistance, including Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food. With the upcoming transfer of USAID's lifesaving programming to the Department of State, I will establish procedures that enable nutrition assistance to reach the most vulnerable children with severe acute malnutrition, while remaining accountable to the U.S. taxpayer.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current procedure for reviewing contracts facing termination that distribute RUTF and other emergency food products?

Answer:

We are ensuring that life-saving emergency programs that have been approved through the foreign assistance review process pursuant to Executive Order 14169, Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid, have the appropriate contracts in place to support their implementation, including contracts for food and nutrition assistance. For example, the Blanket Purchase Agreements for USAID's two U.S. RUTF suppliers are currently active and the suppliers are expected to be awarded new purchase orders in June.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How much funding would the Department of State expect to need to meet the need for RUTF around the world in Fiscal Year 2026?

Answer:

The FY 2026 President's Budget Request for the International Humanitarian Assistance account will provide support for lifesaving assistance in FY 2026, including for the procurement of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food. In FY 2024, USAID obligated $1.1 billion for emergency nutrition assistance, supporting the procurement of RUTF alongside other lifesaving nutrition interventions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you support the allocation of humanitarian assistance to Armenia to support the needs of the 120,000 Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan?

Answer:

The United States provides more humanitarian support than the next ten countries combined, but we cannot do it alone. The administration is currently focused on establishing lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan that prevents future conflict. I remain committed to promoting freedom of religion or belief and advocating the protection of members of vulnerable minorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What measures is the United States taking to ensure Azerbaijan's good-faith participation in, and compliance with, peace talks with Armenia?

Answer:

We are engaging Azerbaijan through diplomatic channels to establish peace with Armenia. My team has outlined to Azerbaijan the tremendous benefits that would come from signing a peace deal, engaged both sides to overcome differences, and warned all sides against violence that the United States would find to be destructive and counterproductive.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is the United States prepared to impose consequences on Azerbaijan if it undermines and delays a peace agreement?

Answer:

My focus is on trying to establish a lasting peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia. I have stated that now is the time for Armenia and Azerbaijan to commit to peace, sign and ratify the treaty, and usher in a new era of prosperity for the people of the South Caucasus. My team has emphasized the tremendous benefits that would accrue to both sides, and the region, with signing a peace deal.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

I remain concerned about the growing threat of Iran's nuclear program. What information can you provide about the progress of negotiations with Iran on their nuclear program?

Answer:

The President has been absolutely clear that the United States will never allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Significant work remains to achieve a deal, and we have communicated clearly to Tehran that we need to make progress quickly. In the interim, we will continue to impose maximum pressure.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How can the Department claim to defend American workers from grossly unfair labor practices while failing to address the twin scourges of human trafficking and forced labor – international criminal behavior that leaves American workers unable to contribute to, or complete fairly in, global supply chains?

Answer:

Human trafficking, including for the purpose of forced labor, hurts American workers by allowing foreign adversaries to gain an unfair market advantage. I aim to use all Department tools, including reporting and sanctions, to hold traffickers to account. We will help prevent the importation of goods made with forced labor into the U.S. and level the playing field for American workers.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #14
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the State Department doing to support the continued work of the Australia, United Kingdom, United States Security Partnership (AUKUS)?

Answer:

The State Department leads management of our alliances and relationships with the United Kingdom and Australia. In close coordination with interagency partners, the Department leads AUKUS-related diplomatic efforts in bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral settings on issues such as arms exports, non-proliferation, and security assistance policy. The Department advances streamlined efforts to enable AUKUS cooperation, such as the establishment of an International Traffic in Arms Regulation exemption for enhanced military capability development and production.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative by Rep. Gabe Amo #15
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

With your recent actions to revoke visas, how can foreign students or workers feel confident in the status of their visas and how will this uncertainty harm the stability of our workforce and economic wellbeing?

Answer:

The Department routinely revokes visas to secure America's border and keep our communities safe and will continue to do so. Every prospective traveler to the United States undergoes interagency security vetting. When considering revocations, the Department looks at information that arises after the visa was issued, which may indicate a potential visa ineligibility under U.S. immigration law, including information that indicates an alien poses a threat to public safety or other situations where revocation is warranted.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Rep. Michael Baumgartner #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Should the U.S. adopt a differentiated arms transfer process, where our closest allies get a pre-cleared, time-bound fast lane for critical capabilities, rather than waiting in the same queue as countries with less strategic alignment?

Answer:

The Department of State coordinates with the Department of Defense to prioritize strategic arms transfers. I will ensure this process continues smoothly and in accordance with applicable law. Pursuant to the President's Executive Order of April 9, "Reforming Defense Sales to Improve Speed and Accountability," the Department of State is working with the Department of Defense to further streamline processes for sales of defense articles.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

One major source of FMS delays is technology release and foreign disclosure. Should the U.S. negotiate blanket pre-approvals for trusted allies to speed delivery—especially for systems we've already sold them before?

Answer:

The Department of State is working with the Department of Defense to implement the President's Executive order, "Reforming Defense Sales to Improve Speed and Accountability," which includes reforming the technology release and foreign disclosure process.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you support expanding joint production authorities for high-demand systems like artillery or air defense, particularly with allies facing frontline threats from Russia or China? What steps would you recommend Congress take to streamline the bottlenecks—especially around interagency approvals, technology release, and contracting timelines—so that the U.S. can deliver defense capabilities at the speed of relevance?

Answer:

I have directed the Department of State to work with the Department of Defense to broaden and deepen cooperation on a wide set of national security issues, including defense sales reform. Additionally, I seek to work productively with Congress to fix bottlenecks, improving the security capabilities of our allies, which in turn bolsters our defense industrial base.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program continues to face a severe bottleneck at the Chief of Mission stage, with thousands of applicants stuck in limbo for years. What specific funding or personnel requests are you making in the FY26 budget to address the COM backlog? And how will you ensure that those resources actually result in faster, more accountable processing—not just a bigger bureaucracy?

Answer:

We will continue to process Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) with existing resources. The Department is vigilant against threats that could jeopardize U.S. national security while supporting Afghans eligible under U.S. law for SIVs and has streamlined the multi-step application process where possible, consistent with U.S. law. In FY 2024, we issued more than 40,000 COM decisions, up from approximately 9,500 in FY 2021. As of May, the Department is issuing an average of 900 COM decisions weekly; the COM denial rate has averaged 70 percent since summer 2024.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question 5:

Last month, you announced a comprehensive reorganization plan for the State Department that would implement significant changes to organizational structure, personnel, and procedures by July 1 – which is just six weeks away.

Can you share an update on the steps that have been taken to date to implement this reorganization and what legislative authorities are you planning to seek from Congress?

Answer:

Planning for the Department of State reorganization to operate more efficiently and to better reflect the Administration's priorities is well underway. We plan to have implementation of the reorganization under way by July 1.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The State Department's reorganization is a rare opportunity to rethink how we deliver diplomacy and development — not just from Washington or capital cities, but out in the field where the challenges are most acute. The reorganization is an opportunity to develop a more expeditionary foreign service — one that's agile, field-forward, and able to operate in high-risk environments like conflict zones, disaster areas, or regions without strong state institutions. What do you see as the biggest barriers to building that kind of forward-deployed capability — particularly as the State Department takes on many of USAID's field-based missions? And where do you think the real leverage lies: in changing laws and authorities, or in shifting culture, incentives, and career paths?

Answer:

The Department's reorganization will ensure that operations are maximally efficient and fully aligned with and support core U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives. A nimbler and more proactive Department will be better able to advance the national interest; moreover, our embassies and diplomats in the field will be newly empowered to advance America's interests abroad.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Rep. Congressman Michael Baumgartner #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

As a former Senator, now Secretary, what's your advice to Congress on how we can be most helpful — where legislation is needed to unlock capability, and where we risk pushing on a string if the real problem is cultural inertia?

Answer:

As Secretary and a former Senator, I would advise that both branches of government work together to focus legislative efforts on areas where clear statutory authority or funding may be required to enable critical capabilities, which could include in modernizing infrastructure, enhancing cybersecurity, or addressing emerging global challenges. At the same time, I would caution against over-legislating in areas where cultural inertia or institutional resistance may be the primary barriers, as these issues often require leadership, collaboration, and sustained engagement rather than mandates.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

I want to applaud your effort to realign American foreign assistance with our national security priorities and believe it was the right decision to move USAID under the State Department. However, as the Administration moves forward with this change, what steps are you taking to ensure the State Department has the capacity to absorb USAID, as well as maintains the necessary expertise and resources from USAID to be successful in this mission?

Answer:

Relevant bureaus will receive new positions in connection with the transition of programs from USAID, in addition to other programming that logically fall into various functional bureaus. These positions have been carefully targeted to ensure adequate expertise in humanitarian aid, crisis mitigation, and disaster response, and will be supplemented by expertise within the new Foreign Assistance and Humanitarian Affairs (F) office. These personnel will cross-train on a regular basis to ensure close coordination during an emergency response scenario.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question 9:

How do you envision the delivery of foreign assistance to meet US national security, diplomacy and development priorities under the newly reorganized State Dept?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department are calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. Centralizing capabilities and transitioning USAID's core life-saving and strategic aid programs to the State Department enables this administration to significantly enhance the efficiency, accountability, uniformity, and strategic impact of foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you believe Congress should revisit the authorizing statutes for public diplomacy institutions like MBN and Voice of America—or are you seeking to achieve your policy goals within existing law and appropriations? If reforms are needed, how do you plan to involve Congress in shaping them?

Answer:

We are committed to ensuring that under this Administration, the United States has a full range of public diplomacy resources and tools available to engage audiences abroad and tell America's story through the robust capabilities across the R family, regional PD offices, and partners across the Department. In doing so, the Department plans to utilize existing law and appropriations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

As we confront growing propaganda efforts from Russia, China, and Iran, how does your budget reflect the strategic value of soft power tools like MBN and VOA in contested information environments—and what metrics are you using to evaluate their continued relevance or reform?

Answer:

We remain clear-eyed about the threats China, Russia, Iran, and other foreign adversaries pose to U.S. interests and commit to countering those threats in a cost-effective way with robust capabilities across the R family, regional PD offices, and partners across State. Just as our adversaries continue to adapt, the U.S. government and the Department must make data-informed decisions to adapt to a modern information environment.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In March, the U.S. Intelligence Community made it plain: America's adversaries-Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea-are not just challenging us militarily. They are working in tandem to erode U.S. influence in trade, finance, and diplomacy, while promoting authoritarian alternatives to the rules-based international system. At the same time, we're seeing something else: hemispheric allies drifting. Just weeks after the Administration announced sweeping cuts to international assistance, Colombia-a longstanding U.S. partner-announced it would join China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Given these cuts, how do you intend to maintain American influence-not just through security guarantees, but through the full spectrum of tools: economic, diplomatic, development, and informational? What's your strategy to prevent this kind of strategic drift?

Answer:

Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. The President and I agree that the United States is no longer going to blindly dole out money without a sufficient return for the American people and this outsized burden must not continue to fall to the American taxpayers. It is long overdue for other donors to contribute to life-

saving assistance and other shared, global challenges. I will continue to make this clear in my bilateral and multilateral engagements.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Michael Baumgartner #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What specific conversations are you having with allies like Colombia, and others considering BRI partnerships, to reassure them that America is still the partner of choice-not just in words, but in investment, infrastructure, and long-term engagement?

Answer:

We have directly told Colombia's President Petro that joining China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was disappointing and unlikely to alleviate Colombia's trade deficit with China. We highlighted how Beijing uses the BRI to advance its political agenda through non-transparent and unfair lending, enabling corruption and unsustainable debt. We encourage countries to limit their exposure to China and will continue to offer credible alternatives that leverage public and private financing in priority areas that make our hemisphere safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In your review of foreign assistance programs, what specific criteria did you use to account the impact of cuts on things like mass migration, instability in strategic regions of the world, and the threat of disease?

Answer:

The Department of State's review process involved rigorous line-by-line review by Senior Bureau Officials in relevant bureaus, the Office of Foreign Assistance, and senior policy staff. At USAID, a task force of senior policy advisors, in consultation with the Office of Foreign Assistance at State, conducted a substantive, individualized evaluation of USAID programs. Foreign assistance awards were reviewed to ensure that they reflected the President's foreign policy priorities, advanced American interests, and reflected responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. We have refocused our foreign aid portfolio on programs that support partners, provide critical

life-saving aid, and which advance U.S. diplomatic, security, and economic interests.

If an award did not align with the national and foreign policy interests of the United States, the award was terminated.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Given that 67% of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide originate from countries with food crises, and more than 80% of refugees are hosted in low and middle-income countries, have you evaluated that cuts to aid programs could drive more people to try to migrate to the United States?

Answer:

We continue to invest in effective and proven programs that advance shared global goals. Those priorities are reflected in the life-saving aid programs that remain ongoing and are being transitioned to the State Department by July 1.

Reviewing and realigning U.S. foreign assistance was never about ending foreign aid but rather reorienting how we deliver aid to maximize impact, adopt a returns-oriented mindset, and center American strategic interests. The Administration will significantly enhance the efficiency and impact of foreign assistance and ensure our aid reaches those in need.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What plan do you have in place to address the serious concerns in the OIG reports to ensure critical foreign assistance programs can continue?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department will ensure that we perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The State Department has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this oversight and is separately hiring for critical capacities in the delivery of foreign assistance as part of the transition of programs from USAID to the Department. We believe these highly complementary efforts will enable the Department to be able to deliver and oversee aid more efficiently and strategically.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How does both the proposed state reorganization staffing plan and firing of 100% of USAID foreign service officer and foreign national staff square with the idea that the U.S. will move foreign aid to a regional/embassy level?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department will ensure we perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The State Department has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this oversight and is separately hiring for critical capacities in the delivery of foreign assistance as part of the transition of programs from USAID to the Department. We believe these highly complementary efforts will enable the Department to be able to deliver and oversee aid more efficiently and strategically.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the staffing plan to ensure foreign assistance is effectively managed at regional and embassy levels?

Answer:

The Department is currently recruiting to fill positions—U.S. direct hire and locally employed staff, overseas and domestic—to support the transition of USAID foreign assistance programs to the Department. We anticipate the Department will hire a number of former USAID employees. We anticipate most of those new employees will be on-board on or before July 1, with locally employed staff on-board before August 15.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can the Department of State provide evidence to justify the claim that all lifesaving programs have turned back on?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of ongoing foreign assistance programs, including life-saving activities through PEPFAR programs. The President's budget request includes $4 billion for disaster relief and other humanitarian assistance at the President's discretion, as well as funding for PEPFAR for current beneficiaries.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria did the Department use to determine which programs qualified as lifesaving?

Answer:

Life-saving humanitarian assistance applies to core life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance, as well as supplies and reasonable administrative costs as necessary to deliver such assistance.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria was used to evaluate the continuation or termination of Gavi funding?

Answer:

As noted in my previous response, the core general contribution agreement to Gavi remains active, and the U.S. government continues to participate in governance and oversight. The Gavi COVAX agreement was terminated.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Why did the Administration decide to terminate Gavi funding?

Answer:

Currently, the core general contribution agreement to Gavi remains active, and the U.S. government continues to participate in governance and oversight. The Gavi COVAX agreement was terminated.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will the Administration restart lifesaving Gavi funding?

Answer:

As noted in my previous response, the core general contribution agreement to Gavi remains active, and the U.S. government continues to participate in governance and oversight. The Gavi COVAX agreement was terminated.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Given that these proven, effective sustainability structures and mandatory country co-financing are models for what strategic U.S. investment in global health security should be, how can we continue support for global immunization programs like Gavi that stop diseases overseas and protect Americans here at home?

Answer:

I agree. Health investments have a more responsible and resilient path forward when countries co-invest in their own health needs as a condition for receiving financing from multi-donor funds. For these reasons, Gavi, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), and the Pandemic Fund have co-financing requirements for recipient governments.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria was used to evaluate the continuation or termination of Neglected Tropical Disease funding?

Answer:

As part of the review of USAID health programs, programs focused on neglected tropical diseases were determined to not be lifesaving.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Why did the Administration decide to terminate Neglected Tropical Disease funding?

Answer:

The Administration is continuing certain lifesaving assistance. As part of the review of USAID health programs, programs focused on neglected tropical diseases were determined not to be lifesaving.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #14
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will the Administration restart lifesaving Neglected Tropical Disease funding?

Answer:

As I noted in my previous response, as part of the review of USAID health programs, programs focused on neglected tropical diseases were determined not to be lifesaving.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #15
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How has the Department of State arrived at the figure that 85% of PEPFAR is operational?

Answer:

In my testimony, I referenced an estimated 85 percent of beneficiaries who could be receiving lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission services, based on the full operational capacity of all active awards as of March 24.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #16
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What data does the Department of State have to support this?

Answer:

As noted in my previous response, there is an estimated 85 percent of beneficiaries who could be receiving lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission services, based on the full operational capacity of all active awards as of March 24.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #17
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you share Q2 PEPFAR data?

Answer:

Yes, I will share the Q2 data once it is received by headquarters and is finalized.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #18
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the correct figure of PEPFAR programs that are operational, and what is the correct percentage of HIV patients who are receiving ARV under PEPFAR?

