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**GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: MARKUP OF THE FISCAL YEAR
2016 BILL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN
OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS**

I would like to welcome everyone to today's markup of the Fiscal Year 2016 bill for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

I want to start by mentioning Chairman Rogers' work to move bills through the Committee this year and thank him for the subcommittee's allocation of \$47.8 billion. It allows us to produce a good bill that addresses many priorities. We know the Chairman faces a difficult task to keep all of the appropriations bills within the levels set in the budget resolution.

I want to thank my friend, Mrs. Lowey, for her dedication to this subcommittee. Even though she has a big job as ranking member of the full committee, she has always engaged on issues in this bill.

I also want to note the hard work of all of the members during our hearings and briefings this year.

All of the members of this Subcommittee know that we live in an increasingly dangerous world where terrorist groups such as ISIL, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram and al Shabaab, threaten the United States, our allies and partners, and our way of life.

We see Russia and China continuing to assert territorial ambitions over their neighbors. The threat of a nuclear Iran is real, and Iran continues to support and fund terrorist activities around the world. For these and many other reasons, this year's bill is first and foremost a national security bill with a focus on:

- embassy security;
- aid to our strategic allies and partners -- such as, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Ukraine; and
- democracy programs and international broadcasting.

The bill also continues to fight the global war on terrorism by supporting aid to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and the Syrian people. We devote new resources to preventing terrorist safe havens and stopping the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

The bill rejects cuts the Administration proposed to humanitarian accounts. The number of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced people is more than 50 million – the highest level since World War II. We cannot reduce this critical assistance when conflict and strife reach into so many corners of the world.

The bill also reverses the President's proposal to cut global health programs and maintains last year's funding level for the account.

This Subcommittee remains committed to programs that save lives and can have the most impact. We focus on diseases such as polio, malaria and HIV, and on reducing the number of children who die before age 5 by increasing funds for early vaccinations.

The bill provides funding above the request for our neighbors in Mexico, Colombia and the Caribbean to address drug trafficking and violent crime before it reaches our shores.

The bill also continues to address the crisis we faced last summer when tens of thousands of unaccompanied children flooded our southern border. While the numbers have come down, this issue is not going to be resolved overnight. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have developed a joint plan to address shared challenges. This is a significant first step, but more needs to be done. This bill demonstrates our commitment to address the security challenges that exist within these countries. Security must come first before there can be prosperity. The Committee will continue to watch how these countries progress, and we expect aid to stop if we do not see results.

The bill continues to prioritize funds to address human trafficking. We must do our part to put an end to what equates to modern slavery.

The bill also continues to devote funds to combat wildlife poaching and trafficking. Many of the members of the committee have expressed their support for this issue, not only because we do not want to see the world's most unique wildlife become extinct on our watch; we also know that this is a security concern - criminal organizations are getting rich off of poaching and trafficking wildlife parts.

In order to address all of these priorities within our allocation, the bill excludes funding for many accounts requested or funded last year, cuts the United Nations and international organizations more than a billion dollars below the request, and eliminates assistance to many international banks.

Next, I want to address some of the policy issues in the bill.

Egypt is a critical partner of the United States. They have continued their strategic relationship with us, and they are upholding the peace treaty with Israel. In this year's bill, we have continued to make these two issues the highest priority. We continue to watch the situation in Egypt, but the United States must stop sending mixed messages.

Our security relationship with Egypt started over 30 years ago when they signed the peace treaty with Israel, and they have kept the peace ever since. At a time of chaos in the Middle East, we need Egypt as our stable ally.

The United States has provided aid to the Palestinians as part of a good faith effort to bring about peace and security between Israel and the Palestinians.

But the Palestinians have now joined the International Criminal Court and they continue to push their cause at the United Nations and other international organizations. This bill sends a clear message that the P.A. will not receive funding as long as they continue to pursue unilateral efforts and work against a negotiated peace agreement. The bill also stops the Palestinians from having representation in D.C. if their hostile actions continue.

I hope that all members can support moving this bill out of Subcommittee today. It is a product that reflects many of the priorities in today's challenging and unpredictable world.

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