

**THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S  
FISCAL YEAR  
BUDGET AND U.S. POLICY TOWARD  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, CIVILIAN SECURITY,  
AND TRADE  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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**THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S FISCAL YEAR  
BUDGET AND U.S. POLICY TOWARD LATIN  
AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**Wednesday, October 23, 2019  
House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere,  
Civilian Security and Trade  
Committee on Foreign Affairs**

*Washington, DC*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Albio Sires (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SIRES. This hearing will come to order. This hearing titled The Trump Administration's Fiscal Year 2020 Budget and U.S. Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean will focus on the Trump Administration's budget request and its policy priorities for the Western Hemisphere. Without objection, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, strenuous, but serious, for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

I will now make an opening statement and then turn it over to the ranking member for his opening statement.

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I have wanted to hold this hearing since the beginning of this Congress. Unfortunately, the former Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs refused to testify before this subcommittee, despite numerous invitations and requests. All recent Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretaries of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs testified multiple times before the House Foreign Affairs Committee during their tenures. It was a disservice to Congress, to the constituents we are elected to represent, and to those diplomats who served under Assistant Secretary Kim Breier, that she chose to stonewall Congress. It should go without saying that testifying before Congress is not optional.

I am appreciative that Ambassador Kozak immediately recognized the importance of this hearing and I am encouraged that we have an Acting Assistant Secretary with such distinguished record of public service.

The challenges facing United States leadership in the Western Hemisphere are immense. In Venezuela, the Maduro dictatorship has managed to cling to power, even in the face of a severe humanitarian crisis that the Maduro regime created. I commend the Colombian people and the Colombian Government for their admirable response to the Venezuela crisis. I am proud of our diplomats and staff on the ground, who have worked tirelessly to promote a demo-

cratic transition and provide humanitarian support and development assistance to the Venezuelan people. That said, I am concerned about the impacts of this crisis, the longer it drags on, and I will be asking our witnesses today to provide a clear strategy for our Venezuela policy going forward.

In the Northern Triangle, forced gang recruitment, extortion, domestic violence, poverty, and the impacts of climate change are among many factors forcing people to migrate north. Unfortunately, under this Administration, U.S. policy toward the Northern Triangle ignores that complex reality. In March, the Trump Administration announced draconian cuts of over \$400 million in U.S. assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Administration officials reached this decision without consulting Congress or even assessing the impact of our assistance programs on migration flows to the United States. Since imposing those cuts, administration officials have coerced Northern Triangle governments into signing safe third country agreements, which aim to deny people who are fleeing violence the right to seek asylum in the United States. The Trump Administration seems to believe that we can stop migration by criminalizing desperation.

I strongly disagree with the approach. I believe that the U.S. must instead work as a partner to create conditions so that Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans can see a future in their home countries. We must also reclaim our commitment to combating government corruption in Guatemala, an effort that the Bush Administration and bipartisan Members of Congress long championed, but which this Administration has backed away from. I am convinced that China's increased presence in the region poses a threat to U.S. interests. However, cutting our foreign assistance to the region by nearly 30 percent, as this Administration proposed in its budget request, will only worsen the problem. We will not overcome the challenges posed by China by cutting foreign assistance and strong-arming our allies. True alliances, based on mutual respect, are America's comparative advantage over China. We need to deepen our engagement with the region in order to regain our competitive edge.

Moreover, if we are going to play a leadership role in addressing the many crises facing the region, we must be seen as an honest broker. We must call on Bolivian authorities to ensure the election results reflect the will of the people. We must stand in solidarity with the Haitian people, who are suffering under crippling poverty and are asking only that their political leaders finally start doing what they were elected to do. And we must continue to support brave activists in Cuba and Nicaragua who are demanding basic human rights, even in the face of severe repression.

I look forward to a productive discussion on these and many other challenges in the Western Hemisphere. I hope we can all agree on a path forward for the United States to deepen engagement with our allies and advance our shared interests in the Western Hemisphere.

Thank you and I will now turn to Ranking Member Rooney for his opening statement.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Sires. I want to thank you for holding this long overdue budget hearing. And as

you commented, I want to thank Secretary Kozak, Administrator Barsa, and Secretary Glenn for underscoring the importance of this hearing and for being here today.

Oversight of the Administration's foreign aid budget for the Western Hemisphere is among this subcommittee's most important responsibilities. In light of concerning attempts to cut aid to the region, I am glad to finally have this opportunity.

Today, we will review the Trump Administration's \$1.2 billion 2020 request and discuss the Administration's priorities for the region. The prosperity and stability of the region is vital to the United States' national security interests, and in many ways, this Administration has demonstrated that it understands this. Inconsistent and episodic United States' attention to the region is a chronic problem and perhaps more than previous administrations, the Trump Administration has paid significant attention to Latin America. For example, since 2017, the President has made one visit to Argentina, Vice President Pence has made five visits to the region, and Secretary Pompeo has made six.

The Administration has also shown its unquestioned commitment to democracy in the region by clearly condemning the dictatorships in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua and standing for human rights.

I commend the Trump Administration for applying sanctions to corrupt actors and human rights violators in these countries and for their commitment to supporting the brave people who risk their lives for freedom every day in Latin America.

I also commend the administration for making the United States the first country to recognize Venezuelans' interim President Guaidó, and for continuing to lead the world in supporting the legitimate national assembly and peaceful democratic transition in Venezuela. Despite initial concerns over the Administration's opposition to NAFTA, the new USMCA actually seems to improve our strong relationship with Mexico. We also continue to maintain our critical relationship with Colombia and Argentina and are taking advantage of opportunities to strengthen our ties with Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Chile.

However, security and economic challenges continue to plague the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, churning an unprecedented wave of irregular migration to our southern border. We also continue to face threat from transnational crime and even Hezbollah in South America.

Recent social unrest in Ecuador and Chile and the blatant irregularities seen in Sunday's Presidential elections in Bolivia, demonstrate the fragile state of the region's democratic institutions.

We must also address the threat in which climate change poses to rural and indigenous populations throughout the region and we have seen greatest incidents of this recently in Guatemala and how this also contributes to migration, not only to our border, but throughout the hemisphere.

China's growing influence in the region threatens our national security and continues to be a concern, threatening to erode democratic values, perpetuate systemic corruption, and undermine the rule of law. Colombia's granting of the country's largest infrastructure project in their history to a Chinese consortium, part of which

has been barred by the World Bank, is the most recent and very concerning example of maligned Chinese influence throughout the region.