Answer:

As I stated in my previous response, there is an estimated 85 percent of beneficiaries who could be receiving lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission services, based on the full operational capacity of all active awards as of March 24.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #19
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What percentage of TB programs have been terminated as a result of the foreign assistance review?

Answer:

U.S. government lifesaving tuberculosis programs continue across priority countries.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #20
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What percentage of TB funding has been cut that was appropriated for FY 2025?

Answer:

U.S. government life-saving tuberculosis programs continue across priority countries.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #21
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria did the Department use to determine whether to continue or terminate a TB program?

Answer:

As noted in my previous response, U.S. government life-saving tuberculosis programs continue across priority countries.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #22
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will the Department ensure gains in the fight against TB aren't lost by the termination of TB elimination programs?

Answer:

Through the support of the United States, significant progress has been made in the global tuberculosis response. The United States will continue tuberculosis programs to ensure gains are not lost.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #23
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What percentage of malaria programs have been terminated as a result of the foreign assistance review?

Answer:

The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) programs continue across all PMI priority countries and continue to save lives.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #24
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What percentage of malaria funding has been cut that was appropriated for FY 2025?

Answer:

Through the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the U.S. government has contributed to the significant progress in reducing deaths and illness from malaria. The United States will continue PMI programs to ensure gains are not lost and continue country progress towards malaria elimination.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #25
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria did the Department use to determine whether to continue or terminate a malaria program?

Answer:

The United States will continue through the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative programs to ensure gains are not lost and continue country progress towards malaria elimination.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #26
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will the Department ensure gains in the fight against malaria aren't lost by the termination of malaria programs?

Answer:

As noted in my previous response, through the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the U.S. government has contributed to the significant progress in reducing deaths and illness from malaria. The United States will continue PMI programs to ensure gains are not lost and continue country progress towards malaria elimination.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #27
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will the Department push back on PRC disinformation in the Indo-Pacific now that the Administration has shuttered RFA?

Answer:

We remain clear-eyed about the threats China and other foreign adversaries pose to U.S. interests and commit to countering those threats with robust capabilities across the R family, regional PD offices, and partners across the Department. The Department must return to targeting specific threats, not abstract narratives, through tools including proactive strategic messaging, foreign stakeholder engagement, ensuring credible information is accessible to global audiences, exposing falsehoods, and telling the American story.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #28
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 20-21, 2025

Question:

How does shutting down Radio Free Asia – a move celebrated by the CCP – advance American security, safety, or prosperity?

Answer:

The Department of State was not a party to USAGM's deliberations, but remains clear-eyed about the threats China and other foreign adversaries pose to U.S. interests. We will continue to energetically advance the Administration's priorities and make every public diplomacy dollar count by countering those threats in a modern and cost-effective way. We commit to countering those threats with robust capabilities across the R family, regional PD offices, and partners across the Department.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #29
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 20-21, 2025

Question:

What are your plans to modernize the State Department's human resources processes and IT systems?

Answer:

Our Bureau of Global Talent Management is dedicated to modernizing and centralizing HR processes and systems. Current priorities include: 1) Consolidating HR applications and processes to reduce duplication, improve data quality and security, and enforce an enterprise focus; 2) Enhancing data sharing, system interoperability, and reporting through Bureau coordination; and 3) Leveraging AI for HR operations and Helpdesk support. Examples of projects include development of a global awards recognition program and the Welcome to State platform for onboarding employees.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #30
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What are the Administration's plans to reduce our diplomatic footprint?

Answer:

No embassy or consulate closures have been announced, and operations continue as normal. The State Department continues to assess our global programs and posture to ensure we are best positioned to address modern challenges on behalf of the American people.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #31
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Are we ceding ground to China by retrenching our diplomatic missions?

Answer:

Any change to our diplomatic footprint would ensure our presence remains strategically effective. Our diplomatic missions continue to advance U.S. interests by aligning resources with U.S. priorities, not legacy mission structures.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ami Bera #32
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

An important function of our embassies and consulates is to help Americans overseas when they are in trouble. How will the closure of embassies and consulates impact our ability to help American citizens overseas?

Answer:

The Department of State's top priority is the protection of Americans abroad. The Department assists and supports U.S. citizens, regardless of the presence of an embassy or consulate in a given country. U.S. citizens in countries without embassies or consulates are supported by U.S. embassies, consulates, and consular agents in neighboring countries. The Department may also enter into a Protecting Power Agreement whereby a friendly nation provides consular services to U.S. citizens in a country where the Department is unable to do so for security or diplomatic reasons.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sheri Biggs #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What can Congress do to ensure the next Secretary of State doesn't revert to promoting partisan ideologies instead of widely held American values and protect the consciences of millions of taxpayers who oppose the funding of abortion?

Answer:

The Administration takes all legislative and policy restrictions related to abortion very seriously. We remain fully committed to ensuring compliance. I am committed to working with you to strengthen related oversight measures for foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sheri Biggs #2
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

How can the United States strategically deploy the Coast Guard's presence and leverage their on-the-ground expertise in critical regions to mitigate risks for DFC investments, cultivate a secure and stable environment where American businesses can prosper, and present a solid alternative to China's Belt and Road initiative?

Answer:

The U.S. Coast Guard, under the purview of the Department of Homeland Security, is a highly sought-after partner by foreign governments to conduct security cooperation via training and technical assistance to counter illegal activities in the maritime domain, facilitate maritime trade, and increase maritime domain awareness. U.S. Coast Guard expertise, port calls, shiprider agreements, and other engagements with foreign partners are critical to countering adversary influence.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The Secretary of State has asserted the authority under Section 237(a)(4)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to revoke the visas and permanent residency of foreign nationals in the United States on the assertion that the foreign national's "presence or activities in the United States" leads the Secretary of State to have "reasonable ground to believe would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States." The law also provides that in the event that the determination is based on a foreign national's "past, current, or expected beliefs, statements, or associations, if such beliefs, statements, or associations would be lawful within the United States, unless the Secretary of State personally determines that the alien's admission would compromise a compelling United States foreign policy interest." According to Court documents, you have made such an individualized determination in at least one case. The statute also requires that such determinations be reported to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on a "timely basis". When will the Department notify the committees of such determinations, as required by law?

Answer:

The State Department reports to appropriate congressional committees as specified by statute.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

According to court documents, you have made such an individualized determination in at least one case [to revoke a visa]. The [relevant] statute requires that such determinations be reported to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on a "timely basis." How many such determinations have been made?

Answer:

The Department of State continues to use all available laws to secure the United States, including INA Section 237(a)(4)(C). The Department reports to appropriate congressional committees as specified by statute.

The Department of State continues to use all available laws to secure the United States, including INA Section 237(a)(4)(C). The Department reports to appropriate congressional committees as specified by statute.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is it your view that foreign nationals enjoy constitutional protections under the First Amendment?

Answer:

The Department of State defers to the Department of Justice on this issue.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will the new social media vetting procedures announced by the Secretary of State apply to athletes, coaches, and officials who will come to the United States to participate in the FIFA 2026 World Cup?

Answer:

The Department of State requires all visa applicants to provide social media identifiers on immigrant and nonimmigrant visa application forms. We use all available information in our visa screening and vetting. The Department collects this information from visa applicants to confirm identity and to determine whether the applicant is eligible for a visa under U.S. law or is potentially subject to a visa ineligibility as set forth in U.S. law.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The President has proclaimed that the United States is currently facing an invasion by a range of entities. Is the United States currently in a state of war with any countries in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer:

The Administration leads with peace through strength and will always put the American people first. The President has also emphasized reasserting control over America's borders is a key foreign policy priority for the Administration. The Department of State remains focused on ending the crisis of illegal immigration to the United States and securing U.S. borders to stop the flow of illicit drugs, especially fentanyl and synthetic opioid precursors, and arms.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the nature of the reported agreement between the government of the United States and the government of El Salvador to detain individuals removed from the United States, including under the Alien Enemies Act?

Answer:

As required by the Case-Zablocki Act, on April 30, the Department transmitted to Congress a nonbinding arrangement between the United States and El Salvador regarding the reception of Tren de Aragua individuals and two named MS-13 members. Covered individuals are housed pursuant to the domestic, sovereign authority of El Salvador.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How much funding - and from what accounts – has the Department of State or another government agency provided to the government of El Salvador since January 20, 2025?

Answer:

The Department provided FY 2024 International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement funds for direct government-to-government assistance to El Salvador for its law enforcement and anti-crime needs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What actions is the Administration contemplating or considering to mitigate the flow of illicit arms to the region, and in particular to Haiti, Mexico, and the Caribbean?

Answer:

The Department supports reducing illicit firearms and ammunition flow through information-sharing, training, and technical assistance. This includes the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm's Jamaica-based attaché working with Haiti and Dominican Republic law enforcement and establishing a Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit in Haiti. Regional programming through the CARICOM's Implementing Agency for Crime and Security and the Caribbean Crime Gun Intelligence Unit connects local law enforcement with U.S. partners. INL also developed a Firearms Trafficking Investigations Unit in collaboration with ATF and the Government of Mexico, with plans to create a second unit targeting firearms trafficking networks linked to criminal organizations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will you commit to working with this Congress to deter the smuggling of lethal arms to Latin America and the Caribbean?

Answer:

The Department is committed to deterring illicit firearms smuggling to Latin America and the Caribbean. Illicit firearms strengthen transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and designated foreign terrorist organizations involved in the trafficking of drugs and contraband, enable violence that endangers U.S. citizens and businesses, and fuel illegal immigration. INL works to curb the flow of firearms to TCOs by partnering with U.S. law enforcement to train and equip security forces in the Western Hemisphere to better identify, investigate, and disrupt weapons trafficking.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Under CN 25-032, which lays out the Department's plan for re-organization, there is no reference to responsibility for enforcement of the Leahy laws. Under this proposal, which bureaus, offices, and officials will be responsible for fulfilling the statutory requirements of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 USC 2378d), and ensuring the independence of this vetting process?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning is calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. Regional bureaus would collaborate with the new Office of Foreign Assistance Oversight to coordinate/conduct vetting for countries within their regions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Under CN 25-032, the Department envisions establishing a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Western Values, which will advance an affirmative vision of "American and Western Values." How does the Department define "Western Values"?

Answer:

It is the moral and ethical framework underlying America's Founding, rooted in an intellectual and cultural tradition spanning from Athens and Rome, through Christianity, to English common law, into America's founding documents. It champions natural law, virtue ethics, the primacy of the family, national sovereignty, religious faith, and political freedom. It recognizes objective good and evil and affirms that all human beings are made in the image of God, possessing free will and certain unalienable rights. It is the duty of government to preserve these rights and freedoms.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What are the "traditional conceptions of core freedoms" described in the Congressional Notification?

Answer:

Core freedoms pertain to the unalienable natural rights protected in America's founding documents, including life, liberty, and security of the person. They also include core freedoms enumerated in the Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to due process. These rights are not determined by governments and cannot be reserved to particular groups or identities. Rather they are universal and belong to all mankind as rational beings made in the image of God and possessing an inherent human dignity.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What prioritization will the restructured DRL bureau give, if any, to the Western Hemisphere?

Answer:

I have said that an America First Foreign Policy means paying closer attention to our own neighborhood – the Western Hemisphere. It was no accident that my first trip abroad as Secretary of State was to Central America. The President's foreign policy agenda begins close to home, and the President's vision for the hemisphere remains positive. We see a prosperous region rife with opportunities. We will continue to engage in the region to advance shared goals, including through DRL, in a way that centers U.S. national security and makes America safer, stronger, and more secure.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #14
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Which office and official will be responsible for the implementation of the Global Fragility Act?

Answer:

The Office of Foreign Assistance Policy (F/POL) will provide policy and strategic support for the Department's bureaus assuming new foreign assistance responsibilities. F/POL will also take on certain statutory policy and reporting duties, including responsibilities related to the Global Fragility Act, currently performed by the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #15
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Which office and official will be responsible for the implementation of the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act?

Answer:

Management of functional policy issues will be returned to the regional bureaus with duplicative functional bureaus eliminated and their statutory functions realigned elsewhere in the Department or restructured to better reflect their appropriate scope and the Administration's foreign policy priorities. Statutory functions and congressional reporting requirements will be aligned as required.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #16
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Which office and official will be responsible for the implementation of the Global Child Thrive Act?

Answer:

The existing Office of Foreign Assistance will be reorganized to better deliver Department-wide monitoring, evaluation, budget and planning, oversight, and program management of foreign assistance. This office will deliver greater accountability in the delivery of foreign assistance in a post-USAID era and ensure statutory requirements are met.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Representative Joaquin Castro by
Secretary Marco Rubio #17
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What are Ambassador Grennell's responsibilities and mandate with respect to Venezuela?

Answer:

As Secretary of State, I have the lead on foreign policy, including our Venezuela policy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Representative Joaquin Castro by
Secretary Marco Rubio #18
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Did Ambassador Grennell commit to sanctions relief or the extension of license to the Maduro regime during his May 2025 visit to Venezuela?

Answer:

At the President's direction, earlier this year I approved foreign policy guidance to terminate all Biden-era oil and gas licenses that benefited Maduro's regime. Those licenses expired on May 27. Final decisions on licenses and sanctions are made by the Department of Treasury, with foreign policy guidance provided by the Department of State – that process has not changed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Representative Joaquin Castro by
Secretary Marco Rubio #19
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

During the hearing, I asked you if, in reference to the return of Venezuelan TPS holders to Venezuela, you stood by Secretary Noem's assessment of conditions in Venezuela that there are "notable improvements in several areas such as the economy, public health and crime that allow for these nationals to be safely returned to their home countries."

Do you share that assessment?

Answer:

This administration is returning Temporary Protective Status (TPS) to its original short-term intent. TPS is a temporary protection, not a permanent benefit. Enforcing U.S. immigration laws and policies, including deportation of those without a legal basis to remain in the United States, is critical to upholding the rule of law and protecting Americans.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Representative Joaquin Castro by
Secretary Marco Rubio #20
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In your efforts to integrate USAID's foreign assistance work into the State Department and move much of programmatic responsibility for foreign assistance into regional bureaus at the State Department, what efforts, if any, are you taking to ensure that such programs are conducted with the use of rigorous evidence? Does the Office of the Chief Economist have any role in assessing the effectiveness of foreign assistance programs, as USAID's office of the Chief Economist did?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department are calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The Department of State has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this oversight.

We are committed to ensuring that we prevent waste, fraud, abuse before it happens – not only that we investigate it after the fact.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #21
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What considerations led to the administration to use the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation for Haitian gangs instead of other existing sanctions authorities?

Answer:

I took these concrete steps to counter impunity for those supporting violence in Haiti. Terrorist designations play a critical role in our fight against these vicious groups and are an effective way to curtail support for their terrorist activities. The designations are the first step in a solution to deter support for gangs and provide U.S. law enforcement more tools. These designations further U.S. objectives to promote accountability for those who provide material support to these groups.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #22
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What additional tools to pressure the Ortega Regime is the Administration considering and under what timeline?

Answer:

Everything is on the table to pressure Nicaragua. The President announced April 2 an 18 percent reciprocal tariff rate on Nicaragua pursuant to IEEPA and the National Emergencies Act. The President paused the imposition of that reciprocal tariff rate from April 9 until July 9, but Nicaragua remains subject to the global 10 percent reciprocal tariff. USTR's 301 investigation into Nicaragua's acts, policies, and practices related to labor rights, human rights, and rule of law continues. We do not preview sanctions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #23
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What support will the Administration provide to the over 200 dissidents expelled from Nicaragua by the Ortega Regime that are currently stateless in the United States?

Answer:

We refer you to DHS for specifics on processes related to the legal status of members of the 222 Nicaraguan former political prisoners. We condemn the Ortega-Murillo dictatorship's moves to strip citizens of their nationality.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #24
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Was it the United States or Qatar that first proposed the transfer of the Boeing 747-8 jet owned by the Qatari royal family to the Department of Defense? Who first proposed such a transfer and when did they do so?

Answer:

The President described the proposed transfer of the Qatari 747 to the U.S. Air Force as a gift from the State of Qatar. We refer those questions to the White House and the Department of Defense.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #25
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Given Pakistan's increasingly close relationship with China, do you support a continued designation of Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally of the United States? If so, what are the reasons you support such a continued designation?

Answer:

Pakistan remains an important security partner, particularly in protecting the United States from the terrorist threat posed by ISIS-K. Pakistan has captured several high-value ISIS-K targets this year, including Muhammad Sharifullah, a key plotter of the 2021 Abbey Gate bombing in Afghanistan, whom Pakistan transferred to U.S. custody to face justice. Pakistan also supports United States maritime interests by cooperating with us and other NATO partners in counter-piracy and other interdiction efforts.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #26
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

As a consequence of the United States' removal of foreign nationals in the United States, a number of minor U.S. citizen children of those foreign nationals have also been removed, including to Mexico.

What steps, if any, is the Department taking to provide consular services to those United States citizen children?

