



Press Release

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**GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: FY 2013 STATE AND FOREIGN
OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS MARK UP**

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

Good morning.

I would like to welcome members to this important hearing on Syria. Our witness today is Ambassador Robert S. Ford who was appointed as the U.S. Ambassador to Syria in January 2011. Although we no longer have a diplomatic presence in Damascus, Ambassador Ford continues his challenging work back at the State Department. We thank you for being here.

The outcome of the current situation in Syria has great strategic importance to the United States. The ongoing crisis has direct implications for security in the region and therefore our own national security. The conflict has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis for the Syrian people and their neighbors in surrounding countries. We know that even if Assad were to fall tomorrow, these needs will continue to be significant for a long time.

Beyond humanitarian assistance, I believe the U.S. needs to be very thoughtful and strategic with our assistance, including who we provide it to, what purpose it is intended to serve, and how we ensure it does not fall into the wrong hands. I am very concerned about what we have seen take place in the Middle East and North Africa over the last two years. This Committee must ensure that the U.S. supports an outcome in Syria that promotes our values, as well as stability in the broader region.

I believe we must do everything we can to support our friends in the region. We must be unyielding in supporting our friend and ally Israel, and Jordan needs our help now more than ever. I look forward to hearing what plans the Administration has to help our allies minimize the impact of the crisis in Syria on their security and stability.

We have a limited amount of time today, so after the Ambassador provides his testimony, we will turn to Members' questions. We will only have time for one round due to time constraints today.

Members are reminded that this briefing is classified at the top secret level.

I will now turn to the Ranking Member, Mrs. Lowey, for her opening remarks.