I want to commend the State Department for successfully stopping an equally bad investment of China in El Salvador. To be clear, we do not want to dictate who sovereign nations deal with, but we do want to guarantee a level playing field.

The U.S. must continue to strongly engage in Latin America and the Caribbean and facilitate conditions where United States' private investments can thrive. Energy security and disaster resilience in the Caribbean are other opportunities for American investments.

I am deeply concerned about continued cuts in U.S. financial support to Latin America and the Caribbean and especially about the cutting of aid to the Northern Triangle. Our foreign assistance is a critical tool to advance our national interests and address the aforementioned challenges.

I want to thank our witnesses again for being here today. I look forward to their testimonies and look forward also to hearing their thoughts on the budget and how we can maintain our strategic influence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. SIREs. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Rooney. I will now introduce the Honorable Michael G. Kozak, Acting Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Previously Ambassador Kozak held two Acting Assistant Secretary roles in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Prior to this appointment, he held the role of Senior Director of the National Security Council staff and served as the United States Ambassador to Belarus and the Chief of Mission in Cuba.

Ambassador Kozak, welcome.

We will then hear from the Honorable John Barsa, Assistant Administrator for the Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean at the United States Agency for International Development. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Barsa served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Partnership and Engagement. He also served in the United States Army Reserves with the 11th Special Forces Group and later the Civil Affairs Battalion.

Mr. Barsa, thank you for your service and for being here today.

Finally, we will hear from Mr. Richard Glenn, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. In his current role, Mr. Glenn oversees the Office of Anti-Crime Program and Western Hemisphere Programs. He began his work with the INL in 2011 as Deputy Director of the Merida Initiative in Mexico City and has also served in Ecuador and Argentina.

Mr. Glenn, thank you for being here.

I ask the witnesses to please limit your testimony to 5 minutes and without objection your prepared written statements will be made part of the record.

Assistant Secretary Kozak, I will turn to you for your testimony.



**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL G. KOZAK, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Hon. KOZAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Rooney and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Fiscal Year 2020 foreign assistance request for the Western Hemisphere.

This is a time of great challenge and opportunity in the region. If we are successful in our efforts to promote democracy in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua, and we intend to be, we will need to provide assistance that is qualitatively and quantitatively different than what we are providing at present to combat the repressive regimes that hold those countries hostage.

We expect our partners in Central America to show political will to break with the past to curb unsafe and illegal immigration and corruption, and to allow all of their citizens to pursue prosperity for themselves and their families. If they do so, they will find us ready to provide significant assistance. But for those who seek to maintain the status quo, we will not let them use our assistance as a facade for their lack of political will to make real reform. Given these challenges and opportunities, Mr. Chairman, we have proposed assistance programs with the recognition that they may need to be significantly reshaped in coordination with you and the subcommittee as events unfold in the region.

Our \$1.19 billion request prioritizes programs that address trafficking and drugs and smuggling of people by transnational criminal organizations and we seek to create an environment for increased U.S. trade and investment, security, and prosperity in the region to benefit our interests. Our assistance strengthens border security and combats corruption. These programs work if the partner governments are truly committed, so we expect our partners to stand up against corruption and against those who seek to preserve the economic and governance status quo.

The request for the Western Hemisphere includes eight primary components. For Venezuela, we are requesting \$9 million to support democratic actors, but we also are asking for \$500 million transfer authority that would provide flexibility to expand U.S. support for a democratic transition and to meet Maduro-imposed regional migration challenges. We will continue to direct U.S. foreign assistance resources to support Venezuelan democracy as represented by the democratically elected National Assembly and interim President Guaidó.

We are requesting \$78.9 million for Mexico. Of this \$76.25 is for the Merida Initiative to combat illicit poppy cultivation, heroin production, and fentanyl trafficking. It also supports Mexican efforts to reduce violence, and promote greater respect for human rights.

\$445 million is proposed for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. We expect the governments of these three countries to take action to reduce illegal immigration to the United States in time to be factored into the 2020 appropriations process. Last week, the President supported some targeted foreign assistance aimed at advancing our joint efforts to deter illegal immigration from those countries. But our programs cannot be a substitute for political will. The governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras

must demonstrate that they are willing to stand up to those who profit from the status quo which generates large numbers of illegal immigrants arriving at the U.S. southern border.

For Colombia, we are requesting \$344.4 million for counter-narcotics efforts and peace implementation. Colombia has shown the political will necessary to confront the severe challenge of coca production. Colombia continues to absorb the largest influx of Venezuelans fleeing the crisis in their country. And we will continue to support Colombia as it responds to these migration flows.

In Haiti, the \$145.5 million request serves to promote good governance and advance economic growth. It will continue to build the capacity of the Haitian National Police, and to support assistance to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. We urge the elected representatives of the Haitian people to take steps necessary to stabilize democratic governance.

For Peru, the \$55.1 million request will support efforts to combat the illicit drug trade and transnational criminal organizations through tightly paired eradication and alternative development programs. Peruvian-based security initiative remains critical to combat crime and violence. The \$40.2 million will strengthen law enforcement capacity and improve justice institutions.

Finally, the request includes \$6 million to support democracy, human rights, and civil society in Cuba; \$1 million for democracy programming for Ecuador, and another \$6 million for democracy in Nicaragua.

Again, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if our policies are successful in promoting change, we will welcome the opportunity to consult with you to take advantage of such positive developments. I look forward to your questions. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Kozak follows:]

## FY 2020 U.S. ASSISTANCE REQUEST FOR THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

TESTIMONY OF  
AMBASSADOR MICHAEL G. KOZAK  
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BEFORE  
THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
October 23, 2019

Chairman Sires, Ranking Member Rooney, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Fiscal Year 2020 foreign assistance request for the Western Hemisphere. This is a time of great challenge and opportunity in the region. If we are successful in our efforts to promote democracy in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua – and we intend to be—we will need to provide assistance that is quantitatively and qualitatively different than what we are providing at present to combat the repressive regimes that hold those countries hostage. We expect our partners in Central America to show the political will to break with the past to curb unsafe and illegal immigration and corruption and to allow all of their citizens to pursue prosperity for themselves and their families. If they do so they will find us ready to provide significant assistance. But for those who seek to maintain the status quo, we will not let them use our assistance as a façade for their lack of political will to make real reforms. Given these challenges and opportunities, Mr. Chairman, we have proposed assistance programs with the recognition that it may need to be significantly reshaped in coordination with you and the subcommittee as events unfold in the region.