Answer:

The State Department has no higher priority than to protect U.S. citizens abroad. U.S. citizen minors are entitled to the same protection, including during emergencies, as all other Americans living abroad, regardless of their parents' U.S. citizenship or visa status.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Joaquin Castro #27
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the Department's estimate of the number of U.S. citizens in Mexico? How many of those U.S. citizen individuals do not have documentation to be in Mexico?

Answer:

The Department of State does not keep track of U.S. citizens' documentation status in Mexico. Mexico requires a valid passport book to enter by air or land. A visa is not required for U.S. citizens visiting for less than 180 days.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Jim Costa #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you recognize that Azerbaijan is the aggressor in the [Armenia-Azerbaijan] conflict? Given that the U.S. is a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, what is this Administration's position on Azerbaijan's demands to dissolve this critical multilateral platform? In light of introducing unreasonable preconditions to a peace agreement, do you believe Azerbaijan is engaging in this peace process in good faith? What measures is the United States taking to ensure Azerbaijan's good-faith participation in, and compliance with, peace talks? Is the United States prepared to impose consequences on Azerbaijan if it continues to undermine and delay a peace agreement? Azerbaijan has also demanded the removal of the European Monitoring Mission in Armenia – which has been critical in deterring and verifying ceasefire violations. What security measures/guarantees is the U.S. pursuing to enforce an eventual peace deal?

Answer:

The United States government supports efforts by Armenia and Azerbaijan to reach a lasting peace. I am aware of Azerbaijan's call to

dismantle the OSCE Minsk group and end monitoring by the EU Mission in Armenia. We are ready to work with both sides to lead to peace.

Through diplomatic channels, we have outlined the tremendous benefits that would come from signing a peace deal, engaged both sides to overcome differences, and warned all parties against violence that the United States would find to be destructive and counterproductive.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Jim Costa #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Given that the Biden Administration didn't waive Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act in 2024 – is the Trump Administration currently upholding the enforcement of these prohibitions?

Answer:

The Department of State provides assistance consistent with applicable law, including section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. The Department did not extend the waiver in 2023 after Azerbaijan's use of force in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Jim Costa #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you support the allocation of humanitarian assistance to Armenia to support the needs of the 120,000 Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan?

Answer:

The United States provides more humanitarian support than the next ten countries combined, but we cannot do it alone. The administration is currently focused on establishing lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan that prevents future conflict. I remain committed to promoting freedom of religion or belief and advocating the protection of members of vulnerable minorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Jim Costa #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

While you have terminated the vast majority of humanitarian and development activities, a few programs remain. However, when speaking to implementing partners that deliver aid, they are struggling to receive approvals from the Department of State to move forward basic and essential activities such as purchasing U.S. commodities and shipping them overseas. Without these approvals, food will not be delivered in time to meet people's needs. The lack of expertise and capacity within the Department of State to effectively and efficiently oversee active USAID humanitarian and development programs is deeply concerning.

What steps is the Department of State taking to ensure it has the expertise and capacity to administer active, life-saving humanitarian awards?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department are calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The Department of State has the resources and personnel to effectively manage the oversight of critical, life-saving humanitarian awards.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Jim Costa #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

When Secretary Rollins testified before the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee a couple weeks ago she mentioned she had been in touch with you about the Food for Peace program.

Can you confirm this outreach from Secretary Rollins? How you are working to ensure Food for Peace programs are protected and functioning going forward if these programs are transitioning this summer from USAID to State?

Answer:

USAID continues to comply with all applicable statutory requirements, including with respect to Fiscal Year 2024 Food for Peace funds. All active USAID awards being transitioned to State will be administered by State Department bureaus and granted no-cost extensions to their period of performance if needed to facilitate an orderly transition. For extensions and cost modifications requiring additional expenditures or obligations, the Office of Foreign Assistance will review these requests as it would in the normal course.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Madeleine Dean #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
Which Department of State offices will continue to support capacity building foreign assistance programs to ensure drugs and weapons are interdicted further up the trafficking routes before they get to U.S. borders? What U.N. agencies will the Department of State continue to support to address illicit drugs and weapons smuggling? How will the Department of State continue to collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security for drug/weapons interdiction capacity building with foreign partners to address illicit trafficking supply chain routes?

Answer:

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) partners with countries to ensure law enforcement and criminal justice systems disrupt the trafficking of illicit drugs and arms – addressing these threats before they reach the United States. INL implements regional programs in the Caribbean to stop firearms smuggling, in coordination with U.S. law enforcement partners including DHS, ATF, and Commerce Bureau of Industry and Security. INL supports the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's efforts to increase international action to schedule drugs and ensure treaty compliance, particularly on smuggling.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Madeleine Dean #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The underlying premise of the US/Netanyahu government plan to override the process of humanitarian aid distribution in Gaza is the notion that Hamas was stealing large amounts of aid. That was not the U.S. government position prior to January 20th. David Satterfield, the Biden administration's special Middle East envoy for humanitarian issues, repeatedly stated that Israeli officials have not presented "specific evidence of diversion or theft" of U.N. assistance.

Please provide the committee for the record, and in a classified annex if necessary, with the new intelligence the Administration has utilized to reach this conclusion.

Answer:

Hamas's ability to control and manipulate the distribution of aid is key to its survival as a political force in Gaza, hence the importance of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's work. The Administration works closely with partners, including the Government of Israel, to assess information regarding aid distribution in Gaza and its final recipients. Such assessments are based on information from open sources as well as classified reports.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Madeleine Dean #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What resources, personnel, distribution networks, and community relationships will the State Department leverage to deliver and distribute humanitarian aid to Gaza? What life-saving services will the Department support and coordinate? What is the timeline for delivering aid and/or services? How does the Secretary's plan ensure malnourished, elderly, disabled, and sick individuals receive assistance if they cannot access distribution sites? How will the Department coordinate with the United Nations (that has publicly released their coordinated plan) to rapidly transport, deliver, and distribute humanitarian aid and life-saving services to the Gaza Strip?

Answer:

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) responded to the President's call for creative solutions to respond to the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The GHF's objective is to effectively and safely deliver lifesaving assistance to Gazans without Hamas diversion or interference. The United States has repeatedly urged the UN, humanitarian organizations, and the international community to work with GHF to provide assistance to civilians. We recognize that the more support they receive, the faster they can alleviate severe suffering and the threat of famine in Gaza.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Madeleine Dean #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Since January 30th, the Israeli Government has enforced a "no-contact" policy with UNRWA, thereby preventing any information sharing or deconfliction efforts, endangering the lives of civilians and humanitarian workers. It is our understanding that a similar directive has been put forward by the Department to its various bureaus. Please provide for the record the guidance, official or unofficial, sent to the bureaus and U.S. embassies regarding contact with UNRWA officials.

Answer:

On February 4, the President signed Executive Order 14199, which prohibits U.S. government funding to UNRWA. Therefore, in line with previous practice, the State Department does not provide funding to UNRWA. The U.S. maintains minimal contact with UNRWA for the purposes of ending U.S. participation in UNRWA's UN bodies, support of oversight and auditing requests related to past U.S.-funded UNRWA activities, and interactions deemed necessary and approved by the Department's senior leadership.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah Jacobs #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Who at the Department will be in charge of the implementation of the Global Fragility Act? Will it be an Assistant Secretary of equivalent, as required by law?

Answer:

The Office of Foreign Assistance Policy (F/POL) will provide policy and strategic support for the Department's bureaus assuming new foreign assistance responsibilities. F/POL will also take on certain statutory policy and reporting duties, including responsibilities related to the Global Fragility Act, currently performed by the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah Jacobs #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Where will the functions of the Global Fragility Act implementation team/unit sit? How many staff will work on GFA implementation?

Answer:

The Office of Foreign Assistance Policy (F/POL) will provide policy and strategic support for the Department's bureaus assuming new foreign assistance responsibilities. F/POL will also take on certain statutory policy and reporting duties, including responsibilities related to the Global Fragility Act, currently performed by the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah Jacobs #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current status of implementation requirements for the Global Fragility Act?

Answer:

The Office of Foreign Assistance Policy (F/POL) will provide policy and strategic support for the Department's bureaus assuming new foreign assistance responsibilities. F/POL will also take on certain statutory policy and reporting duties, including responsibilities related to the Global Fragility Act, currently performed by the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sara Jacobs #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will the functions of the Negotiations Support Unit be transferred to another office? If so, how many staff, including FTEs, will be retained? If not, how will the Department ensure that the skills and expertise housed within the Unit are retained?

Answer:

I am committed to implementing President Trump's vision of an America-first foreign policy that is holistic and driven by our regional bureaus and embassies. Certain critical functions performed by functional bureaus, such as the negotiations support functions of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, will be more efficiently and effectively undertaken by regional bureaus and embassies. Our regional bureaus are staffed with both career foreign and civil service employees with experience to handle these issues.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sara Jacobs #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization office be staffed? What will its functions be?

Answer:

The statutory functions of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization will be realigned to the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. The coordinator will directly report to the Secretary for statutory functions related to crisis response and will perform both disaster response and other crisis response functions. The new coordinator will also be responsible for critical disaster response functions inherited from USAID.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sara Jacobs #6
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 20-21, 2025

Question:

Does the Department of State affirm the January 7 determination that the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias have committed genocide in Darfur, Sudan?

Answer:

The Administration continues to call for accountability for the genocide in Sudan, where members of the Rapid Support Forces and various allied militias have murdered men and boys, and even infants, on an ethnic basis; targeted fleeing civilians; and committed acts of brutal sexual violence against women and girls on an ethnic basis.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is the Department planning to implement any of the following policies or procedures to more efficiently process the surge in visa applications for fans, athletes, coaches, media, and other stakeholders planning to travel to the United States for the World Cup and Olympics? If not, why not? Please provide a justification for each of the below policies:

- Standing up more processing centers and allocating more consular officers to postings with the highest wait times and to the top 15 countries home to the greatest number of sports fans.

- Automatically renew visas expiring in 2025 or 2026 by one or two years. These are travelers who are already trusted not to violate the terms of their visa, and automatically renewing their visas prevents them from having to reapply for a visa if they want to come back to the U.S. to see the games.

- Create a centralized database for Congressional offices to send casework inquiries for district stakeholders trying to get visas to attend the games.

- Remove some extraneous visa processing requirements for accredited travelers like athletes, such as the interview requirement. It is not forcibly necessary to interview an athlete who has qualified for the games to determine why they want to come to the U.S. and if they are likely to return to their country of origin.

- Assign dedicated State Department staff to process the visas of all accredited travelers for the World Cup, Olympics, and other international sporting events.

- Authorize consular officers at U.S. embassies abroad to do outreach to the Olympic national organizing committees in their respective countries to encourage athletes and officials to apply early and coordinate in sharing information about resources needed to process spectators.

Answer:

Every visa adjudication is a national security decision. As we prepare for large sporting events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the safety and security of the United States and matches, athletes, fans, and venues are our top hosting priorities. Our current visa processing framework will ensure fully vetted travelers come to enjoy these important events and ensure their safety and the safety of the American public. We are well-prepared to process visa applications for participants and fans interested in coming to the United States. We encourage international sports fans who will need a U.S. visa to apply now.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What resources (e.g. personnel, infrastructure, equipment) does the Department assess will be required to reduce visa appointment wait times by at least four months at all the postings where wait times currently exceed ten months?

Answer:

The Department of State is committed to protecting our nation and its citizens by upholding the highest standards of national security and public safety through our visa process. We work diligently to ensure an efficient, smooth, and effective visa process that protects America's security. Our first priority is to ensure the safety and security of our country and its people; every visa decision is a national security decision.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the Department's assessment of the impact of policies that limit immigration and stretch thin existing consular capacity–including a freeze on onboarding new Foreign Service Officer generalist classes who typically staff up consular tours, student visa revocations tied to political speech, social media reviews of student visa applicants, introductions of new visa restriction categories–on the ability and willingness of visitors, athletes, and others to travel to the United States to attend international sporting events?

Answer:

The Department of State is committed to protecting our nation and its citizens by upholding the highest standards of national security and public safety through our visa process. Prohibiting entry to the United States by those who could pose a threat to U.S. national security is key to protecting U.S. citizens at home. The United States continues to welcome legitimate travelers. However, there is no right to visit the United States. We cannot and will not tolerate illegal entry, abuse of visas, or the violation of U.S. law.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In January 2025, Secretary Rubio approved the termination of several USAID programs aimed at countering radicalization and extremism in Tajikistan, which is a primary target for recruitment of fighters to ISIS-K. These include (1) the USAID Resilient Communities Activity (RSA) aimed at reducing the risks of radicalization and enhancing resilience to extremism in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, social workers, and local leaders to prevent violent extremism in their communities; (2) the Employment and Enterprise Development Activity (EEDA) which reduced radicalization risk factors like lack of economic opportunity and labor migration by creating job opportunities for young people in Tajikistan while building economic ties with U.S. and Western markets; and (3) the Market Driven Rural Development (MDRD) which addressed root causes of radicalization like rural poverty and unemployment by increasing accessing to agriculture finance through private sector investment.

Was a waiver requested for any of these programs?

Answer:

Waivers were not requested for these three programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

[Per Question 4] If a waiver was requested, what was your rationale in disagreeing with the Department's recommendation?

Answer:

Waivers were not requested for these three programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

[Per Question 4] Did you consider the impact of the termination of these programs on U.S. counterterrorism objectives in Tajikistan prior to ending them? If so, what was the assessed impact? If no assessment was made, why not? Please provide a specific answer for each program.

Answer:

Waivers were not requested for these three programs. Reviewing and re-aligning U.S. foreign assistance was never about ending foreign aid but rather reorienting how we deliver aid to maximize impact, adopt a returns-oriented mindset, and center American strategic interests. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests requires an agile approach. Counterterrorism in Tajikistan remains a priority for the Administration.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The 10th anniversary of the C5+1 Forum is this November. How does the Department plan to leverage this important anniversary to strengthen cooperation and engagement with our Central Asian partners?

Answer:

I recognize the importance of leveraging the C5+1 anniversary to amplify the strategic advantages of the United States as a partner to the C5 (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) as we pursue America First security and economic objectives in Central Asia. I also seek to establish future C5+1 cooperation that advances the peace and prosperity of the United States and the Central Asian countries. I welcome cooperation with Congress to amplify the value of the C5+1 for the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What does the Department view as the diplomatic and strategic benefits of repealing Jackson-Vanik?

Answer:

As I noted in my confirmation hearing, Jackson-Vanik is a relic of the Soviet era. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have been in compliance with the law since 1998, and it no longer offers strategic benefits. Jackson-Vanik denies permanent normal trade relations and impedes our ability to advance regional goals and administration priorities, particularly opportunities to expand U.S. trade and investment and strengthen U.S. energy security.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What kind of tool, if any, does Jackson-Vanik provide to incentivize the cooperation of Central Asian countries on U.S. priorities?

Answer:

Jackson-Vanik does not incentivize cooperation; rather, it creates bilateral irritants that distract from our work on U.S. priorities such as countering illegal immigration and expanding U.S. trade and investment. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have all been in compliance with the law since 1998, and removing Jackson-Vanik would pave the way for permanent normal trade relations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you assess that there are more effective tools than maintaining Jackson-Vanik to incentivize cooperation with the covered countries on other U.S. priorities?

Answer:

We assess that Central Asian countries desire more commercial interaction with the United States. Continuing to apply Jackson-Vanik to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan even though they have been in compliance with the law since 1998 undermines our ability to advance U.S. priorities. We have more effective tools to draw upon including annual reports to Congress, bilateral dialogues, regional diplomatic cooperation through the C5+1 platform, commercial diplomacy, and sanctions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is the Administration planning to prioritize advocacy for Jackson-Vanik repeal in its engagement with Congress?

Answer:

The Administration is reviewing opportunities to have permanent normal trade relations with countries impacted by Jackson-Vanik.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #12
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

In your testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you stated that the refugee vetting process, including for refugees fleeing Afghanistan, is still under review, but that that is separate from the vetting process for Afghans eligible for Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) who served alongside U.S. service members in Afghanistan for many years and are "closely vetted" and thus do not need to be under the same review. For the Afghan SIV holders who have been approved for resettlement and whose vetting is not under review, what is preventing the Administration from allowing them to come to the United States?

Answer:

Afghan SIV processing continues at the Chief of Mission review step and the visa adjudication stage, including consular interviews and interagency security vetting at U.S. embassies and consulates around the world. Afghan SIV holders may make their own commercial flight arrangements from their current location to the United States. Domestic reception and placement services are available to Afghan SIV holders who have arranged their own travel to and arrive in the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #13
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do I have your commitment that you will ultimately allow for vetted Afghan SIVs to resume resettlement in the United States?

Answer:

Afghan SIV processing continues at the Chief of Mission review step and the visa adjudication stage, including consular interviews and interagency security vetting at U.S. embassies and consulates around the world; it was never halted. Afghan SIV holders may make their own commercial flight arrangements from their current location to the United States. Domestic reception and placement services are available to Afghan SIV holders who have arranged their own travel to and arrive in the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #14
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can the Department provide a timeline for when Afghan SIVs will be able to resume resettlement to the United States?

