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## **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs**

### **Member Day Testimony on Fiscal Year 2027 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations**

Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury (NM-01)

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Lois Frankel, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in front of this committee on our priorities as they relate to National and Global Security and International Development.

### **RESTORING PEACE AND AMERICAN DIPLOMACY**

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that we meet today at a moment of profound global instability.

An unauthorized war in Iran is costing more than \$1 billion dollars a day and putting not only a staggering financial burden on our country, but creating a global humanitarian and geopolitical crisis. At this date we do not have a full accounting of the costs of this war, but know that in the early days alone, it cost a staggering \$11 billion in it's first week and has cost the lives of 13 American service members and over 200 injured. Not to mention over 2000 dead in the Middle East and over a hundred and seventy-five school children and teachers dead in Iran in the largest civilian casualty in decades—and at the hands of American missiles.

This is exactly why the programs covered under this committee's jurisdiction were created: to prevent war, to promote peace and prosperity, and to invest in global development as a foundation for diplomacy. At a time when families here in America cannot afford healthcare, housing, food, and education, it is hard to understand why this Administration has gutted international programs that promote peace—while pursuing a war that is not only costing innocent lives, but destabilizing global energy markets, food systems, and supply chains.

It is for this reason I am coming to testify in front of this Committee today. To call for an end to this war and for the restoration the programs at the State Department, USAID, and other international commissions and bodies this bill funds—in order to restore peace and American

leadership as a global partner—which we know will save lives and make the world a safer and more secure place for everyone.

## **IMPACTS OF CUTS TO PROGRAMS**

As the Ranking Member of the DOGE Subcommittee over the last year I have seen first hand the devastating impacts cuts to these programs have had on global security.

Cuts to USAID have had devastating impacts including:

- Reducing humanitarian aid in conflict zones
- Disruptions to food and medical assistance
- Increasing vulnerability to famine and disease
- Weakening of fragile democracies
- And the death of thousands of children across the planet that were completely preventable

These cuts are not just a moral failure—they are a national security failure. When we cut support for development, we create a global vacuum that is filled by instability, extremism, and the influence of our adversaries. And, it weakens the standing of the United States as a global leader—as these are the programs on the frontlines of American diplomacy promoting global partnerships, economic development and democratic governance across the world.

## **RESTORING AMERICAN LEADERSHIP**

If we are to regain our standing as a global leader, we must reverse course.

International diplomacy and development programs are strategic investments in peace and global security. Every dollar spent on development prevents wars, saves lives, and is an investment in American security

That is why we must:

- Fully restore and fund USAID
- Reinvest in international peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs
- Protect critical humanitarian agencies, including UNRWA
- Restore aid to regions where it has been cut—especially in places like Gaza, where civilians are facing immense suffering.

We must also restore U.S. leadership in UN peacekeeping missions, democracy-building initiatives, women's empowerment programs, and protections for LGBTQ+ communities across the world. These efforts are essential to building stable, inclusive societies. They strengthen institutions, uphold human rights, and create conditions where peace can take root.

Closer to home, we must address urgent concerns in our own hemisphere.

We must conduct robust oversight, on a bi-partisan basis, on this Administration's approach to diplomacy or lack thereof, armed conflict and unauthorized use of the military, and the seizure and disposition of foreign assets without authorization from Congress.

In Venezuela, serious questions remain regarding U.S. military actions in January and ongoing operations in the Caribbean and Pacific and the need for a full investigation into the White House and State Department's handling of Venezuelan oil and financial transactions involving foreign banks.

In Cuba, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate under the current Administration's blockade and longstanding U.S. policies that have led to a completely black out and immense suffering over the last several weeks.

And across the board, Congress must exercise its constitutional authority to conduct oversight of the State Department and USAID—particularly regarding the dismantling of programs that have led to this moment.

## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE AND U.S. AND GLOBAL SECURITY**

The United States stands at a crossroads.

We can continue down a path of aggression and war, weakened alliances, and diminished global standing. Or we can choose a path grounded in diplomacy, development, and democratic values.

Investing in foreign aid, peacebuilding, and international cooperation is not only the right and righteous thing to do—it is critical to American security. It saves lives. It prevents conflict. And it ultimately saves taxpayer dollars.

If we are serious about national security, we must recognize that bombs do not make us safe. Partnerships do. Stability does. Diplomacy does.

In this budget, let us recommit to American leadership that reflects our highest ideals—and makes our nation and our world more secure.

Thank you.