The FY 2020 \$1.19 billion request for the Western Hemisphere prioritizes programs that address illicit pathways that transnational criminal organizations exploit to traffic in drugs and smuggle people. At the same time, our proposed assistance seeks to create an environment for increased U.S. trade and investment in the hemisphere. Security and prosperity in the region benefit our interests directly and create opportunities for U.S. companies.

The request supports programming that disrupts transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), strengthens border security, combats corruption and impunity, and reduces illicit trafficking across our southern border. We know these programs work if the partner governments are truly committed to reform. So we continue to expect our partners in the region to stand up against corruption and against those who seek to preserve the economic and governance status quo. By doing so they contribute more to their own security and development.

The request for the Western Hemisphere includes eight primary components:

For Venezuela, the Administration designed the FY 2020 request to support emerging democratic actors and included a continuing democracy bilateral request of \$9 million. It also includes a \$500 million transfer authority that would provide flexibility to expand U.S. support for a democratic transition and to meet regional migration challenges. Since the time of the request, international support has advanced for Interim Venezuelan President Juan Guaidó and the National Assembly—the only democratically elected governing institution in Venezuela. The United States and fifty-five other countries have recognized Interim President Guaidó as Venezuela's rightful democratic leader. Since 2017, the United States has committed almost \$644 million in response to the crisis in Venezuela. This includes resources to support countries in the region and provide assistance and other services to Venezuelan refugees and other displaced Venezuelans. We will continue to direct U.S. foreign assistance resources to support Venezuelan democracy and to support countries in the region receiving Venezuelans fleeing this Maduro-imposed crisis. At the same time, given Cuba's continued interference in Venezuela, as well as its increasing repression against the Cuban people, we are expanding our efforts outside of foreign assistance to disrupt the flow of funds to Cuban regime coffers.

The United States and Mexico through the Merida Initiative cooperate to combat illicit trafficking, improve border security, and support Mexico's efforts to strengthen the rule of law. Consistent with the President's Executive Order on Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking, our joint efforts reduce drug production, inhibit cross-border movement of drugs, cash, and weapons, and deny illicit revenue to transnational criminal organizations. The total Mexico FY 2020 bilateral request is \$78.9 million. Of this, \$76.25 million is for the Merida Initiative in the ESF and INCLE accounts. The request supports Mexico's efforts to combat illicit poppy cultivation, heroin production, and fentanyl trafficking. It also supports Mexican efforts to reduce violence, and promote greater respect for human rights. The United States will continue to work in partnership with Mexico to combat migrant smuggling and take critical steps to secure our shared border.

The request includes \$445 million for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. We expect the governments of these three countries to take action to reduce illegal immigration to the United States, in time to be factored into the FY 2020 appropriations process. The President will ultimately decide whether each government has taken sufficient steps to warrant our foreign assistance, and last week the President supported some targeted foreign assistance aimed at advancing our joint efforts to deter illegal immigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. We will continue to press the countries to address human trafficking, gang violence, illicit finance transnational crime, and the production and movement of illicit narcotics destined for the United States. We will also urge them to improve governance, civilian security, and economic opportunity. But our programs cannot be a substitute for political will. The governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, must demonstrate that they are willing to stand up to those who profit from the status quo which generates large numbers of illegal immigrants arriving at the U.S. southern border.

For Colombia, the \$344.4 million bilateral request prioritizes counternarcotics efforts, including eradication, interdiction, alternative development, and peace implementation. The request includes additional funding for shared U.S.-Colombian eradication priorities. Colombia is the United States' highest performing and most willing partner in Latin America; President Duque has shown the political will necessary to confront the severe challenge of coca production, which directly affects the United States. Colombia continues to absorb the largest influx of Venezuelans fleeing the crisis in their country; the United States will continue to support Colombia as it responds to these migration flows.

In Haiti, the \$145.5 million bilateral request serves to promote good governance, fight poverty, advance economic growth initiatives, improve food security and nutrition, support transparent and accountable government institutions, build the capacity of the Haitian National Police, and support assistance to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. We urge the elected representatives of the Haitian people to take steps necessary to stabilize democratic governance.

For Peru, the \$55.1 million request supports efforts to combat the illicit drug trade and TCOs through tightly paired eradication and alternative development. The request also supports anti-money laundering and asset-forfeiture initiatives; counternarcotics and justice sector efforts; customs and port security; and private sector-led alternative development programs.

In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative remains critical to our efforts to combat crime and violence threatening the United States. The \$40.2 million request will strengthen maritime boundary controls and combat illicit trafficking. Funded programs will strengthen law enforcement capacity and improve justice institutions. They will also support anti-corruption and alternative opportunities for youth who may otherwise fall victim to criminal activity.

In addition to support for democracy in Venezuela, the request includes \$6 million to support democracy, human rights, and civil society in Cuba; as well as for democracy programming for Ecuador, with a request of \$1 million; and Nicaragua, with a request of \$6 million.

Again, if our policies are successful in promoting change, we will welcome the opportunity to consult with you to take advantage of such positive developments.

I look forward to your questions.

Mr. SIREs. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.  
Assistant Administrator Barsa, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN BARSÁ, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Hon. BARSÁ. Chairman Sires, Ranking Member Rooney, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am grateful for the Committee's bipartisan support for USAID's work in Latin America and the Caribbean.

USAID is requesting \$547 million in Fiscal Year 2020 resources for programs that advance the U.S. national security and economic prosperity, demonstrate American generosity, and promote a path to recipient self-reliance and resilience.

Our most pressing priority is Venezuela. Nicolás Maduro's inept political and economic policies, corruption, and the use of fear and violence have caused a humanitarian and political crisis that overflows the borders of Venezuela. The United States stands in solidarity with Venezuelans and the government of Interim President Guaidó. We have provided nearly \$644 million in humanitarian and development assistance to support programs inside Venezuela and throughout the region.

With Fiscal Year 2020 resources, USAID will continue programs that support human rights, civil society, independent media, electoral oversight, and the democratically elected National Assembly.

We are also supporting democratic actors in Nicaragua and Cuba. With bipartisan support from Congress, we remain committed to helping Nicaragua and NGOs and political activists as they seek change in peaceful, democratic ways.