Answer:

Afghan SIV processing, self-funded travel, and reception and placement services are available and continue.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #15
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

What agencies are leading the review of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program vetting process?

Answer:

We refer questions on refugee vetting, including any review of or proposed changes to vetting, to the Department of Homeland Security, which leads on vetting.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #16
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the Department's timeline for concluding the vetting process review?

Answer:

We refer questions on refugee vetting, including any review of or proposed changes to vetting, to the Department of Homeland Security, which leads on vetting.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #17
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will the Department commit to releasing the findings of its review to Congress?

Answer:

We refer questions on refugee vetting, including any review of or proposed changes to vetting, to the Department of Homeland Security, which leads on vetting.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #18
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Secretary Rubio approved the termination of all USAID programs in Afghanistan, both humanitarian and for basic services, with the exception of two education programs, as reported by SIGAR in April 2025. Does the Administration still maintain a policy of supporting educational opportunities for Afghan women and girls?

Answer:

While this is a USAID program, the Administration has authorized certain education programs benefitting Afghan women and girls to continue through June 30, allowing the students to complete the school year. The future of the USAID program remains under review.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #19
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Madrassas are the only alternative to U.S.-funded education opportunities available to women and girls under oppressive Taliban restrictions. Some madrassas in Afghanistan may seek to radicalize vulnerable populations. Did the Department evaluate the risk of increasing women's vulnerability to radicalization as part of its decision to terminate education programs for women and girls in Afghanistan? If so, what was the assessed impact?

Answer:

The Administration has authorized certain education programs benefitting Afghan women and girls to continue through June 30, allowing the students to complete the school year. The future of the USAID program remains under review.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #20
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The Administration communicated in April 2025 that it intends to terminate funding in June 2025 for the American University in Afghanistan's online undergraduate and graduate education program, which services 1,000 students, 80% of whom are women, and is effectively the only remaining educational opportunity for girls living in Afghanistan. Is the Administration considering extending funding for this program through at least the Fall 2025 semester?

Answer:

The program has been authorized to continue through June 30, allowing the students to complete the school year. The future of the program remains under review.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #21
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Was a waiver previously requested for this program?

Answer:

No waivers were requested for this program.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #22
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

If a waiver was requested, what was your rationale in disagreeing with the Department's recommendation?

Answer:

No waivers were requested for this program.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #23
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Has the Department secured additional commitments been successful in encouraging other from U.S. partners to increase their financial support for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, or to provide immigration pathways to Rohingya refugees to resettle in safe third countries?

Answer:

As of May 20, the $934.5 million 2025 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis in Bangladesh is only 21 percent funded – a level significantly lower than in previous years. The United States provided $10.8 million to support the Rohingya response in FY 2025 and has been a leading provider of humanitarian aid for this response. It is time for other donor countries to step up and help meet the needs of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and find solutions to their displacement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #24
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question 128:

Do I have your commitment that this year's IVLP participants will be allowed to complete the IVLP programs appropriated in FY25?

Answer:

ECA is proceeding with IVLP programming with budget appropriations for FY 2025, in alignment with current White House executive orders and proclamations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #25
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the current status of YALI program implementation for FY25, including the Regional Leadership Centers previously administered by USAID and the Mandela Washington Fellowship?

Answer:

Program implementation for the Mandela Washington Fellowship for FY 2025, scheduled to take place in summer 2026, has not begun. A congressional notification regarding the Department's intention to obligate FY 2025 ECE funds for this program is forthcoming. All USAID-administered awards to implement the four YALI Regional Leadership Centers were terminated in March.

Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #26
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Does the Department still view developing people-to-people ties with African leaders and young people as critical to advancing U.S. foreign policy interests on the continent?

Answer:

People-to-people ties enable the United States to engage with the rapidly growing African youth population. Engaging with the continent's next generation of leaders is vital to ensuring that the United States is appropriately positioned to compete with China and others who are vying to exploit Africa's potential. The Young African Leadership Initiative is the United States' flagship public diplomacy effort for Africa and currently includes an in-person fellowship and digital engagement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #27
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Following the closure of R/FIMI, what tools does the Department intend to employ to counter the dissemination of foreign adversary propaganda to American audiences?

Answer:

The Department of State is committed to staunchly defending free speech while aggressively countering adversarial propaganda, including from foreign governments, that threatens U.S. interests. The Department will make every public diplomacy dollar count by targeting specific threats, not abstract narratives, through a full spectrum of public diplomacy tools, including proactive strategic messaging, engaging foreign stakeholders, ensuring reliable and credible information is accessible to global audiences, exposing falsehoods, and above all, telling the American story.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #28
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What will be the responsibilities and functions of the Coordinator for Digital Freedom in its new capacity under the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in R/PPR?

Answer:

The Digital Freedom Unit will advance a robust doctrine of free-speech diplomacy in a variety of relevant domains.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #29
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Absent U.S. support for the Amazon Fund, which was helping address the drivers of deforestation, is the Department supporting any programs to counter deforestation and illicit logging and mining in the Amazon rainforest?

Answer:

The Department has imposed visa restrictions on individuals involved in wildlife and timber trafficking. Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance to ensure it makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #30
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Does the Department plan to send a U.S. delegation to participate at COP30 in Belém, Brazil in November 2025? If not, what is the Department's justification for not attending?

Answer:

A decision has not yet been made on whether to send a delegation to COP30.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #31
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How does the Department intend to implement the statutory requirements of the Women, Peace, and Security Act following the elimination of the Office of Global Women's Issues?

Answer:

I am committed to implementing President Trump's vision of an America-first foreign policy that is holistic and driven by our regional bureaus and embassies. The critical expertise of functional bureaus will not be eliminated but will be more efficiently and effectively led by regional bureaus and embassies. The elimination of the Office of Global Women's Issues will dissolve siloed reporting lines and ensure that promoting women's rights and empowerment is a priority across the full scope of the Department's diplomatic engagement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove #32
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many S/GWI staff will the Department continue to retain, and to what bureaus will they be assigned?

Answer:

I am committed to implementing President Trump's vision of an America-first foreign policy that is holistic and driven by our regional bureaus and embassies. The critical expertise of functional bureaus will not be eliminated but will be more efficiently and effectively led by regional bureaus and embassies. Our regional bureaus are staffed with both career foreign and civil service employees with vast expertise to handle these issues, and we will continue to staff them appropriately to more effectively meet the needs of the Department.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you provide an update on the status of the appointment of a Special Envoy for Northern Ireland?

Answer:

The Special Envoy for Northern Ireland position is currently vacant, and the President has not announced plans to nominate someone for this role. The United States has played a valuable role in the Northern Ireland peace process, and I appreciate the contributions of past Special Envoys to the cause of achieving and maintaining peace in Northern Ireland. In the meantime, I am working alongside my colleagues at the Consulate General in Belfast and our embassies in London and Dublin to ensure the gains made since the Good Friday Agreement are preserved.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is Vladimir Putin a war criminal?

Answer:

President Trump has made it clear the violence and killing in Ukraine is unacceptable, and there can be no military solution to this war. We will continue to urge Vladimir Putin to stop the killing and negotiate with Ukraine. We will judge Russia's commitment to peace by its actions and not its words. The President's patience has limits, and we need to see actions, not just demands, from Moscow.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What country initiated the conflict in Ukraine which began on February 24, 2022?

Answer:

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and Ukraine has suffered terrible consequences. President Trump wants the killing to stop. There can be no military solution to this war, only a diplomatic one. That is why we continue to urge Russia and Ukraine to negotiate a durable settlement to the conflict.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is Russia the aggressor state in the conflict with Ukraine?

Answer:

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014 and again on a larger scale on February 24, 2022. President Trump continues to call on both sides to stop the killing and negotiate an end to this war. President Trump has made it clear the violence and killing are unacceptable and that there can be no military solution to this war. We will judge Russia's commitment to peace by its actions and not its words.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Does Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine constitute a war of aggression?

Answer:

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014 and again on a larger scale on February 24, 2022. President Trump has made it clear the violence and killing are unacceptable, and there can be no military solution to this war. We continue to urge Russia and Ukraine to negotiate a durable settlement to the conflict. We will judge Russia's commitment to peace by its actions and not its words.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Does the Department believe facilitating Ukraine's accession to the European Union is a key priority?

Answer:

Membership in the EU is ultimately a decision for members and candidates.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative William Keating #7
House Foreign Relations Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the status of U.S. foreign assistance to Ukraine? Please provide an itemized list of all programs that were active prior to January 20, 2025, and the status of those programs today.

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance programs to ensure value for American taxpayers. Achieving the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative William Keating #8
House Foreign Relations Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How does the Department plan to disburse remaining supplemental funding appropriated for use in Ukraine? What type of assistance (security, non-security, humanitarian, food, health, etc.) does the Administration want to pursue in Ukraine moving forward?

Answer:

Assistance to Ukraine is continuing. Activities include the procurement of U.S. defense articles, providing equipment to border guards and police, and humanitarian assistance. The Department and Administration will continue to carefully review current and potential programs as well as consider the role of foreign aid as new opportunities are identified to advance the President's foreign policy agenda.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #9
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the status of Presidential Drawdown Authority deliveries to Ukraine? What is the administration's approach to providing additional Presidential Drawdown Authority to Ukraine?

Answer:

Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) deliveries to Ukraine are ongoing. While there are no current plans for new drawdowns for Ukraine, the Department of State retains the flexibility to act swiftly in response to direction from the President. The United States continues to believe there is no military solution to the conflict. A diplomatic resolution is required.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 20-21, 2025

Question:

How is the Ukraine portfolio divided within the State Department? What role does Special Envoy Witkoff play in facilitating the end of the war in Ukraine? Who does Special Envoy Witkoff report to in the Department of State?

Answer:

The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the Special Presidential Envoy for Ukraine, Special Envoy Witkoff, and Secretary Rubio collaborate closely to advance the President's call to stop the bloodshed in Ukraine and achieve a durable and lasting end to this war. Many other offices contribute their expertise and effort to this multifaceted mission.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a comprehensive list of official visits by Special Envoy Witkoff to Russia. For each official visit, what officials from the Department of State attended the meetings?

Answer:

Special Envoy Witkoff visited Moscow on February 11, March 13, and April 25, and St. Petersburg on April 11 to encourage Russia to stop the killing and negotiate with Ukraine. In official meetings, he was not accompanied by officials from the Department of State, but the State Department and the White House have remained in close contact about ongoing negotiations between Russia and Ukraine to end the killing and stop the war.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In the view of the Department, do Vladimir Putin and the Russian military's actions in Ukraine constitute atrocity crimes?

Answer:

Members of Russia's forces in Ukraine have committed war crimes, and members of Russia's forces and Russian officials have committed crimes against humanity in Ukraine. President Trump has made it clear the violence and killing are unacceptable, and there can be no military solution to this war. We continue to urge Russia and Ukraine to negotiate a durable settlement to the conflict.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is the Department concerned by the Hungarian government's solicitation of PRC foreign direct investment? What actions is the Department taking to raise concerns regarding PRC foreign direct investment into Hungary?

Answer:

As I have previously stated, China is a near peer competitor and adversary of the United States. With Hungary being a close NATO ally, the Department has raised concerns about Chinese investments in Hungarian security and telecommunications infrastructure.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #14
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How do you intend to further the J-1 Cultural Exchange Visa Program to facilitate the needs of small and seasonal businesses across the country while at the same ensuring that foreign college students continue to gain valuable experiences in the United States which furthers U.S. soft power?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to protecting our nation by upholding the highest standards of national security and public safety in our visa process. Every visa adjudication is a national security decision. While obtaining a visa is a privilege, not a right, the United States continues to support legitimate travel through programs like the J-1 Summer Work Travel program. The Administration remains focused on maintaining program integrity, prioritizing participant safety, and ensuring the program aligns with our security interests, broader foreign policy goals, and the needs of small and seasonal businesses across the country.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Bill Keating #15
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Afghan Allies who assisted the United States in the Global War on Terror deserve respect and dignity following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. What is the administration's plan to expand Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans who were employed by or on behalf of the United States Government?

Answer:

The security of our nation and the American people remains an unwavering priority of this Department. I am vigilant against emerging threats that could jeopardize this security while honoring our commitments to Afghans found eligible under U.S. law for Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs). Congress passes legislation that establishes and amends the Special Immigrant Visa programs and allocates the maximum number of visas that can be issued each fiscal year.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Young Kim #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you commit to attending or sending the Deputy Secretary of State to next year's Pacific Islands Forum to reaffirm and visibly demonstrate our enduring commitment to the Pacific Islands?

Answer:

The United States shares a long history with the Pacific Islands and deep ties to the region. The Department values the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and its members and will continue to deepen our cooperation with the PIF on a range of regional issues to secure a free, open, and prosperous Pacific region. As a Dialogue Partner of the PIF, we look forward to sending a high-level delegation to engage the PIF and the new PIF Chair in Solomon Islands this September.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Young Kim #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will you ensure that the foreign assistance apparatus you are building within the State Department has these capabilities?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department are calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The Department of State has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this oversight.

We are committed to ensuring that we prevent waste, fraud, abuse before it happens – not only that we investigate it after the fact. In the planned State Department reorganization, current plans call for a new consolidated oversight function, and we anticipate expanding counterterrorism vetting for foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Young Kim #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you please specify the Administration's current plans for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), including whether current compacts will be fulfilled, and how administration representatives to the MCC Board plan to participate in its governance?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to ensuring U.S. foreign assistance programs and policies align with the national interest and deliver maximum benefit to the American taxpayer. Its review of MCC and its programs, including current compacts, is ongoing. At its conclusion, MCC will notify Congress of any relevant organizational changes and decisions to continue, modify, or terminate programs. The Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 states the Secretary of State shall serve as Chairperson of the Board of Directors. I plan to fulfill those duties in full accordance with the law.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative George Latimer #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

With 1.3 million new HIV infections each year, will PEPFAR's reorganization under the State Department include HIV prevention for all at-risk populations along with HIV treatment?

Answer:

PEPFAR continues to support lifesaving HIV testing, care and treatment, and prevention of mother to child transmission services approved by the Secretary of State. This includes lifesaving HIV treatment for key populations. OMB is reviewing PEPFAR-funded services for assessment of programmatic efficiencies and consistency with United States foreign policy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative George Latimer #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How is the administration working to integrate long-acting injectable PrEP into PEPFAR's programming to ensure the sustainability of its investments?

Answer:

We are evaluating the opportunity presented by new long-acting injectable PrEP products in their ability to reduce new HIV infections as part of a broader strategy for supporting foreign governments to cost-efficiently manage their own HIV response. A critical milestone will be FDA regulatory review of the safety and efficacy of a 6-month injectable for PrEP.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Why were American humanitarian experts so delayed arriving to assist with efforts in Burma, and how did the dismissal of "28 USAID and State Department programs supporting Myanmar," reported by Reuters, contribute to this delay?

Answer:

In response to the earthquake in Burma, the United States deployed a team of experts from USAID on March 31 to assess needs on the ground, share information with partner countries, and inform post-earthquake recovery efforts. The team concluded its needs assessment on April 16. To date, the United States has made approximately $9 million in humanitarian assistance available to the hardest-hit areas. U.S. partners deployed mobile health clinics and provided food, drinking water, shelter items, mosquito nets, medical supplies, and other essential items.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What steps is State taking to ensure that the U.S. can continue to act as a leader in responding to humanitarian disasters around the world?

Answer:

Disaster relief is an important part of America's foreign assistance portfolio, and one we will continue to support. Disaster response programs will be transitioned from USAID to the Department of State. In our hiring and integration plans, we are committed to ensuring that the Department has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this portfolio and will be ready to respond to disasters should the need arise.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #3
Senate Committee on Appropriations
May 21, 2025

Question:

Why is the State Department not coordinating with the UN, and what steps is this administration taking to ensure adequate aid is reaching civilians in the Gaza strip, including the opening of more aid crossings and approval of emergency supplies waiting outside the border?

Answer:

The United States has repeatedly urged the United Nations, humanitarian organizations, and the international community to work with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) to provide assistance to civilians. We recognize that the more support they receive, the faster they can alleviate suffering. GHF is helping to deliver life-saving assistance to the people of Gaza without diversion from Hamas.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Could you and your staff please elaborate how you are so confident that no one has died due to cuts to USAID funding, and where you acquired this information?

Answer:

We continue to invest in effective and proven programs that reduce maternal and child deaths and achieve other critical global health goals. Those priorities are reflected in the life-saving aid programs that remain ongoing and are being transitioned to the State Department by July 1.

Reviewing and realigning U.S. foreign assistance was about reorienting how we deliver aid to maximize impact, adopt a returns-oriented mindset, and center American interests. By transitioning USAID's programs, we will enhance the efficiency and impact of foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In the past week, Secretary Rollins decided to terminate school feeding programs which included several in Asia, like Timor-Leste and Nepal, which are particularly important to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Why did you agree to Secretary Rollins' proposal to cancel these critical programs, and what justification was offered? How is this in America's foreign policy interest? If you weren't consulted by Secretary Rollins, does this indicate that each individual agency will be conducting their own foreign policy strategies?

