

**Ranking Member Gregory W. Meeks (NY-05)**  
**Testimony at Member Day Hearing for FY26 National Security,**  
**Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations**  
**Tuesday, April 1st, 2025**

Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Frankel, thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's Member Day hearing. I appreciate this opportunity to share my priorities for the National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill.

If this were any other year, I would focus my testimony on the specific programs we have worked together to support. But this is no ordinary year. We are dealing with an administration that has shown an unprecedented and reckless disregard for Congress's constitutional power. This includes our power of the purse and the clear guardrails we establish through appropriations law, as well as other directions of congressional intent and authorizations of Executive Branch agencies and programs.

Within this subcommittee's jurisdiction, the most damaging example of the Trump-Musk onslaught against our federal government—and Congress' role—is the dismantling of USAID. The President's sudden freeze of foreign assistance caused utter chaos. Food assistance Congress appropriated sat rotting on shelves. Clinics we funded sat closed and unable to distribute their stocks of lifesaving medicines, leading to unnecessary deaths and babies born with HIV. And now, despite court orders challenging the legality of their actions, the administration boasts that 83% of foreign assistance programs are already shuttered, and what remains of USAID is now being folded into the State Department.

Similarly, President Trump disregarded existing statutes and terminated by decree the U.S. Agency for Global Media, resulting in grant terminations to its subsidiaries, including Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia. These broadcasters delivered trusted information to audiences in heavily

censored countries starved of independent media and flooded with propaganda from our adversaries.

And the most recent egregious flouting of the law was DOGE's hostile takeover of the U.S. Institute of Peace, which Congress created as a nonpartisan, independent nonprofit organization. USIP has had broad bipartisan support, working successfully under seven administrations to prevent violent conflicts and broker peace around the world.

The Trump administration has done all this outside of the law, without consulting Congress and in stark contradiction of the appropriations law and other bills we have passed that are now the law of the land.

Regardless of whether we are Democrats or Republicans, we must, as Members, stand up for our prerogatives as the legislative body of this democracy and a co-equal branch of government.

Because this is ultimately about our ability to stand up for our constituents. And the programs this subcommittee funds are critical to our national security; they help ensure the United States can successfully achieve our foreign policy goals, compete with our rivals, and prevent regional crises from escalating into armed conflict. These programs allow us to respond to humanitarian emergencies and the development needs of our partners, preventing diseases from becoming pandemics that reach our shores. All these objectives and more are achieved through a well-resourced State Department and related agencies and programs, with the support from Congress that they need to effectively wield our soft power. The world is far too small and interconnected for us to hide behind our borders, pull back our tools, and hope the next conflict or epidemic won't impact us here at home.

This subcommittee has recognized the value of all these efforts, as evidenced by the strong, bipartisan support for its work over many years. Of course, each administration has the right to review policy.

And our job is not to defend the status quo over modernization. But President Trump and Elon Musk do not have the right to unilaterally eliminate programs that Congress has deemed essential. The legislative branch after debate and deliberation—and in consideration of the executive’s position – creates the body of the law the Executive must indeed execute. That is the right way to ensure improvements and reforms.

It is critically important that the next National Security Appropriations bill maintain and strengthen the investments that safeguard our national security at no less than the FY24 level. But whatever Congress ultimately decides, it is even more essential that we ensure that the FY26 law is implemented by the administration—because in America, we believe in the rule of law, not of kings.