USAID programs in Cuba support human rights, the free flow of information, civil society, and humanitarian assistance to political prisoners and their families.

In other countries, we seek to build upon progress we have made in recent years. USAID helps to advance programs in Colombia that further a just and sustainable peace, economic development, citizen security, and a culture of legality in former conflict zones.

In Mexico, our programs work to prevent crime, improve access to justice, and strengthen civil society.

In Brazil, USAID works to conserve biodiversity while advancing prosperity through responsible economic development.

Our assistance in Peru helps reduce the production and trafficking of illicit drugs by supporting economically viable alternatives to growing coca.

We welcome the recent decision to partially move forward with certain targeted U.S. foreign assistance activities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The success of our work depends on the leadership and political will of our host country partners. Using data shared with us by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, we are better targeting current and potential programs. We are also specifically adding migration metrics to assess the impact of our work.

As Assistant Administrator, I am committed to working with our partners in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to address the root causes of illegal immigration to the United States.

The U.S. Government places a high priority on our work under the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in the Caribbean. Just last week, we announced \$5 million to reduce electricity prices, increase service quality, and make electricity systems in the Caribbean more resilient.

And today, we have announced a \$2 million partnership with the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology to help countries address the risks and improve disaster response.

USAID was proud to stand with the Bahamian Government with humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. I recently traveled to the Bahamas with Administrator Green when he announced an additional \$7.5 million to help with relief and recovery which brought USAID's total humanitarian assistance to nearly \$34 million. We remain in close contact with the Bahamian Government about their plans and needs regarding long-term recovery.

In Haiti, where political instability and violence reminds us that progress continues to be fragile, USAID resources address poverty, food security, healthcare services, and advance accountable governmental institutions.

I am particularly excited about the recent developments in our relationship with Ecuador. Thanks to President Moreno's re-engagement with the United States, Administrative Green signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Ecuador in May 2019 and we plan to reopen an office in the next year.

We also are continuing to monitor the extensive development needs and political situation in Bolivia. After expelling USAID in 2013, Morales has given no indication that he is willing to work with the United States. However, he recently requested assistance from USAID to fight the Amazon fires.

In conclusion, this is just a short overview of our programs and plans for Fiscal Year 2020 resources. We will continue to work on the prosperity, security, and good governance programs, and encourage people to build better societies for their families and home communities.

I thank the subcommittee for its interest in support of our work. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Barsa follows:]

**Prepared Testimony of John Barsa**  
**Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean**  
**United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**  
**Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee**  
**Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade**  
**Wednesday, October 23, 2019**

Chairman Sires, Ranking Member Rooney, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am grateful for the Committee's support for the work of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and am pleased to have this opportunity to present our plans outlined in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 President's Budget Request. Continued United States engagement in Latin America and the Caribbean is a priority for the Trump Administration and USAID; in fact, Administrator Mark Green has already made eleven trips to the region to advance our policy and development objectives. I, too, have visited the region twice in my first four months on the job, and have plans for at least two more trips in the next four months.

**Introduction**

USAID's FY 2020 request for the Latin America and Caribbean region is \$547 million for programs that advance U.S. national security and economic prosperity, demonstrate American generosity, and promote a path to recipient self-reliance and resilience in support of the Administration's foreign-policy objectives, including the National Security Strategy and the Department of State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan. Where other countries' assistance models further dependence or unsustainable debt, the United States' model is one of partnership with the governments, civil society, and private sector in countries in which we work. Our development assistance promotes a country's own Journey to Self-Reliance, consistent with U.S.-supported universal values and interests.

As mentioned, USAID has proven time and time again that we are a dependable partner, especially when disaster strikes. On my recent trip to The Bahamas, I witnessed first-hand the destruction of Hurricane Dorian on the Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, where the storm affected an estimated 76,000 people. While in The Bahamas, Administrator Green announced an additional \$7.5 million to help with relief and recovery, which brought USAID's total humanitarian assistance to more than \$33 million. I am proud of the work USAID has done to provide critically needed assistance to people affected by Hurricane Dorian, and we are committed to working on disaster resilience throughout the region.

As Administrator Green has said, "Our ultimate goal is a future in which foreign assistance is no longer needed. We are working toward a world of safe, prosperous, self-reliant, and economically integrated countries that work together to solve common problems."

**Addressing a Crisis of Historic Proportions: Venezuela**

No discussion about the current state of affairs in the Western Hemisphere can be complete without a discussion of Venezuela. The crisis caused by Nicolás Maduro's mismanagement has overflowed the borders of Venezuela and now affects the vast majority of countries in the region. Inept political and economic policies, combined with his regime's rampant corruption and monstrous use of fear and violence against those who oppose them, have caused a humanitarian and political crisis.



Along with a systematic consolidation of power into the hands of corrupt regime members came the steady decline and collapse of the Venezuelan economy, health care system, justice system, and any other Maduro-controlled institutions designed to serve and protect the people of Venezuela. Venezuelans face unimaginable conditions. Inflation has risen to such a degree that it is nearly impossible to put food on the table, medicine is in scarce supply, and people have nowhere to go if they are sick or suffering. Basic social services such as water and electricity are unreliable, and often unavailable. Those who exercise their democratic rights face exile, repression, torture, imprisonment, and even murder at the hands of the regime. As a result, nearly 4.5 million Venezuelans have fled their country to date as refugees and other displaced persons - the largest outmigration in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

I saw these effects firsthand when I was in Cúcuta, Colombia, in August. I spoke with young mothers who had to walk from Venezuela to find diapers, food, and life-saving medicine for their children. The real tragedy is that this situation did not need to happen; it is the result of Maduro's corruption and mismanagement.

The United States firmly supports the Government of Interim President Juan Guaidó, and stands in solidarity with Venezuelans who are suffering and those who seek to restore democracy in their country. Since 2017, the United States has provided nearly \$644 million in humanitarian and development assistance to support the people of Venezuela inside their country as well as vulnerable displaced Venezuelans and host communities throughout the region. USAID works with governments, faith-based and community organizations, and international partners in neighboring countries as they support the influx of Venezuelan refugees through an immediate humanitarian response that connects to medium- and long-term support. We will continue to provide urgently needed food, medicine, and other essentials to these vulnerable people and the communities that are generously hosting them.