Answer:

USDA and the Department of State work together to ensure the coherence and uniformity of foreign policy and assistance, and USDA has consulted with the Department on its recent foreign assistance program decisions. Reviewing and realigning U.S. foreign assistance was about reorienting how we deliver aid to maximize impact, adopt a returns-oriented mindset, and center American interests. By transitioning USAID's core life-saving and strategic aid programs to State, we will significantly enhance the efficiency and strategic impact of foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Secretary Rubio, which services have been reduced or eliminated as part of that 15% [PEPFAR] cut? Is it true that prevention services are only being provided to pregnant and nursing mothers? Which populations have been most impacted by this decision? Will you commit to fully restoring the entirety of PEPFAR's prevention services?

Answer:

Life-saving HIV care and treatment services are continuing, including for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. PEPFAR-supported HIV prevention programs operating through the Department of State are being reviewed by OMB to ensure that they reflect the President's foreign policy priorities, advance American interests, and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Sarah McBride #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The FY26 Skinny President's Budget Request proposes a 93% reduction to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) which would significantly reduce the United States' ability to implement programs like the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Given the incredible return on investment, why is the Administration proposing a cut to this vital foreign policy tool?

Answer:

The Administration's FY 2026 budget reflects America First foreign policy priorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Have you made any agreement with the government of El Salvador to deport Venezuelan nationals and place them in CECOT or other prisons in El Salvador?

Answer:

On April 30, as required by the Case-Zablocki Act, the Department transmitted to Congress a nonbinding arrangement between the United States and El Salvador regarding the reception of Tren de Aragua individuals and two named MS-13 members. Covered individuals are housed pursuant to the domestic, sovereign authority of El Salvador.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In remarks to the press on February 4, you announced that the United States had concluded an agreement with the Government of El Salvador to accept and detain deportees from the United States of any nationality, describing it as, "the most unprecedented and extraordinary migratory agreement anywhere in the world." What are the terms of this agreement?

Answer:

On April 30, as required by the Case-Zablocki Act, the Department transmitted to Congress a nonbinding arrangement between the United States and El Salvador regarding the reception of Tren de Aragua individuals and two named MS-13 members. Covered individuals are housed pursuant to the domestic, sovereign authority of El Salvador.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

With which other countries have you negotiated any similar agreements to deport people sent from the United States? What are the terms of those various agreements, if there are others?

Answer:

Under the amended Case Act, the Department provides to Congress, not less frequently than once each month, all qualifying non-binding instruments signed, concluded, or otherwise finalized between the U.S. government and foreign governments during the preceding month. The Department will provide the text of any significant non-binding instruments in the appropriate Case Act report.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will you send those agreement texts to Congress as required in law?

Answer:

The Department of State will continue to comply with the provisions of the Case-Zablocki Act, as amended.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

I understand Michael Needham negotiated with President Bukele's brother to secure a 50 percent discount, "upon all nine being returned." Who are these nine people?

Answer:

The Department does not comment on supposed leaked documents nor supposed diplomatic deliberations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Are any of the people you agreed to return to El Salvador currently charged with crimes committed in the United States?

Answer:

I refer you to the Department of Justice regarding the requested information.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Did you or the State Department agree to requests from the Salvadoran Government to deport certain MS-13 gang leaders before they have the chance to testify in U.S. courts?

Answer:

The Department does not comment on supposed leaked documents nor supposed internal deliberations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is the State Department paying El Salvador a maintenance fee, and if so, from what accounts?

Answer:

The Department does not comment on supposed leaked documents nor supposed internal deliberations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What specific steps has the Administration taken to facilitate the return of Abrego Garcia in compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court order?

Answer:

Mr. Abrego Garcia was returned to the United States June 6. The Department does not comment on diplomatic negotiations or ongoing litigation.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many deportees has the United States negotiated with Venezuela for them to receive? How many have they received thus far?

Answer:

Maduro must accept all repatriated Venezuelans from the United States without conditions. These unconditional repatriations need to be continuously ongoing until every Venezuelan illegally present in the United States returns to Venezuela. This is not an issue for debate or negotiation. More than 3,500 Venezuelans have been repatriated since the beginning of the President Trump's Administration.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Are there ongoing negotiations with the Maduro regime to receive deportees?

Answer:

As both President Trump and I have stated, Maduro must accept all Venezuelans from the United States without conditions. This needs to be an ongoing, regular process that continues until every Venezuelan illegally present in the United States returns to Venezuela. This is not an issue for debate or negotiation.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What specific role did the US play in the operation that rescued 5 opposition leaders from the Argentina Embassy in Caracas?

Answer:

After more than 400 days deprived of their liberty, five Venezuelan opposition leaders who had taken refuge in Argentina's Caracas diplomatic headquarters are finally free from tyranny and are safe on U.S. soil, thanks to the leadership of the Trump Administration and other partners. We are extremely grateful for and proud of all of those who were involved in this rescue operation. The important thing is these Venezuelan heroes are free from the tyranny of the Maduro regime.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What was the rationale behind the State Department's determination that it would not need congressional approval or notification before conducting a precise operation on May 6 to rescue hostages held at the Argentina Embassy in Caracas?

Answer:

We are extremely grateful for and proud of all of those who were involved in this rescue operation. The important point is these Venezuelan heroes are free from the tyranny of the Maduro regime.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #14
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the reporting structure of Special Presidential Envoy for Special Projects Grenell with respect to Venezuela? Does he report to you? How do you deconflict engaging in Venezuela?

Answer:

As Secretary of State, I have the lead on foreign policy, including our Venezuela policy. I refer you to the White House for any additional details on Special Envoy Grenell's responsibilities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #15
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What proactive measures is the State Department taking to ensure there will be no interruption to humanitarian aid following the FTO designation [in Haiti]?

Answer:

The United States stands with the Haitian people as they seek a secure, stable future for their country and citizens. The Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) designations provide additional tools to counter violent groups terrorizing the Haitian people. General licenses (GLs) facilitate humanitarian aid by lowering sanctions risk while not unduly benefiting sanctioned parties or undermining the efficacy of our sanctions. GLs do not affect potential criminal liability related to providing material support to an FTO.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #16
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

You indicated the State Department is leading an inter-agency Haiti policy review: Which agencies are part of that review? What is on the table for additional support for the Haitian people? Will the Haiti policy review include a review of foreign assistance contracts cancelled or stopped since January 20th, 2025, and will rationale for their cancellation be sent to Congress?

Answer:

The Department continues to engage interagency partners on our Haiti policy, including the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, Treasury, and the intelligence community. We provide vital foreign assistance to Haiti, which is complemented by robust assistance from the Department of Defense to sustain the MSS mission Life Support Area. The Department and Administration continue to carefully review all foreign assistance to ensure it effectively advances our interests while also making the American people safer, more secure, and more prosperous.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #17
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will the State Department support a peacekeeping mission at the UN [with respect to Haiti]?

Answer:

We are still reviewing the most efficient and effective role for the United Nations (UN) and other international institutions in responding to the crisis in Haiti. A greater role for regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), reauthorization of the Multinational Security Support mission's Chapter VII UN Security Council mandate, or a different UN role are not mutually exclusive options, and are in line with the principles of burden-sharing and relevant provisions in the UN and OAS charters.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #18
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

There would be a significant learning curve to establish a peacekeeping mission [in Haiti] through the OAS. Does the Administration plan on pursuing a regional Peacekeeping mission through the OAS, and if so, what is its strategy to overcome those barriers? How will the State Department work to pass a resolution approving a peacekeeping mission either through the UN or OAS?

Answer:

The Trump Administration is not seeking a regional peacekeeping mission. We recognize the MSS mission alone will not solve the myriad complex challenges in Haiti and that is why regional leadership through the OAS is needed to achieve sustained results for the people of Haiti. Under its mandates and authorities, the OAS could help stabilize Haiti by deepening efforts to coordinate international and regional support while also filling critical gaps, as it did during the previous MINUSTAH mission.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #19
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the State Department's strategy to engage partner nations, including the Caribbean, at the OAS?

Answer:

The Department continues to engage OAS member states to secure support for Haiti. Our priority is to ensure the OAS and countries in the region share the burden, so it does not fall disproportionately on the United States. The United States is working alongside Haiti and OAS Secretary General Ramdin to ensure Haiti remains a priority ahead of and during the OAS General Assembly. At the General Assembly, the United States intends to work with member states to facilitate a resolution to achieve security and create the conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections in Haiti.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #20
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

During the hearing, you noted there was an interest in stopping the flow of illicit guns to the region. What concrete steps is the Secretary of State taking to stop the flow of arms to the region? What specific policies will you enact to stop the flow of arms to the Caribbean?

Answer:

My team is working across the U.S. government, including with U.S. law enforcement agencies as well as Caribbean partners, to stop the flow of illicit firearms trafficking in the region. This includes improved information sharing with ATF and partner law enforcement agencies in the region and collaborating with Homeland Security Investigations to advance our Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit in Port-au-Prince. We also aim to strengthen cross-border investigations with CARICOM security partners through the Caribbean Crime Gun Intelligence Unit.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #21
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide the Administration's legal rationale and justification for the dismissal of State Department Inspector General Cardell K. Richardson and USAID Inspector General Paul K. Martin, including for the failure to provide a 30-day congressional notification in advance of these dismissals as required by law. Please include how the Department complied with relevant legal statutes, including the Inspector General Act of 1978.

Answer:

I am unable to comment on this, as there is ongoing litigation. I am committed to ensuring the Office of the Inspector General is appropriately resourced to address issues of fraud, waste, and abuse.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #22
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How does President Trump's proposal to withhold all assessed contributions to the United Nations regular budget and potential loss of our vote in the General Assembly (should U.S. arrears equal or exceed the amount due for two preceding years) advance U.S. interests at the United Nations?

Answer:

Reform at the UN and promoting responsible stewardship of American taxpayers' dollars at the UN are key U.S. interests. Therefore, the President's budget request pauses most assessed and all voluntary contributions to the UN and other international organizations. This will ensure an adequate examination of the value of our contributions, promote fairness to the American taxpayer within the assessment calculations, and serve as a notice that the business-as-usual approach to funding the regular budget is no longer sufficient. To preserve maximum negotiating leverage, the President can also choose to fund these international organizations out of the America First Opportunity Fund.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #23
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

On January 28, 2025, the Department notified the Committee in a "Consult Note" that it intended to close 10 consulates – 9 in Europe and one in Brazil. Were you aware that the State Department sent Congress a preconsult note indicating it would close these missions?

Answer:

No embassy or consulate closures have been announced, and operations continue as normal. The State Department continues to assess our global programs and posture to ensure we are best positioned to address modern challenges on behalf of the American people.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #24
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you confirm that the Department is no longer seeking to close the 10 overseas posts listed in the January 28 Consult Note – as well as any other US diplomatic posts overseas? Do you have any specific data or analyses that suggest gutting the CDP bureau and dividing up its work streams will increase the efficiency or effectiveness of U.S. cyber policy? If so, please share that data or those analyses with the Committee.

- Are you aware the law requires consultation with Congress to relocate the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy?

- Please share when and how you consulted with this Committee in advance of making this announcement?

- Will the CDP bureau maintain its foreign assistance functions? If not, what is the data to support ending such assistance?

Answer:

Reforms to enhance the effectiveness of the State Department will not inhibit our ongoing efforts to advance U.S. foreign policy priorities, including issues in cyberspace. Changes would be undertaken in a manner consistent with applicable Congressional consultation and notification requirements.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #25
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Under what authority are USAID and the State Department conducting RIFs?

Answer:

Reductions in Force of State Department and USAID employees will be conducted consistent with statutory authorities and applicable regulations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #26
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Will you be utilizing RIFs on members of the Foreign Service?

Answer:

Yes, the Department intends to conduct reductions in force (RIF) affecting certain domestic offices and functions. In accordance with applicable law, RIF actions will impact both civil and foreign service personnel.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #27
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In your testimony before this committee, you cited "less than 200" RIFs in total at the State Department had been undertaken to date since the start of the current Administration. Does this figure include positions eliminated because their home bureaus or offices are proposed to be eliminated by July 1? If not, how many additional positions will be eliminated due to closure of bureaus or offices, and under what authority are you conducting that process? For each eliminated position or RIFed employee, provide the bureau, office, title, and FS or GS level.

Answer:

Numbers provided in testimony before the committee were accurate as of the date of the hearing. The Department plans to reduce its domestic footprint by roughly 15 percent using baseline staffing levels as of May 4. These reductions include a planned reduction in force and voluntary departures, such as employee participation in the Department's two previously offered Deferred Resignation Programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #28
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many USAID positions have you eliminated, are you in the process of eliminating, or will you eliminate via RIFs? Taken together, what percentage of the total USAID workforce as of January 20, 2025 does this represent?

Answer:

The integration of certain USAID programs and functions into the Department of State is ongoing. In connection with assuming these new responsibilities, the State Department is hiring for a limited number of new positions to build foreign assistance capacities. While applications for these new roles are not limited to former USAID employees, the Department values the critical foreign assistance and humanitarian assistance experience of former USAID employees and a significant proportion of these new hires have previously worked at USAID.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #29
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Does the Department maintain its plan to cut up to 700 State Department positions or employees – as cited in the consult note to the Committee and in the subsequent briefing to Committee staff? Will employees who have left due to early retirement or the so-called Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) be counted toward these 700? Provide the full list – including bureau, offices, titles, and FS or GS levels – of the 700 positions or employees to be terminated.

Answer:

The Department plans to reduce its civil service and foreign service domestic workforce by roughly 15 percent using baseline staffing levels as of May 4. These reductions will include employees who are departing under the Deferred Resignation Programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #30
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Are any bureaus or offices exempt from RIFs or other staffing cuts and, if so, which ones?

Answer:

Reduction in force plans have been tailored to preserve critical core functions. These plans ensure that functions related to security, consular services, and regional desk responsibilities remain fully operational during and after the reorganization process.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #31
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The Trump Administration has not yet completed its foreign assistance review, despite multiple announcements both you and Pete Marocco have made to the contrary over the past three months. The results of the foreign assistance review will be material to the design of staffing patterns to support remaining foreign assistance programs.

- When will your foreign assistance review be completed?

- What criteria have you used to determine which programs to terminate?

- If you still do not have an official list of which foreign assistance programs will continue and which are terminated, how can you know which USAID staff functions you will need to retain?

Answer:

The Department and USAID's substantive, individualized review of foreign assistance awards was completed earlier this year. Awards were reviewed to ensure they reflected the President's foreign policy priorities, advanced American interests, and reflected responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Final program decisions were made with my approval.

By transitioning USAID's life-saving aid programs to State, we will enhance the efficiency and strategic impact of foreign assistance programs. State has the resources and personnel to deliver on this mandate.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #32
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The State Department is currently hiring for both domestic and international positions to fill former USAID functions via other sources – Schedule A and Limited Non-Career Appointments. Why is the transfer of functions from USAID to the State Department not following this employee transfer process set out in statute, and what is the Department's legal justification? Current position announcements for these Limited Non-Career Appointments at the State Department note they are two-year temporary appointments. Why are these not permanent positions? Is it your intention that the State Department will permanently administer the functions it is subsuming from USAID, or is this a temporary arrangement? What is your plan for retaining the deep development and humanitarian expertise of the staff at USAID?

Answer:

The integration of certain USAID programs and functions into the Department of State is ongoing and the Department is filling a limited number of new positions to build foreign assistance capacities. The Department requested and was granted by OPM expedited hiring authorities to ensure the continuation of ongoing programming. Consistent with funding and hiring laws, many term-limited appointments will be converted to permanent roles.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #33
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

You stated that 85% of PEPFAR recipients are still receiving assistance. Please provide the data to substantiate this assertion. Does the 85% refer both to patients who had been receiving antiretroviral therapy prior to January 20, 2025, and to patients who had been receiving prevention services under PEPFAR, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis, counseling on risk management, and other interventions for populations that are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection?

Answer:

In my testimony, I referenced an estimated 85 percent of beneficiaries who could be receiving lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission services, based on the full operational capacity of all active awards as of March 24.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #34
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question

What evidence does the State Department have that HIV prevention programming saves lives?

Answer:

PEPFAR continues to support lifesaving HIV testing, care and treatment, and prevention of mother to child transmission services approved by the Secretary of State. PEPFAR routinely collects and monitors data, including on approved prevention activities, to ensure accountability and impact.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #35
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Which HIV prevention programs or interventions are still supported by PEPFAR today? Please provide details on programming, amount of funding, number of patients served, and in which countries.

Answer:

PEPFAR continues to support lifesaving HIV testing, care and treatment, and prevention of mother to child transmission services. OMB is reviewing all PEPFAR-supported HIV prevention programs operating through the Department of State to ensure that they reflect the President's foreign policy priorities, advance American interests and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #36
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Does PEPFAR maintain a focus on key populations?

Answer:

PEPFAR continues to support lifesaving HIV testing, care and treatment, and prevention of mother to child transmission services. This includes lifesaving HIV treatment for key populations. OMB is reviewing all other PEPFAR-funded services or assessment of programmatic efficiencies and consistency with United States foreign policy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #37
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In your confirmation hearing, you referred to malaria's impact in Africa a "deep economic crisis." Yet the second Trump Administration has cancelled 80% of its malaria awards and delayed or stopped more than 40 percent of planned bed net distribution campaigns. Which of the U.S. government's malaria assistance programs continue today? Please provide information on which types of services remain, how much funding remains, number of patients served, and in which countries.

Answer:

Through the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the U.S. government has contributed to the significant progress in reducing deaths and illness from malaria. The United States will continue PMI programs to ensure gains are not lost and continue country progress towards malaria elimination.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #38
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the Trump Administration's plan for the future of MCC?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to ensuring U.S. foreign assistance programs and policies are aligned with the national interest and deliver maximum benefit to the American taxpayer. The Administration's review of MCC and its programs is ongoing. At its conclusion, MCC will notify Congress of any relevant organizational changes, as well as decisions to continue, modify, or terminate programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #39
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the United States giving Rwanda in exchange for accepting third-country nationals the Trump Administration plans to deport? Please provide details on the substance of the arrangements.

Answer:

Under the amended Case Act, the Department of State provides to Congress, not less frequently than once each month, all qualifying non-binding instruments signed, concluded, or otherwise finalized between the U.S. government and foreign governments during the preceding month. State will provide the text of any "qualifying non-binding" instruments under the terms of the Case Act in the appropriate Case Act report.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #40
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Have the United States and Rwanda concluded any agreement on deportations? If so, when will the Trump Administration send the text of that agreement to Congress, in accordance with the law?

Answer:

Under the amended Case Act, the Department of State provides to Congress, not less frequently than once each month, all qualifying non-binding instruments signed, concluded, or otherwise finalized between the U.S. government and foreign governments during the preceding month. State will provide the text of any “qualifying non-binding" instruments under the terms of the Case Act in the appropriate Case Act report.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #41
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
Please describe the functions and duties of personnel the proposed reorganized Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). How many positions will be retained in DRL versus moved or dual-hatted elsewhere in the Department? Please confirm that the Administration intends to nominate an Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor complying with 22 U.S.C. §2651a. Please provide the total number of personnel whose positions in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor have been terminated since January 20, 2025, disaggregated by employee type, and the number of additional forthcoming RIFs of DRL staff. How many existing DRL global program and policy staff will be retained in the Department in the proposed reorganization?

Answer:
The planning for the reorganization of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) is ongoing. DRL's existing functions are expected to transition from a regionalized model to a leaner, more agile subject-matter model. Regional functions will be integrated into regional bureaus and embassies. By centralizing regional activities, the Department seeks to empower personnel to make decisions that are more responsive to the specific needs and conditions of the regions they serve. Some personnel from DRL regional offices will be realigned to DRL's new functional offices.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #42
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What are the Administration's human rights, democracy and labor programming priorities and priority countries?

- How many programs supporting DRL were funded by the State Department on January 20, 2025? How many have been terminated?

- Did the Department use keyword searches as it considered what programs to terminate? What keywords did the Department or your staff use?

Answer:

We continue to advance human rights in a way that centers the U.S. national interest and makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. The provision of any foreign assistance, including for democracy programming, will be guided by whether it furthers the national interest of the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #43
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will the State Department work with international partners and multilateral organizations to address human rights abuses worldwide, particularly to confront authoritarian regimes and foreign malign actors working to undermine democracies globally?

- Which office or unit within the State Department will house experts focused globally on democracy, human rights, or labor issues and what is the Department's proposed staffing plan (number of personnel, General Schedule level, and proposed budget) to assign these responsibilities?

- Which office or unit within the State Department will house experts focused globally on democracy, human rights, or labor issues and what is the Department's proposed staffing plan (number of personnel, General Schedule level, and proposed budget) to assign these responsibilities?

- How many human rights officers were employed at U.S. overseas posts on January 20, 2025? How many are employed in such roles at U.S. overseas posts currently?

- How many human rights officers at U.S. overseas posts does the Administration intend to support under the proposed reorganized State Department?

Answer:

The Department will be addressing human rights abuses worldwide, including multilaterally, when it is in our interest to do so. Our regional bureaus and our embassies will focus on human rights as part of our holistic approach. In support of this holistic approach, DRL is moving to a leaner subject-matter model focused on advancing the Administration's affirmative vision of American and Western values.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #44
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the national security justification for admitting Afrikaners as refugees since the start of the Administration on January 20, 2025? What is the national security justification for declining to admit refugees of other nationalities since that date? Please provide a list of, and the text of agreements the Administration has reached with, countries accepting voluntary repatriations of asylum seekers in the United States. Please provide a list of countries that have engaged in negotiations with the United States to support voluntary and involuntary repatriations supported in whole or part through State Department funding, and the amount and type of State Department funding provided to them to date.

Answer:

The Secretary of Homeland Security and I jointly determined the admission of specific refugees is in the national interest and does not pose a threat to the security or welfare of the United States. Of these, 68 South African nationals and 64 Afghans have been admitted based on this determination as of May 30. Like all others resettled through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, these individuals met the U.S. statutory definition of a refugee and passed background and security checks.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #45
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a list of programs working to counter synthetic drug production and trafficking and efforts to counter transnational crime that have been paused and/or terminated by the Trump Administration. Please indicate the total dollar value of these programs and what percentage of INL's active programs (in dollar value) as of January 20, 2025.

How many times has the Administration engaged the People's Republic of China (PRC) since January 20, 2025 to discuss the disruption of the fentanyl supply chain and what resulted from these negotiations?

Answer:

The Department reviewed nearly 1,400 active INL projects, and terminated over 400 that did not effectuate Administration policy goals or meet the Secretary's standards for effectiveness and efficiency. INL reactivated all other projects, including those focused on countering synthetic drug production and trafficking, and efforts to counter transnational crime. We expect China to end the export of deadly fentanyl precursors used by cartels to illicitly manufacture drugs. I continue to prioritize this issue and welcome any engagements on this with Beijing.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #46
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

a) Please list the policy priorities the Administration intends to advance in support of women and girls globally.

b) Please provide a detailed staffing plan that outlines the roles, reporting lines, and resources allocated to personnel focused on global women's issues in the new structure proposed in your FY26 budget.

Answer:

The Department remains committed to promoting women's rights and empowerment as a priority. Some staff, functions, and responsibilities of the Office of Global Women's Issues will be integrated into regional bureaus and embassies in an approach that will dissolve siloed reporting lines and ensure that promoting women's rights and empowerment is a priority across the full scope of the Department's diplomatic engagement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #47
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Under the proposed reorganization plan, which bureau will develop this strategy and coordinate broader implementation of the WPS Act, including with the U.S. interagency as required by statute?

Answer:

I am committed to implementing the President's vision of an America-first foreign policy that is holistic and driven by our regional bureaus and embassies. The critical expertise of functional bureaus will not be eliminated but will be more efficiently and effectively led by regional bureaus and embassies. The elimination of the Office of Global Women's Issues will address siloed reporting lines and ensure that promoting women's rights and empowerment is a priority across the full scope of the Department's diplomatic engagement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #48
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

On February 15, the so-called "Department of Government Efficiency" tweeted a list of programs it claimed to have cancelled, including "$21 million for voter turnout in India". Please explain the details surrounding the $21 million grant to India, including the dates of the grant, the contract information, the implementing partner, the proposed activities, and the dates of the activity. Please also provide any documentation, including the Congressional Notification number and date the CN was submitted.

Answer:

While this is a USAID program, at my direction, the Department conducted a full-scope programmatic review of individual grants, contracts, and other foreign assistance awards at the State Department and USAID. There are currently no programs in India for voter turnout. The Department will continue to keep the Committee apprised as we carefully review programs to ensure they advance U.S. national interests.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #49
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

At the 57th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Sri Lanka, including the Sri Lanka Accountability Project, for one year. With the U.S. having withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council, how do you plan to ensure the long-term continuation of this critical accountability mechanism?

Answer:

The United States continues to encourage the Government of Sri Lanka at the highest levels to engage meaningfully with Tamil political parties, civil society organizations, and victim communities to promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses. The Department regularly engages with Tamil communities and victim and survivor groups across Sri Lanka on human rights, justice and accountability, equality, and reconciliation.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #50
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Bangladesh was previously one of the largest recipients of U.S. development assistance across a range of different sectors, which had demonstrable impact on economic indicators in the country. Given the termination of many of these programs, how do you plan to continue to engage with Bangladesh and ensure that the political transition currently underway achieves a positive outcome in line with the aspirations of the Bangladeshi people?

Answer:

We welcome Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus' announcement of April 2026 elections to allow the Bangladeshi people to choose their leaders in a free and fair manner. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Bangladesh promoting economic development and regional security in the Indo-Pacific region. The Department welcomes Bangladesh's proactive steps to coordinate with the United States on rebalancing the trade relationship.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #51
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

On May 10, you tweeted: "I am pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site." Can you provide additional details, including a timeline and location for these broader talks, and the specifics surrounding what both sides agreed to discuss?

Answer:

I commend both the Indian and Pakistani governments for choosing the path to peace by maintaining the ceasefire. It is up to both governments to agree upon next steps for broader bilateral talks on areas of concern.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #52
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

As I understand it, the longstanding U.S. position on Kashmir has been that its status should be resolved through negotiations between India and Pakistan that respect the wishes of the people there. Do these basic premises still describe U.S. policy?

Answer:

Yes, our long-standing policy on Kashmir remains the same. The pace, scope, and character of any negotiations on Kashmir are for India and Pakistan to decide upon bilaterally.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #53
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

According to press reports, on February 14, MCC notified the Government of Nepal that ongoing projects under the compact would be affected by the suspension of payments resulting from the foreign assistance freeze. Although some Compact activities have reportedly resumed as of March 21, I am concerned about the uncertainty we are communicating about the Compact and the broader status of MCC to a key partner who has spent significant political capital to deepen its relationship with the United States. As chair of the MCC Board of Directors, how do you plan to address this uncertainty and continue to strengthen U.S. engagement with Nepal?

Answer:

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is responsible for developing its plans, subject to oversight by the MCC Board of Directors on which the Secretary of State serves as the chair. As I noted in my testimony on May 20, the review of MCC is designed to improve it, not eliminate it. We will continue to engage with the Government of Nepal to advance U.S. interests.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #54
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Paragraph 32 of the February 13 Joint Statement issued by President Trump and Prime Minister Modi noted that the two countries intended to strengthen law enforcement cooperation, including against "other elements who threaten…the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both nations". Does this language communicate a shift in U.S. posture towards accountability for individuals connected to the government of India targeting U.S. citizens on U.S. soil? Does accountability remain a priority for this administration?

Answer:

Accountability for the murder-for-hire plot against a U.S. citizen remains an Administration priority. On January 15, the Indian Enquiry Committee investigating the plot recommended the Indian government bring charges against an unspecified person for his/her involvement and ensure systemic controls were in place to deal with future incidents. The Department of Justice has issued indictments against former Indian intelligence agent Vikash Yadav and Indian citizen Nikhil Gupta for involvement in October 2024 and November 2023 respectively.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #55
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

US policy in Afghanistan emphasized to the Taliban that the normalization they seek is unreachable without a radical shift in their human rights conduct, in particular their treatment of half of Afghanistan's population. Does this continue to be the policy of the Trump administration?

Answer:

It is in the U.S. and global interests to see an Afghanistan that never again harbors terrorists, adheres to its international commitments, and is a net contributor to regional stability rather than a detractor. President Trump has made clear counterterrorism and securing the release of detained Americans are our top priorities in Afghanistan. We cannot even begin to consider normalization of relations with the Taliban.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #56
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Have you appointed a Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts, as required by law? Do you intend to maintain the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Refugee Efforts and associated overseas transit points and infrastructure to ensure that we can keep faith with Afghans who supported our mission there?

Answer:

At this time, the appointment of a Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) remains under consideration, as is the future of the office.

The Department maintains an acting coordinator for CARE.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #57
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many Countering People's Republic of China Influence Fund (CPIF) projects have been terminated since the start of the foreign assistance review?

Answer:

The Department of State has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #58
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the total dollar value of the CPIF projects terminated?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations and dollar figures of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #59
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a list of all the terminated CPIF projects.

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #60
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria were used to terminate these CPIF projects?

Answer:

We continually evaluate all our foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. This Administration is establishing a new foreign assistance paradigm for the Department, ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States. The Department and Administration will continue to carefully review current and potential programs as well as consider the role of foreign aid as we identify new opportunities to advance the President's foreign policy agenda.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #61
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many CPIF projects remain suspended or paused as part of the foreign assistance review?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #62
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the total dollar value of the paused/suspended CPIF projects?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #63
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a list of all the paused/suspended CPIF projects.

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #64
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria were used to pause/suspend these CPIF projects?

Answer:

Foreign assistance awards were reviewed to ensure that they reflected the President's foreign policy priorities, advanced American interests, and reflected responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. As I've said before, after decades of misalignment, we have refocused our foreign aid portfolio on programs which invest in partners, provide critical life-saving aid, and which advance U.S. diplomatic, security, and economic interests. Where I concluded the award did not align with the national and foreign policy interests of the United States, the award was terminated.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #65
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Who made the final decision regarding which awards are terminated or paused/suspended?

Answer:

The Department of State's review process involved rigorous line-by-line review by Senior Bureau Officials in the relevant bureaus, the Office of Foreign Assistance, and senior policy staff. At USAID, a task force of senior policy advisors, in consultation with the Office of Foreign Assistance at State, conducted a substantive, individualized evaluation of USAID programs. Final program decisions were made with my approval.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #66
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How are CPIF projects that were previously managed and implemented by USAID being managed now, and how does the Department plan to manage them in the future?

Answer:

Ongoing State Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to the State Department are calibrated to ensure we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The Department of State has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this oversight.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #67
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How much of the $400 million that was appropriated for CPIF under P.L. 118-47 has been expended?

Answer:

At the time of this hearing, $15.5 million in Fiscal Year 2024 Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF) has been notified and approved. Bureaus are actively reviewing their submissions for the Fiscal Year 2024 CPIF, and the Department will ensure only those in alignment with an America First foreign policy move forward.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #68
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What does the Administration plan to do with the DA funds appropriated under PL 118-47 for CPIF?

Answer:

Bureaus are actively reviewing their submissions for the Fiscal Year 2024 CPIF, and the Department will ensure only those in alignment with an America First foreign policy move forward. As part of this process, the Department is also considering how DA funds appropriated under PL 118-47 may be used. Among several other factors, the Department will consider any necessary modifications or changes in scope to proposals funded by DA-CPIF.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #69
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Which State Department official is currently responsible for the management and oversight CPIF?

Answer:

Consistent with prior years, both the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Office of Foreign Assistance are responsible for the management of CPIF, in consultation with other regional and functional bureaus. The Director of Foreign Assistance has oversight over all CPIF accounts.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #70
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many full-time staff currently work on CPIF at the State Department?

Answer:

The Department has a core group of representatives from the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs' China House and the Office of Regional and Security Policy Affairs, as well as the Office of Foreign Assistance, that review proposals for CPIF and offer recommendations to Department leadership.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #71
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many full-time staff worked on CPIF at USAID and the State Department before the foreign assistance review commenced?

Answer:

In previous years, the Department maintained a group of representatives from Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs' China House and Office of Regional and Security Policy Affairs, the Office of Foreign Assistance, and representatives from the Bureau of Planning, Learning, and Resource Management at USAID.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #72
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many State Department and USAID programs related to Tibet have been terminated or cut since the start of the foreign assistance review?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs. We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #73
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the total dollar value of Tibet-related programming terminations and cuts?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs. We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #74
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a list of all the terminated or cut Tibet-related programs.

Answer:

The Department continues to act swiftly and efficiently, completing a comprehensive review of all of its existing awards. This process remains ongoing with the Office of Management and Budget.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #75
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria were used to terminate or cut these Tibet-related programs?

Answer:

The State Department is working to reorient foreign assistance programming after decades of misaligned priorities in the delivery of foreign assistance, as directed by President Trump's executive order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid. The Department will continue, as necessary and consistent with relevant authorities, to align its activities and programs with the foreign policy priorities of the President.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #76
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many Tibet-related programs remain suspended or paused as part of the foreign assistance review?

Answer:

The Department continues to act swiftly and efficiently, completing a comprehensive review of all of its existing awards. This process remains ongoing with the Office of Management and Budget.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #77
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the total dollar value of the paused/suspended Tibet-related programs?

Answer:

The Department continues to act swiftly and efficiently, completing a comprehensive review of all its existing awards. This process remains ongoing with the Office of Management and Budget.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #78
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a list of all the paused/suspended Tibet-related programs.

Answer:

The Department continues to act swiftly and efficiently, completing a comprehensive review of all of its existing awards. This process remains ongoing with the Office of Management and Budget.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #79
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What criteria were used to pause/suspend these Tibet-related programs?

Answer:

The State Department is working to reorient foreign assistance programming after decades of misaligned priorities in the delivery of foreign assistance, as directed by President Trump's executive order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid. The Department will continue, as necessary and consistent with relevant authorities, to align its activities and programs with the foreign policy priorities of the President.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #80
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

I understand you have recompeted several Deputy Chief of Mission positions, selected by the D Committee. Why have these been recompeted? What criteria are you using to select these new DCMs?