And we will continue to elevate the plight of Venezuelans on the world stage. We know that lasting political and economic reforms are the only real solutions to the crisis. Just last week, Administrator Green signed a Development Objective Agreement with Interim President Guaidó's Ambassador to the United States, Carlos Vecchio, with an initial approximately \$98 million. With this funding and the resources and authorities that we are requesting for FY 2020, USAID will continue programs that support human rights, civil society, independent media, electoral oversight, and the National Assembly, and add new ones in health and agriculture. Thank you for your bipartisan support for this funding.

Following a democratic transition, which will pave the way for a government that is open to accepting the international assistance needed to address this crisis, USAID is ready to provide immediate food, medical care, and other life-saving aid at a scale that can more adequately address the needs inside Venezuela. The people of Venezuela deserve a return to democracy and the rule of law, and a peaceful, prosperous, hopeful future. We are grateful for the bipartisan support we have received from Congress for our efforts.

**Supporting Democracy in the Face of Dictatorship: Nicaragua and Cuba**

Another topic on which we have a tremendous amount of bipartisan support in Congress is Nicaragua. While most of the news within the Hemisphere tends to focus on Venezuela, Daniel Ortega and his wife Rosario rule over an authoritarian government doing precisely what we have seen in Venezuela. As this Committee well knows, they have manipulated elections; flagrantly trampled on human rights; monopolized media, stepped on civil society; and jailed or murdered dissenters, protesters, and students.

About 18 months ago, we saw protesters go to the streets against Ortega, only to be bullied, beaten, jailed, and, in some cases, killed. The Ortegas and their thugs are still using brutal tactics, based on a model patented in Cuba, to stymie political activism and civil society. With Congress's help, USAID has been able to support organizations and media that track the abuses of the regime, while promoting visions of democratic order, free elections and human rights. We remain committed to helping Nicaraguan non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and political activists as they continue in their effort to seek change in peaceful, democratic ways.

An area we will watch closely is related to humanitarian need. Staying on the theme of "lessons learned" from both Cuba and Venezuela, the Ortega regime has forced tens of thousands into exile over the last year and a half, which is creating cross-border tensions with Costa Rica.

USAID commends the bravery of Nicaraguan students, journalists, human rights defenders, members of civil society, religious leaders, campesinos, and indigenous groups who have united their voices in a call for justice, rule of law, and a return to democratic order in Nicaragua. The United States calls on the Ortega regime to cease the repression of democratic freedoms immediately, unconditionally release all remaining political prisoners in Ortega's gulags, and heed the demands of the people of Nicaragua for a citizen-responsive government under new transparent and free elections.

USAID also helps to maintain an operating space for those in Cuba who seek to preserve their freedoms of expression, religion, and peaceful assembly and association, and their democratic voice. Thousands of Cubans are detained arbitrarily, harassed, beaten, and arrested by the Cuban regime for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights. USAID's programs in Cuba support human rights, the free flow of information, civil society, and humanitarian assistance in the form of food and medicine to political prisoners and their families.

**Ensuring Continued Progress: Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Perú, and Paraguay**

Colombia is USAID's largest program in Latin America and the Caribbean and one of our highest priorities in the region. As Administrator Green has said, "There is no more important relationship in this Hemisphere." I agree, which is why I chose Colombia as my first destination as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. I was heartened that each Colombian official whom I met on my trip reiterated the commitment of President Duque and his Administration to a strong relationship with the United States.

USAID's resources continue to advance U.S. national security and prosperity with programs in Colombia that further a just and sustainable peace, promote rural economic development and citizen security, and bolster the growth of licit economies and a culture of legality in former

conflict zones. Our programs expand access to justice and human rights, strengthen citizen-responsive governance at the local and national levels, foster reconciliation among those affected by the conflict, build civil-society capacity, and increase rural economic development. And because all sectors of society are fundamental to Colombia's stabilization and development, I sought to meet with women's groups, Afro-Colombians, and indigenous leaders to assess the status of progress on inclusion efforts and see where improvement can occur. For example, I met with Marino Córdoba, the Director of the National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians, as well as other leaders in Bogotá, Cúcuta, and Riohacha. These groups are core partners in our development projects. While heartened by the progress to date, and the demonstrated commitment to a more inclusive Colombia by the Duque Administration, I firmly believe we must double down on our commitment to the people of Colombia as they seek to shore up their fragile peace.

México is another key partner to the United States as we seek to disrupt the activities of transnational criminal organizations. In support of the Mérida Initiative, our programs work with at-risk youth to prevent crime, improve access to justice and victims' services, strengthen civil society, and enable communities to become more effective in combating crime and violence.

In Brazil, USAID has worked for decades to conserve biodiversity while also advancing prosperity through responsible economic development. Our efforts further a private-sector-led, financially viable, and scalable approach that is critical to promoting economic opportunities for local communities while also protecting the Amazon's precious natural resources and biodiversity. Thanks to the resources generously appropriated by Congress, USAID continues to work with the Government of Brazil, civil society, and the private sector to increase investment in healthy forests, creating incentives to protect these critical natural resources, including through creation of the first-ever biodiversity-focused impact-investment fund for the Brazilian Amazon.

In Perú, USAID's assistance helps reduce the production and trafficking of illicit drugs into the United States and third countries. We support the Peruvian Government's efforts to combat the drug trade through alternative-development programs that support licit, economically viable alternatives to growing coca; complement security assistance; and help to sustain reductions in the cultivation of coca in targeted areas. We are currently exploring how to expand our support to include programs in the highest coca-growing regions in the country as the Government moves into them. We also work with communities affected by illegal gold mining - which is more lucrative than the production of coca and breeds child labor, human trafficking, violence, and land grabs - by helping them to address social conflicts and rehabilitate affected land. More and more, our role in Perú is changing from a traditional donor to a strategic partner and advisor as the National Government increases its capacity to manage the country's development on its own, in conjunction with the private sector.

Paraguay is at a critical point in its still-emerging democracy. Unprecedented levels of transparency have unveiled considerable, high-profile corruption, but a still-weak and politicized judicial system enables pervasive impunity, which undermines Paraguayans' public support for democracy. USAID's resources combat impunity and encourage citizen-responsive governance to foster trust in democracy. These programs will help to disrupt the influence of transnational organized crime, as weak institutions are ineffective against arms smuggling, drug dealing, and

the financing of terrorist organizations, especially in Paraguay's tri-border area with Brazil and Argentina and in its Northern Zone. Paraguay is the only country in the world in which USAID's portfolio is entirely in the hands of local organizations.

**El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras**

USAID has worked with the people of Central America since our earliest years to improve their livelihoods, strengthen democratic institutions, and advance security. Since 2015, our work in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has included programs to address the root causes of illegal immigration to the United States by improving citizen security, growing prosperity, and addressing corruption and impunity to advance citizen-responsive governance. This has been important work, and I am extremely proud of, and grateful to, the men and women of USAID--both American and local staff--who have shepherded these many programs.

While these programs have addressed some of the root causes of illegal immigration, we are seeking to tie programmatic performance more closely to illegal immigration. We have begun adding migration as a specific indicator to evaluate the impact of our programs so we can ensure that we are effectively and responsibly advancing the policy objective of reducing irregular out-migration; the first results are expected in the coming months.

But USAID's programs alone cannot solve the issue of illegal immigration to the United States. In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, stemming outmigration depends on the leadership and political will of the host-country governments to strengthen good governance, improve economic opportunity, and enhance citizen security. We need the active partnership of these governments to help our programs be effective in preventing illegal immigration to the United States. As Administrator Green has said, we cannot want it more than they do.

For these reasons, we welcome the recent decision to partially move forward with certain targeted U.S. foreign assistance activities to deter illegal immigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. As Assistant Administrator for the Bureau of Latin American and Caribbean, I am committed to working with our dedicated partners in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to address the root causes of illegal immigration.

**Implementing the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in the Caribbean**

The U.S. Government also places a high priority on our engagement with the countries of the Caribbean. The 2017 U.S. Strategy for Engagement in the Caribbean consistent with the U.S.-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act (P.L. 114-291), identifies the region as the "third border" to the United States. USAID's work in the region aligns with the six pillars of the Strategy: security, diplomacy, prosperity, energy, education, and health. Through programs that build resilience in the face of natural disasters, prevent crime and violence, foster citizen-responsive governance, and promote economic growth and good health, we are advancing the security and prosperity of the Caribbean and the United States alike.

USAID supports the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) programs in Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and the countries of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, and The Bahamas). Our work under CBSI

strengthens the enabling environment necessary to prevent crime and violence; and advances community-level interventions to prevent crime and violence among young people, including a positive-youth-development approach focused on engagement for civic and economic opportunity for young people. These programs will help us to secure our “third border” while promoting our shared security and prosperity.

USAID’s increased engagement in the Caribbean includes a focus on reducing Caribbean nations’ vulnerability to natural disasters and their reliance on external sources for energy. Working together with host-country and regional partners, community organizations, and the private sector, we are helping countries to develop skills and procedures that will reduce their risk before a disaster, and recover quickly if one hits. Because energy security is critical to building resilience, USAID is leading the Caribbean Energy Initiative (CEI) with an initial investment of \$5 million of a planned five-year, \$25 million program, which will reduce electricity prices, increase the quality of service, and make electricity systems in the Caribbean more resilient. In FY 2020, we have requested \$2.5 million to continue this regional energy work. Part of the U.S. Government’s *America Crece / Growth in the Americas* initiative on energy and infrastructure, CEI builds on USAID’s recent energy programs in Jamaica, the Eastern Caribbean, and Haiti, as well as on recent efforts by other U.S. Government Departments and Agencies, the private sector, and other donors.

#### **Haiti**

USAID’s most-extensive development program in the Caribbean is in Haiti, where political instability and violence in recent years and playing out before our eyes today reminds us that progress continues to be fragile. In support of the Journey to Self-Reliance, USAID’s resources address poverty, promote good governance, improve food security and nutrition, fight infectious disease, strengthen primary health care, and advance transparent and accountable government institutions. A more prosperous, stable, and democratic Haiti is mutually beneficial, as it reduces illegal immigration to the United States, lowers the humanitarian costs of recurring disasters and crises, reduces transnational crime, and improves a business climate that provides economic opportunities to American businesses.

#### **Ecuador and Bolivia**

I am particularly excited about the recent developments in our relationship with Ecuador. Because of Ecuador’s former leader Correa’s policies, USAID closed our Mission in 2014. For five years, we continued to support the people of Ecuador with programs that helped civil society, independent media, and human-rights defenders maintain a democratic space in the country. Thanks to President Moreno’s reengagement with the United States, Administrator Green signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Ecuador in May 2019 and we plan to reopen an office in the next year. This past August, I traveled to Ecuador for the first of regular dialogues with the Government that will help shape our future programs; these will likely include economic growth, environment, democracy and governance, education, and support to help with the influx of Venezuelan refugees and displaced persons. We are encouraged by this progress, and look forward to advancing development for the people of Ecuador.

USAID also continues to monitor the extensive development needs and political situation in Bolivia. Bolivia's leader Morales expelled USAID in 2013 and we closed our Mission in La Paz. Unlike the partnership that we have seen with President Moreno, President Morales has given no indication that he is willing to work with the United States to help build a healthier, more prosperous future for the Bolivian people. However, because of the good that it did for the Bolivian people and the fragile Amazon rainforest, we are grateful that he recently requested assistance from USAID to fight the Amazon fires. We hope that this could help to lay the groundwork for potential future cooperation that will bring a brighter future for all Bolivians.

**Partnerships**

To maximize taxpayer investments, guard against duplication, and ensure greater sustainability, USAID ensures that governments, civil society, and the private sector in our partner countries are invested in their own development. We coordinate and leverage the work of other donors, universities, including many U.S. land grant institutions, and non-governmental organizations, including faith-based organizations. We are forging agreements with Mexico, Chile, Brazil, and Colombia to tackle shared challenges in the region. We also increasingly engage with the American and regional private sector to co-create, co-design, and co-finance our projects so that we can further development more effectively in the region. In FY 2017, 59 U.S.-based private sector organizations engaged in active partnerships with USAID in the region, including companies like Chevron, Starbucks, Johnson & Johnson, and CISCO.

**Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning and Accountability**

As a United States taxpayer-funded agency, USAID takes seriously our responsibility to transparent, evidence-based oversight and management of our programs. Using a broad range of monitoring-and-evaluation tools, we regularly assess our progress at multiple levels to ensure we are meeting our goals, maximizing outcomes, and adapting to changing contexts. On average, USAID conducts approximately 20 performance and impact evaluations in Latin America and the Caribbean each year.