Answer:

The Department re-competed a limited number of Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) positions at critical posts to allow nominated and confirmed Ambassadors to provide input on the selection of their DCM and clearly outline their expectations for these key officers, with the goal of a stronger partnership between the Ambassador and the DCM. The criteria used to select DCMs were the same criteria used to select all other DCMs: a demonstrated ability to lead people and drive policy and familiarity with the region and regional policy priorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #81
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

You appointed an untenured Foreign Service Officer with only one foreign tour to lead the Bureau of Global Talent management, replacing a two-time career Ambassador and member of the senior foreign service. What merit criteria was used to place the incumbent into this position?

Answer:

I am committed to implementing President Trump's vision of an America-first foreign policy that is holistic and driven by our regional bureaus and embassies and have full faith in my assembled team to ensure every dollar we spend, every program we fund, and every policy we pursue aligns with these goals.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Gregory Meeks #82
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Under what basis is the SBO of the R Bureau reviewing all Fulbright applicants who have been approved by the Fulbright committee? What criteria are they using to determine whether or not approved applicants move forward?

Answer:

Fulbright applications were reviewed in full compliance with the Fulbright-Hays Act.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
In FY2024, less than half of one perfect of the federal budget of the United States went to USAID, while 13%, or roughly $850 billion dollars, went to the Department of Defense – despite the DoD having failed seven straight audits since 2018. The State Department and USAID have never failed an audit at all in the same time period.

Is it correct that less than half of one percent of the FY2024 budget went to USAID?

Answer:

The United States spends tens of billions in taxpayer dollars on foreign aid every year. These are funds that could be used to support American families and it is critical that every dollar of foreign assistance furthers the national interests of the United States. The President is keeping his promises on delivering an America First agenda and we have a responsibility to the American people to ensure these resources serve U.S. interests and actually reach people in need.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Secretary Rubio, does it make sense to you to continue raising an agency's budget if they cannot even keep track of their own funds?

Answer:

I refer you to the Department of Defense for any questions regarding their budget.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

USAID formerly employed staff members assigned to prevent waste and fraud and manage risk within USAID's foreign assistance programs. Can you please provide information on whether you plan to rehire USAID staff members that worked to prevent waste and fraud and manage risk within foreign assistance programs? If so, can you please provide the total number of these staff members you plan to rehire, and what percentage this number is of the staff that were employed at these tasks at USAID before the Trump Administration's cuts?

Answer:

USAID functions and certain staff are being integrated into the Department of State to enhance accountability and to make foreign aid more effective and aligned with U.S. priorities. I am committed to enhancing staff capacity and expertise to guarantee the effective implementation of foreign assistance programs, manage risks and prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

USAID relied on third party monitoring awards for fraud and waste prevention in countries where it is difficult for U.S. government personnel to visit project sites, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Venezuela. Almost all of these awards have been terminated.

- Share all documentation and communications and the rationale relating to the decision to terminate these third-party monitoring awards?

- How will you ensure there is no fraud and waste in USAID projects that previously relied on third-party monitoring awards?

Answer:

Ongoing Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to State are calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs.

We are committed to ensuring that we prevent waste, fraud, abuse before it happens – not only that we investigate it after the fact. In the State Department reorganization, current plans call for a new consolidated

oversight function, and we anticipate expanding counterterrorism vetting for all foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Has the State Department prepared an assessment of how to recreate the internal controls and other measures to responsibly manage foreign aid resources at USAID within the State Department?

- Please provide any assessment, report, analysis, or other documentation related to this matter?

Answer:

Ongoing Department reorganization planning and the transition of USAID programs to State are calibrated to ensure that we are fully equipped to perform rigorous oversight of foreign assistance programs. The Department has the resources and personnel to effectively manage this oversight and is hiring for critical capacities in the delivery of foreign assistance as part of the transition of programs from USAID to the State. We believe these complementary efforts will enable the Department to be able to deliver and oversee aid more efficiently and strategically.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
The Honorable Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
Is it correct that the State Department plans to continue some of USAID's global health programming? If so, which ones and why? List which USAID global health programs will be discontinued and provide a rationale for this determination.

Answer:

Yes. The Department of State is working to ensure a smooth transition of global health programs USAID managed to the Department of State, including malaria, tuberculosis, polio, and maternal and child health programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
The Honorable Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What planning or analysis has the State Department conducted on how it will implement health programming that it is taking over from USAID, in light of the greatly reduced capacity of USAID implementing partners that have been forced to lay off staff or shut down during the foreign assistance freeze?

Answer:

The Department of State is working to ensure a smooth transition of USAID managed global health programs to the Department of State. Currently active implementing partners have the capability to implement approved lifesaving global health programming.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
The Honorable Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What assessments, analyses, or reports has the State Department prepared regarding how the reduction of our global health programs will affect our national security and foreign policy interests, including how Russia and China might fill the void we created?

- Provide any assessments, analysis, reports, or any other documentation on this subject?

Answer:

The Department of State routinely assesses Russia and China's efforts in global health and will continue to do so.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you please provide any assessments, analysis, or other documentation related to efforts to rebuild USAID's staff capacity and expertise to carry out foreign assistance programs at the State Department?

- Provide all communications to USAID staff relating to efforts to rehire USAID staff at the State Department to work on foreign assistance programs?

Answer:

The transition of certain USAID functions to the Department of State will streamline operations and ensure that foreign assistance aligns more closely with the U.S. national interest. The Department is rehiring some former USAID employees to bring expertise, as well as support implementation of the programs and functions realigned from USAID. I am committed to ensuring that foreign assistance programs are effectively overseen and managed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
I have heard from faith-based non-profits in my district that have been engaged in foreign assistance work that the State Department is no longer making advance payments to implementing partners for aid work and will now only reimburse implementing partners for work they have already completed. Is this information correct? If so, why?

- Can you please provide any documentation or communication related to the decision to no longer make advance payments for foreign assistance work?

- Has any analysis or assessment been made on how this decision will impact the implementation of foreign assistance programming, including global health programs? If so, can you please provide this analysis or assessment?

Answer:

For all awards, the Department is committed to paying contractors and grantees for all legitimate expenses incurred.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

In the face of intense global competition, how does removing one of the United States' most effective tools in our development toolkit harm our national priorities and interests globally?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to ensuring U.S. foreign assistance programs and policies are aligned with the national interest and deliver maximum benefit to the American taxpayer. The Administration's review of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and its programs is ongoing. At its conclusion, MCC will notify Congress of any relevant organizational changes, as well as of decisions to continue, modify, or terminate programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #12
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Secretary Rubio, can you please explain the current status of the foreign assistance review process?

- If the foreign assistance review process is complete, will you present the findings of this review to Congress? If it is not yet complete, can you please commit to presenting the findings of this review to Congress when it is complete? Can you please share, in detail, the criteria used to decide which USAID awards were terminated, as well as all communications and documentation relating to decisions to terminate specific USAID awards? Although the pace has improved, many USAID implementing partners still have not received all of the payments they are owed for work they completed months ago, including work completed under the Biden Administration. When should implementing partners expect these payments, which are vital to the financial health of organizations that implement US foreign assistance programs?

- Will you commit to ensuring all payments owed to implementing partners can be processed and distributed to them by Tuesday, July 1, 2025?

Answer:

The Department and USAID's substantive, individualized review of foreign assistance awards was completed earlier this year. Awards were reviewed to ensure they reflected the President's foreign policy priorities,

advanced American interests, and reflected responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Final program decisions were made with my approval.

We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring programs can support U.S. national security and other core national interests requires an agile approach. We will make changes as needed. For all awards, the Department is committed to paying contractors and grantees all legitimate expenses incurred.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #13
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

While the Administration claimed to put into place a waiver system for life-saving humanitarian assistance during the foreign assistance review, more than 100 life-saving awards were terminated shortly after receiving waivers. In addition, awardees that received waivers waited–and still wait–for payments, crippling their response to crises around the globe.

How does the Administration intend to restore programs and payments to organizations that received waivers so that they can continue their life-saving work?

- Please provide data on how many awards received waivers to continue operating during the foreign assistance review.

- Please provide data on the names, awardees, and countries of operation of the awards that received waivers?

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance programs to ensure they

make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #14
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The President's FY26 budget proposal does not include a specific budget proposal for PEPFAR. How much funding is this Administration requesting for PEPFAR in FY26?

- Any significant cuts to PEPFAR would threaten the millions of people on PEPFAR supported treatment. How will the State Department prevent widespread death from decreased access to HIV and AIDS treatment?

Answer:

The President's budget request includes $4 billion for disaster relief and other humanitarian assistance at the President's discretion, as well as funding for PEPFAR for current beneficiaries.

Ultimately, we are reorienting our foreign assistance programs to align directly with what is best for the United States and our citizens. This includes continuing essential life-saving programs and making strategic investments that strengthen our partners and our own country.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #15
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

[Refugees] Secretary Rubio, President Trump says that a white genocide is happening in South Africa. Past Secretaries of State have officially determined genocide against the Uyghurs, the Rohingya, in Sudan, and against religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.] Have you, in your capacity as Secretary of State, formally determined there to be a genocide against white people in South Africa? Do you, in your capacity as Secretary of State, plan to formally determine a genocide is taking place against white people in South Africa? Has President Trump asked you to formally determine a genocide is taking place against white people in South Africa? Can you please provide any documentation relating to a decision to formally determine a genocide against white people in South Africa? Do you personally agree with President Trump that genocide has been perpetrated against Afrikaners?

Answer:

The President has been very clear about the severity of the violence in South Africa, and we remain disturbed by the conditions in South Africa and its policy of racial discrimination against white South Africans. We have not made any decisions about a genocide determination.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #16
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

How is it in our national interest to admit Afrikaners as refugees but not Ukrainians persecuted by Putin, Venezuelans persecuted by Maduro, Cubans persecuted by the Castros, or Afghans who supported us during the war? Do you believe that Vladimir Putin is attempting a genocide against the people of Ukraine?

Answer:

The Secretary of Homeland Security and I jointly determined that the admission of specific Afrikaner refugees is in the national interest and does not pose a threat to the security or welfare of the United States. The President has made it clear the killing in Ukraine must stop and expects Russia to negotiate with Ukraine to end this war.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #17
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many South African nationals have applied for refugee or asylum status with the United States in FY 2023 and FY 2024?

Answer:

We refer questions on asylum status, including any statistics, to DHS and DOJ, which receive and make eligibility determinations on asylum applications.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #18
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

Refugees: South African Nationals/Asylum Status. Please break down approvals, denials, and pending cases, and provide median processing times for each category.

Answer:

We are unable to comment on individual cases or internal operations of refugee processing. As of May 30, 68 South African nationals have arrived in the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in FY 2025.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #19
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

What specific considerations or security assessments currently guide the Department's determination that an applicant from South Africa qualifies for refugee protection?

Answer:

Consistent with President Trump's Executive Order on Addressing Egregious Actions of the Republic of South Africa, the Department of State is prioritizing U.S. refugee resettlement of Afrikaners in South Africa who are victims of unjust racial discrimination. Like all others resettled through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, to be admitted to the United States as a refugee, Afrikaners met the U.S. statutory definition of a refugee and passed background and security checks.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #20
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Have there been any recent changes in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's reports that materially affect eligibility determinations for refugee status? If so, when were posts notified?

Answer:

There have not been any recent changes to DRL's reports that materially affect eligibility determinations for refugee status.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #21
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

Describe the multilayer vetting process for South African applicants, including coordination with DHS, DOJ, and ODNI.

Answer:

The interagency identified vetting as an area that requires additional attention. We refer questions on refugee vetting, including any proposed changes to vetting, to DHS, which leads on vetting.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #22
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
Secretary Kristi Noem has said that "Afghanistan has had an improved security situation, and its stabilizing economy no longer prevents them from returning to their home country." Secretary Rubio, do you agree with this statement? Is it your official assessment that it is safe for Afghan nationals to return to Afghanistan? Is it your official assessment that it is safe for Afghan women and girls to return to the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan? Is it your official assessment that it is safe for Afghanistan nationals who assisted or collaborated with the U.S. armed forces to return to the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan? Is it your official assessment that Afghanistan is safer for women and girls than South Africa is for white people?

Answer:

Temporary Protective Status (TPS) is a temporary, not permanent benefit. The security situation in Afghanistan for Afghans has changed since the suspension of operations at the U.S. Embassy in 2021 and we have seen hundreds of Afghans who elect to return to Afghanistan voluntarily. The Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate, extend, or terminate a foreign state for TPS after consultation with appropriate agencies of the U.S. government. DHS regularly consults the Department throughout the process.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #23
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

My staff have heard from former USAID and State Department employees that, due to low levels of interest among White South Africans, the State Department or other federal agencies have deployed staff to go door-to-door in South Africa to recruit white South Africans to apply for refugee status in the United States. Is this information correct?

Please provide any assessments, reports, analysis, documentation, or communications relating to deploying State Department employees or other federal government employees to South Africa to communicate with white South Africans regarding applying for refugee status in the United States?

Answer:

The information in this question is inaccurate. The U.S. embassy in Pretoria continues to review the more than 50,000 inquiries from individuals who have expressed interest to the embassy in resettling to the United States and is reaching out to eligible individuals for refugee interviews and processing.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #24
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you please share any plans, documents, or communications relating to the Trump Administration's plans to engage with the CARICOM countries? Can you please share the Trump Administration's formal position on which areas of engagement they plan to prioritize with CARICOM?

Answer:

My engagements with our Caribbean partners promote regional actions to end illegal immigration, counter transnational organized crime, and address Haiti's political and security challenges. We aim to strengthen our economic partnerships to counter Chinese influence by supporting Taiwan's diplomatic ties and facilitating private sector investments in infrastructure and energy projects to boost the region's economic potential ties. I prioritize security and border security measures through initiatives like the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Congresswoman Kweisi Mfume #25
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
Can you please share any commitments made to or received from CARICOM countries that you met on the March 2025 trip or during the May 2025 meeting, including any commitments on the issues of narcotics and firearms trafficking, disrupting transnational criminal networks, energy security, and enhancing shared economic prosperity? Can you please share the details of the commitment made to Jamaica to enhance cooperation on combatting transnational crime? Can you please share all transcripts, documents, and communications relating to any plans to facilitate or assist with Guyana's energy resource development? Can you please transmit a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on March 27, 2025, between the United States and Guyana?

Answer:
To make America safer, we work with Caribbean countries to counter threats from transnational and local criminal organizations. One example is the non-binding Memorandum of Understanding we entered with Guyana on security cooperation, a copy of which we will share with Congress in compliance with the Case-Zablocki Act, as amended. To make America more prosperous, we will marshal our private sector companies to increase energy production capacity, manufacturing, and industry within our hemisphere.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #26
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The President's FY26 Skinny Budget Request does not include funding for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). You mention support for the CBSI in several of the readouts from your meetings with Caribbean leaders. Can you please share the funding level the President plans to request for CBSI in FY26? Do you expect that this funding level will be higher or lower than the FY24 enacted level?

Answer:

Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools to advance U.S. interests. I am committed to supporting our Caribbean partners' efforts to build a safer, stronger, more secure region. Crime and violence in the region affect our neighbors as well as millions of U.S. tourists, resident citizens, and firms. To keep transnational criminal organizations from taking root in the region, it is vital that our Caribbean partners strengthen law enforcement cooperation, border security measures, and institutional accountability.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #27
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
Mr. Secretary, you indicated on Tuesday, May 20th that the Trump Administration is prepared to take a leading role in the Organization of American States (OAS) stepping up engagement to address the security crisis in Haiti. Can you please share any plans, assessments, documentation, or communications relating to working with the OAS to intervene in Haiti? Can you provide a commitment that the Trump Administration will continue to invest in the Multinational Security Support mission in Haiti, including an upcoming $200 million payment for the continued operation of the mission's base in Port-au-Prince? Can you please share any State Department plans, assessments, documentation, or communications related to helping to expand the Haitian National Police?

Answer:
The Department continues to work with Haiti and other member states at the OAS to bring peace and security to the Haitian people. The Trump Administration is committed to supporting common sense solutions to address the crisis in Haiti while increasing international burden sharing, including through supporting the Kenyan-led MSS mission in Haiti. Through INL, State Department assisted with graduating 739 new Haiti National Police cadets in January, with the goal of supporting additional promotions to increase the size of the HNP.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #28
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Over a week ago, news reporting revealed that the administration is considering closing or consolidating several diplomatic outposts in Africa, including the American embassies in Eritrea, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan. At a time when both China and Russia are expanding the number of embassies they have in Africa, this would seem to be short sighted. Could you please comment on the signal it would send to these countries if the US were to close these facilities? What would that do to the State Department's ability to serve US citizens, preserve and promote diplomatic partnerships, and have influence in those regions?

Answer:

The dynamic nature of foreign policy encourages the Department to constantly evaluate its programs and operations to ensure the USG's limited resources are best deployed to meet America's most pressing challenges. To my knowledge, no decisions have been made to close posts in Africa at this time.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #29
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May, 21, 2025

Question:

Mr. Rubio, can you please share all documentation and communications relating to your and the Trump Administration's efforts to free the remaining hostages held by Hamas?- Can you please also share any documentation and communications relating to your and the Trump Administration's efforts to pressure Israel, Hamas, and all other relevant stakeholders towards reaching a ceasefire deal that ends the war in Gaza and returns the remaining hostages?