**Conclusion**

USAID's work in Latin America and the Caribbean prioritizes the challenges that affect the United States most directly. We are addressing the urgent situation caused by Maduro's illegitimate regime in Venezuela, while confronting the long-term challenges of corruption and the influence of transnational criminal organizations. We will continue to work on the prosperity, security, and good governance programs that encourage people to build better societies for their families and home communities. I thank this Subcommittee for its interest in, and support for, our work, and look forward to collaborating with you to address the challenges and opportunities in the region.

Mr. SIREs. Thank you.  
Mr. Glenn, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD H. GLENN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. GLENN. Chairman Sires, Ranking Member Rooney, members of the subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here today to testify on the President's Fiscal Year 2020 budget request and the policy priorities for the Western Hemisphere.

The efforts of the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, better known as INL, are vital to our national security interests. INL builds the capacity of foreign partners to disrupt transnational crime and other security threats before they reach our borders. Our request of \$484 million will enable INL to address the most pressing security issues directly affecting the United States. We will prioritize combating drug-trafficking organizations and transnational gangs. We will address the deadly opioid epidemic in the United States. And we will work with Mexico and Central America to address the migration crisis at our southern border.

The \$209 million request for Colombia represents the largest portion of our request. Colombia remains the world's largest producer of cocaine and is the source of over 90 percent of the cocaine seized in the United States. The majority of funding will support our joint commitment with the Colombian Government to cut coca cultivation and cocaine production levels in half by the end of 2023. We are on target to reach that goal.

Last year, illicit coca cultivation decreased for the first time since 2012. Coca eradication is the cornerstone of this support. With our support, President Duque has quadrupled the number of manual eradicators and achieved the highest level of manual eradication in the last 7 years. We will support the restart of a safe and effective Colombian led aerial eradication program. However, eradication is only part of the solution. These efforts must be joined by expanded police presence, crop substitution, and alternative development activities to sustainably reduce cocaine production. INL, along with USAID and the Government of Colombia, have agreed to a focused implementation of these types of programs in key areas to sustain counternarcotics gains. These efforts combined with our support for interdiction, anti-money laundering, asset forfeiture, and justice sector reform will deliver the results that we all seek.

Closer to home, Mexico is the origin of most heroin and methamphetamine consumed here and remains the major transit zone for cocaine destined for the United States. We are alarmed at the emergence of fentanyl production in Mexico. Our work with Mexico seeks to intensify counternarcotics cooperation through strengthening border security, increasing the operational capacity of law enforcement units, and ensuring the Mexican criminal justice system serves its citizenry and ends impunity.

Our programs build the capacity of Mexican criminal justice actors to attack each component of the organized crime business model to reduce drug production, control cross-border trafficking, remove illicit profits, and restore government control over all its

territory. As the President has noted, Mexico needs to do more to root out organized crime. Two weeks ago INL Assistant Secretary Madison traveled to Mexico to urge them to develop and share a comprehensive counternarcotics strategy, an especially urgent task given the events of last week in Mexico.

In Central America, INL increases our partners' ability to stop drug trafficking, combats organized crime, and addresses security-related drivers of migration. INL will expand our maritime interdiction efforts with an eye toward enhanced bilateral and multilateral information sharing and operations.

In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, we will continue to address the security-related drivers of migration. Transnational gangs, like MS-13, perpetuate violence, insecurity, and commit acts of extortion in Central America and in the United States. We will support vetted units and specialized task forces to investigate and prosecute cases and to serve as reliable trusted partners of U.S. law enforcement. Our efforts focus on multi-national approaches to collect, analyze, and disseminate intelligence, to identify criminals, and transnational crime trends in the region. We remain committed to strengthening justice sector institutions and confronting the foundational threats posed by endemic corruption.

The challenges we face are serious, but we are seeing results, especially when partner countries have the political will to put our assistance to proper use. Obviously, more work remains to sustain these gains. Our Fiscal Year 2020 Year request is critical to those efforts. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Glenn follows:]





Prepared Statement of:  
**Richard H. Glenn**  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for  
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Hearing before the:  
**House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere,  
Civilian Security, and Trade**  
**“The Trump Administration’s FY2020 Budget and U.S. Policy Toward Latin America  
and the Caribbean”**

October 23, 2019

UNCLASSIFIED

Chairman Sires, Ranking Member Rooney, distinguished members of the Subcommittee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the President's FY 2020 budget request for foreign assistance in the Western Hemisphere. Given our proximity and shared interests, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' (INL) efforts with Western Hemisphere partners are vital to our national security interests. The FY 2020 request of \$484 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) assistance to the Western Hemisphere will provide the necessary resources for INL to address pressing security issues directly impacting the United States: combating transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), especially drug trafficking organizations and gangs; turning the tide of the opioid epidemic in the United States; and working with Mexico and Central America to address the migration crisis at our southern border.

Drug trafficking organizations and other TCOs continue to inflict devastating harm on the United States and our partners in the region. Throughout the hemisphere, these criminal organizations undermine citizen security, limit economic investment and growth, weaken the rule of law, and erode citizens' trust in the criminal justice sector and government institutions. TCOs have a direct, detrimental effect on United States citizens and our interests, most evident in their contribution to the ongoing drug crisis in our country. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts a staggering 68,637 drug overdose deaths in 2018, according to its preliminary data.<sup>1</sup> INL efforts to address drug trafficking, TCOs, and other security issues in the hemisphere translate to increased security for American citizens and American lives saved. We disrupt transnational crime by building the capacity and increasing the will of our foreign partners to address threats before they reach the United States' borders. Due to the complex and cross-border nature of transnational crime, our programs reflect a comprehensive and multilateral approach to address these pressing issues.

#### ***South America***

Colombia remains the world's largest producer of cocaine and the source of over 90 percent of the cocaine seized in the United States. Cocaine originating from Colombia, and to a lesser extent from Peru, contributes to the rising drug overdose rates in the United States, particularly when combined with synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl. CDC preliminary data reports a record level of more than 14,800 Americans died of cocaine overdose in 2018.<sup>2</sup>

The request of \$209 million for Colombia represents the largest portion of INL's FY 2020 funding request in the hemisphere. Funds will continue to support the Colombian government's efforts to meet our joint goal to cut coca cultivation and cocaine production levels in half by the end of 2023. We are indeed seeing early signs of progress from this partnership, with illicit cultivation numbers stabilizing in 2018 for the first time since 2012. INL continues to support President Duque's whole-of-government counternarcotics strategy, which includes reducing consumption, decreasing the supply of drugs, dismantling TCOs, disrupting financial flows to TCOs, and increasing state presence and economic opportunity in rural areas. Our efforts focus on regions responsible for the majority of Colombia's coca cultivation and cocaine production.