Answer:

The United States is committed to securing the freedom of all remaining hostages in Gaza, including recovering the remains of two deceased Americans. We have engaged with Israel, Qatar, Egypt, and other interlocuters across the region to free the hostages and secure a broader peace in the region. These efforts are sensitive and cannot be discussed in public.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #30
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you please share all diplomatic steps you and the Administration are taking to ensure sufficient aid is reaching Palestinian civilians as soon as possible with my staff, including all documentation and communications on this subject?

Answer:

Since the President was elected, the Department has been working non-stop to find creative solutions and smart, bold ideas to improve life for the people of Gaza. We are supportive of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's (GHF) plans to ramp up aid delivery and continue to work with Israeli authorities to allow traditional humanitarian aid operations to resume immediately as a bridging mechanism until the GHF is fully operational.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #31
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you please share where responsibility for the Global Fragility Act will be moving in the State Department reorganization? How does the State Department plan to preserve the institutional knowledge held by the former Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations regarding implementation of the Global Fragility Act? How has the foreign assistance freeze set back implementation of the Global Fragility Act, especially in Haiti?

Answer:

The Office of Foreign Assistance Policy (F/POL) will provide policy and strategic support for the Department's bureaus assuming new foreign assistance responsibilities. F/POL will also take on certain statutory policy and reporting duties, including responsibilities related to the Global Fragility Act, currently performed by the Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Kweisi Mfume #32
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

The President's FY26 Discretionary Budget Request for the State Department slashes funding for numerous programs including lifesaving global health programs, humanitarian assistance, international narcotics and law enforcement, and pledged contributions to international organizations At the same time, the President requests $2.9B in funding to a brand new America First Opportunity (A1OF) Fund. The description of how this fund will be used is vague, listing activities and purposes that are already being done through programs that you have cut budgets for, or have slated for elimination.

- Please share all communications, documentation, planning, and assessments for how the State Department will use this new America First Opportunity Fund?

- Can you commit that you will consult with members of both parties in Congress on the use of this fund, how it will support existing laws, and oversight and reporting plans that will prevent waste, fraud, and abuse?

Answer:

The America First Opportunity Fund (A1OF) consolidates scattered, restrictive, duplicative, and inefficient foreign assistance accounts into one flexible, multi-purpose account to ensure that our aid can respond nimbly to

the changing global landscape. The A1OF will enable the Department to respond rapidly to needs and strategic opportunities as they occur. Like all State Department foreign assistance accounts, the A1OF would be administered subject to my direction. I look forward to engaging with Congress to realize the A1OF.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide a comprehensive list of the development programs that have been terminated by the foreign aid review.

Answer:

The Department has previously provided information to the leadership of this committee on the status of foreign assistance programs, including terminations of foreign assistance awards, and will continue to do so. We are continually evaluating all our foreign assistance programs to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Ensuring we have the right mix of programs to support U.S. national security and other core national interests of the United States requires an agile approach. We will continue to make changes as needed.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide the number of countries that will lose support as a result of the elimination of these DA programs. Please provide estimates of how many people and projects will be affected, broken down by region and sector.

Answer:

Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. The President and I agree that the United States is no longer going to blindly dole out money without a sufficient return for the American people and this outsized burden must not continue to fall to the American taxpayers. It is long overdue for other donors to step up to contribute to life-saving assistance and other shared, global challenges.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What metrics, evaluations, and/or analyses did you use to inform the elimination of the DA account?

Answer:

The America First Opportunity Fund (A1OF) consolidates scattered, restrictive, duplicative, and inefficient foreign assistance accounts into one flexible, multi-purpose account to ensure that our aid can respond nimbly to the changing global landscape. The A1OF will enable the Department to respond rapidly to needs and strategic opportunities as they occur.

Like all State Department foreign assistance accounts, the A1OF would be administered subject to my direction. I look forward to engaging with Congress to realize the A1OF.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What modeling has been done to assess the potential risks—such as increased cycles of crisis or dependency—if the DA account is eliminated as proposed in the FY26 skinny budget?

Answer:

The America First Opportunity Fund (A1OF) consolidates scattered, restrictive, duplicative, and inefficient foreign assistance accounts into one flexible, multi-purpose account to ensure that our aid can respond nimbly to the changing global landscape. The A1OF will enable the Department to respond rapidly to needs and strategic opportunities as they occur.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How will you preserve critical education programs codified in the READ Act and its reauthorization?

Answer:

Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. The Department and Administration will continue to carefully review current and potential education programs, as well as consider the role of foreign aid as new opportunities are identified, to advance the President's foreign policy agenda.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Is the State Department releasing or planning to release new requests for assistance (RFAs) or requests for proposals (RFPs) before the school year in many countries begins this fall? How many children will lose access to education if no new RFAs/RFPs are released this year?

Answer:

The Department and Administration will continue to carefully review current and potential education programs to advance the President's foreign policy. All active USAID foreign assistance awards being transitioned to State will be administered by State Department bureaus and granted no-cost extensions to their period of performance if needed to facilitate an orderly transition. For extensions and cost modifications requiring additional expenditures or obligations, the Office of Foreign Assistance continues to review these requests as it would in the normal course.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide the State Department's estimate of the number of teachers who have lost support as a result of the foreign aid cuts.

Answer:

The Department and Administration will continue to carefully review current and potential education programs to advance the President's foreign policy agenda. Reviewing and realigning U.S. foreign assistance was never about ending foreign aid, but rather reorienting how we deliver aid to maximize impact, adopt a returns-oriented mindset, and center American strategic interests. By transitioning USAID's core life-saving and strategic aid programs to the State Department, we will significantly enhance the efficiency and strategic impact of foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #8
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Please provide the State Department's estimate of the number of students who have lost access to safe learning spaces as a result of the foreign aid cuts.

Answer:

The Department and Administration will continue to carefully review current and potential education programs to advance the President's foreign policy agenda. Reviewing and realigning U.S. foreign assistance was never about ending foreign aid, but rather reorienting how we deliver aid to maximize impact, adopt a returns-oriented mindset, and center American strategic interests. By transitioning USAID's core life-saving and strategic aid programs to the State Department, we will significantly enhance the efficiency and strategic impact of foreign assistance programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #9
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How did the State Department identify programs that were wasteful, fraudulent, or outside the mission of the State Department and USAID?

Answer:

Foreign assistance awards were reviewed to ensure they reflected the President's foreign policy priorities, advanced American interests, and reflected responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. After decades of mismanagement, we have refocused our foreign aid portfolio on programs which invest in partners, provide critical life-saving aid, and advance U.S. diplomatic, security, and economic interests.

If an award did not align with the national and foreign policy interests of the United States, that award was terminated.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #10
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How many surveys, focus groups, interviews, and other engagements were conducted with non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, industry experts, and other stakeholders to determine which programs to cut?

Answer:

The Department of State's review process involved rigorous line-by-line review by Senior Bureau Officials in relevant bureaus, the Office of Foreign Assistance, and senior policy staff. At USAID, a task force of senior policy advisors, in consultation with the Office of Foreign Assistance at the Department of State, conducted a substantive, individualized evaluation of USAID programs. I approved final program decisions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Johnny Olszewski #11
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the total financial cost resulting from the Trump Administration's foreign aid cuts and program terminations, specifically for the below? Please provide itemized figures or estimates for each category, and cite the data used to calculate these costs:

- Lawsuits and legal settlements related to unpaid contracts or disputed terminations.

- Abandoned or unfinished projects.

- Delayed transportation and storage of materials.

- Wasted or perished commodities (such as food or medical supplies).

Answer:

For all awards, the Department of State is committed to paying contractors and grantees for all legitimate expenses incurred.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Keith Self #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you need additional authorities or assistance to promote NATO membership for Kosovo, which will promote stability in the Western Balkans?

Answer:

The United States looks to European partners to take a leadership role on European security. Kosovo aspires to be a positive contributor to regional security. Through our existing authorities, we support Kosovo working to do so through the gradual, transparent transition of the Kosovo Security Force to a NATO-interoperable, multi-ethnic, territorial defense force subject to civilian control. Kosovo needs to continue building the capabilities and demonstrating the commitment that would bring it closer to NATO integration.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Keith Self #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:
As our committee works to reauthorize the State Department, my subcommittee has jurisdiction over the T Family branch. In your new organizational chart, you included the Bureau of Counterterrorism within the T Family. Can you explain how this change will benefit the State Department's counterterrorism efforts?

Answer:

The Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) will maintain statutory responsibility for coordinating CT efforts. Moving to the T-Family will increase the Bureau's alignment with other security policy and assistance providers, including INL, ISN, PM, and CDP. CT is a fast-paced issue requiring rapid coordination within the Department and interagency to respond to imminent threats. Integrating CT with other bureaus responsible for security policy and assistance will enhance coordination and ensure maximal alignment to deliver the President's national security priorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Keith Self #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Could you explain how [President Trump's] tariffs will benefit our partnerships with EU and NATO allies, especially as it relates to establishing deterrence against our mutual adversaries?

Answer:

For many years, trading partners have treated the United States unfairly, creating a trade deficit which threatens our economic and national security, reduces our national competitiveness, and makes us dependent on other countries to meet our security needs. By making trade more reciprocal and balanced, we can reduce the trade deficit, grow the U.S. economy, and improve our trade relationships. We have already reached a historic Economic Prosperity Deal with the United Kingdom that bolsters national and economic security.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Jefferson Shreve #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Mr. Rubio, how is the State Department working to address the issue of scam centers?

Answer:

The State Department has an Online Scam Operations Working Group that coordinates efforts to combat all facets of scams in Southeast Asia. The Department leverages diplomatic efforts, specialized training and equipment to Southeast Asian law enforcement agencies, and engagement with the private sector and civil society to leverage their expertise, information, and resources. State continues to consider and apply sanctions, visa restrictions, and transnational organized crime rewards programs to hold perpetrators to account while protecting U.S. citizens.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Jefferson Shreve #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Do you believe the Department has the statutory authority it needs to properly address foreign scam centers? If not, what can Congress do to help?

Answer:

Yes, the Department has the statutory authority it needs to address foreign scam centers.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Jefferson Shreve #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Like with other transnational criminal threats, combatting scam centers involves many different U.S. government entities—State Department, FBI, Secret Service, as well as state and local law enforcement. In your view, should the State Department lead this effort?

Answer:

Yes, the State Department should lead on foreign policy and international engagement, and we do so in close coordination with our interagency colleagues, including the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Treasury, as well as state and local law enforcement. The State Department coordinates and facilitates the work of interagency partners internationally and provides key information, funding, and relationships to help their respective missions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Jefferson Shreve #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

How is the Department coordinating with the interagency community to address foreign scam centers?

Answer:

The State Department is working closely with the White House and the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Treasury to coordinate law enforcement actions and facilitate relationships with target countries, impose sanctions against transnational criminal organizations and their enablers, and advance other measures to apply maximum pressure on scam operations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Jefferson Shreve #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Mr. Rubio, I recently introduced a bill called the STOP Scammers Act, which would require the Treasury Department to identify and designate foreign scam operations targeting Americans as Foreign Financial Threat Organizations (FFTOs). This designation would give federal law enforcement more tools to trace and seize funds, block access to U.S. telecommunications infrastructure, and direct federal agencies to take cybersecurity measures to disrupt the FFTOs operations.

Do you believe the enactment of a new designation, such as a FFTO, would make interagency operations to counter large-scale scam centers more effective?

Answer:

The Department of State would defer to the Departments of Treasury, Justice and Homeland Security on whether such a designation would provide additional tools to U.S. law enforcement and other federal agencies to combat this threat.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Would the State Department consider reducing the travel advisory for Somaliland? (Right now all of Somalia—including Somaliland, per past "One Somalia" policy—is listed as "Level 4 – do not travel.")

Answer:

When we assess the Travel Advisory level of a destination, we consider all present threats and make an assessment based on risks prevalent in a majority of the area. Somaliland represents about a quarter of Somalia's land area, and its security situation is part of our overall assessment for Somalia's Travel Advisory. Additionally, consular officers may not travel to Somaliland due to security conditions, which exacerbates risks present for Americans. We strongly recommend American citizens do not travel to Somalia, including Somaliland, for any reason.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

As an interim step towards recognition, would the State Department consider opening a consulate in Hargeisa? Alternatively, might consular and ultimately a full diplomatic mission be run out of our embassy in Addis Ababa, as opposed to Mogadishu?

Answer:

The Department is not currently considering opening a consulate in Hargeisa. The United States continues to recognize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia, which includes the territory of Somaliland. Given ongoing security concerns at Embassy Mogadishu, U.S. Embassy in Nairobi handles consular responsibility for Somalia.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Can you contrast the religious freedom situation in Somaliland with that as exists in the rest of Somalia?

Answer:

All of Somalia, including Somaliland, remains a deeply conservative Islamic society with significant legal and practical restrictions on religious freedom. Recent developments in Somaliland are encouraging but do not constitute sustained and meaningful improvement in the religious freedom situation. Blasphemy and "defamation of Islam" remain prohibited and documented detentions, and imprisonments of Christian converts have continued, feeding a perception that Somaliland is targeting Christians.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #4
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Has the de facto government of Somaliland signaled that it would join the Abraham Accords if it were recognized by the United States? If it were to pledge to do so, how would such a pledge be received by the Administration, and would it be a factor in considering whether or not to accord official recognition?

Answer:

The Somaliland government has not offered to join the Abraham Accords in return for U.S. recognition of Somaliland as a state. In accordance with the Administration's guiding foreign policy principles, any such proposal would be assessed on whether such an arrangement makes America safer, stronger, or more prosperous.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #5
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

What is the status of the conflict in Las Anod? Please provide a timeline of significant events beginning on July 1, 2022, to the present. Please include a breakdown of the clans which traveled to Las Anod to take part in a consultation among greater Darod clan families, where they are from, and whether clan elders who attended were accompanied by armed entourages of supporters.

Answer:

The situation in Las Anod has remained stable since August 2023, following the defeat of Somaliland security forces by clan militia. The conflict erupted in late 2022/early 2023 following the killing of local officials and a subsequent Somaliland security force crackdown. The Dhulbahante, Warsengeli, and Marjerteen are the primary Darod sub-clans represented in that area. The Department is not in a position to verify who attended various clan consultation meetings, but it is common for armed security to accompany clan elders when traveling in Somalia.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #6
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

With respect to clans which traveled to Las Anod, are you aware of any which received funding or other support from the PRC? Please focus in particular on clans from Puntland, such as the Majeerteen.

Answer:

The Department has been unable to verify reports China has provided funding to clans from Puntland or elsewhere in Somalia.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary Marco Rubio by
Representative Chris Smith #7
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

To what extent was this initiative [not to accept Taiwan (Republic of China) passports and travel documents for travel to Hargeisa, which it claims is a part of Somalia as a de jure though not de facto matter] instigated by the PRC? While the Somali government reversed policy under US pressure, there is no guarantee that we will not see a repeat of this, and therefore, wouldn't a definitive solution be to recognize the independence of Somaliland as a de jure as well as a de facto matter? Please include any classified information in a separate classified annex in response to the above questions.

Answer:

This is yet another case of Beijing waging its intimidation campaign against Taiwan and its supporters around the world, undermining the sovereign decisions of other countries and threatening international peace and prosperity. However, U.S. recognition of Somaliland as a state would not guarantee that airlines serving Somaliland would accept Taiwan passports and travel documents for travel to Hargeisa.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ryan Zinke #1
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

It has come to my attention the continued issue of obtaining business visas for travel into the United States. We have heard stories that wait times for appointments at some consular offices are almost two years. At the end of the day, all inbound business travel should be safe and efficient and obtaining a business travel visa should be a straightforward process. Secretary Rubio, what ways is State working to speed up the ability of the business travel industry to obtain visas for inbound travel?

Answer:

As set forth in Executive Order 14161, the United States must be vigilant during the visa-issuance process to ensure that those aliens approved to apply for admission into the United States do not intend to harm Americans or our national interests. We do not issue a visa until an applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the consular officer adjudicating the case that he or she is eligible to receive a visa under U.S. law.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ryan Zinke #2
House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 21, 2025

Question:

Which countries have the longest consular wait times and how can we accelerate the safe and efficient issuance of visas?

Answer:

The Department of State publishes our current wait times for nonimmigrant visa appointments monthly on our website. Wait times for nonimmigrant visa interviews reflect the time required for consular officers to adjudicate the cases before them in full compliance with U.S. law, including to ensure applicants do not pose a security or safety risk to the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Marco Rubio by
Representative Ryan Zinke #3
House Foreign Affairs Committee May 21, 2025

Question:

Assuming this issue is widespread, would you work with us to develop legislation to address this issue, please?

Answer:

Yes, the Department of State stands ready to provide technical assistance to Congress in reviewing proposed legislation on visa processing to ensure we uphold the highest standards of national security and public safety to protect our nation and its citizens.

○