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<sup>1</sup> Predicted Number of Deaths for the Period Ending December 2018, accessed October 18, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts, accessed October 18, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

A cornerstone of INL's support to the Duque administration to meet its five-year goal is coca eradication. In addition to aviation support, INL provides Colombian eradicators with logistical support, field equipment, supplies, and life-saving counter improvised explosive device (IED) training and detection equipment. With INL assistance, President Duque significantly increased eradication efforts, including quadrupling civilian manual eradication groups from 23 to 100 in 2018 and achieving the highest level of manual eradication since 2012. Colombia destroyed 56 percent more coca in the first six months of 2019 than during the same period in 2018. On July 18, Colombia's Constitutional Court gave the Colombian government the authority to restart aerial spray of glyphosate on coca once it meets certain administrative and oversight conditions. In light of the court's decision and at the request of the Duque administration, INL will work with the Colombian government to restart a targeted, Colombian-led aerial eradication program that meets the administrative and oversight conditions upheld by the court. As part of a comprehensive approach, including manual and targeted aerial eradication, expanded police presence, crop substitution, and alternative development, we are helping Colombia sustainably reduce cocaine production. We are continuing efforts to build Colombian capacity to conduct interdiction operations, including destruction of cocaine processing labs and maritime operations along Colombia's rivers and along Colombia's Pacific coast.

As drug trafficking organizations become increasingly diffuse and interconnected through the use of modern technology, including the dark web, crypto currency and other digital assets, and secure messaging, INL support is also evolving. Our anti-money laundering and seized asset support builds Colombian capacity to go after the profits of criminal groups, cutting off their financial resources and obtaining proceeds that will bolster Colombia's counternarcotics efforts. INL justice sector reform and capacity building helps ensure the Colombian justice system is capable of investigating and prosecuting complex crimes ensuring criminals do not operate with impunity.

While Colombia is the origin point of the majority of cocaine destined for the United States, TCOs by nature are not contained by borders and their operations impact many countries in the region. INL's FY 2020 request includes funding for Ecuador and Peru, which have smaller, but significant, roles in the illicit cocaine trade. Ecuador is a key transit point for both narcotic precursor chemicals entering Colombia for cocaine production and for cocaine from Colombia destined for the United States. After a suspension of programming from 2014-2018, the current Moreno administration provided a new opportunity for INL engagement. INL's FY 2020 request will address drug trafficking and the criminal organizations engaged in it through training and mentoring by the Colombian National Police to build Ecuadorian police counternarcotics capacity; technical assistance to build Ecuadorian justice sector capacity to investigate and adjudicate transnational organized crime cases; and citizen security initiatives along Ecuador's northern border to combat drug trafficking and other criminal activity. In Peru, INL assistance is focused on coca eradication, interdiction, and capacity building opportunities, thus denying revenue to TCOs. INL will continue to nationalize aviation assets; support the Peruvian government's manual eradication and interdiction efforts; enhance the rule of law and combat corruption; and combat illegal mining- a key revenue source for TCOs in Peru.

**Mexico**

Drugs originating from Mexico have a profound and deadly impact on the United States. Opioids, particularly synthetic varieties like fentanyl, destroy the lives of Americans and wreak havoc on communities across the country. In 2017, nearly 68 percent of fatal drug overdoses in the United States involved opioids, and of those, more than half involved synthetic opioids. Synthetic opioids are particularly challenging to target as they can be produced almost anywhere and criminals are able to tweak chemical formulas to evade detection. Traffickers smuggle synthetic opioids via mail and in the form of counterfeit prescription pills. Of great concern are indications that fentanyl trafficking operations in Mexico are growing and evolving to include fentanyl production—an alarming new development. Mexico is the country of origin for most heroin and methamphetamine consumed in the United States, and along with Central America and parts of the Caribbean, Mexico remains a major transit zone for cocaine from South America destined for the United States.

TCOs in Mexico perpetuate violence and corruption. In 2018, Mexico's homicide rate hit a record high of 29 per 100,000 inhabitants and homicides continue to climb in 2019, according to Government of Mexico statistics. A Mexican non-governmental organization estimated over 60 percent of the murder in Mexico in 2018 were tied to organized crime. INL supports Mexico's efforts to reduce drug trafficking and production, secure its borders and ports, deprive TCOs of illicit revenue streams, and reduce the impunity and corruption that enables TCOs to thrive. Our FY 2020 request supports the expansion of counternarcotics programs to address the multiple drug threats, disrupting the production and trafficking of heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamine, and precursor chemicals used to make these drugs. Mexico has seized some significant drug loads and dismantled drug labs, but much more work remains. The request prioritizes counternarcotics funding to improve Mexico's capacity to detect and interdict drugs at ports of entry through more targeted application of non-intrusive inspection equipment, and in the maritime domain through training and mentoring; to improve poppy eradication through capacity building for Mexico's army and Prosecutor General's Office; and to strengthen border security through cross-border training initiatives.

INL continues to work with the Lopez Obrador administration to address shared security priorities and seeks to intensify cooperation on counternarcotics, especially strengthening border security and ensuring the criminal justice system in Mexico serves its citizens and ends impunity for crime that impacts both our countries. Our programs take a comprehensive approach to build the capacity of Mexican criminal justice actors to attack each component of the TCO business model to reduce drug production and remove illicit profits. Before the Merida Initiative, most Mexican criminal justice institutions lacked any enforceable career standards and relied primarily upon on-the-job training. Today, with INL's support, Mexican police departments, forensic labs, prisons, and courtrooms are improving professional standards. In August 2019, Mexico strengthened its asset forfeiture law, a vital tool in the fight against TCOs and their affiliates. We expect Mexico to make full use of this new law.

In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mexico is working to build its capacity to more effectively target its poppy eradication to areas of highest opium yield, and to share that information with the United States, given our interest in reducing production and trafficking of heroin. Yet, as noted in the *Presidential Determination on Major*

*Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for FY 2020*, Mexico needs to do more to combat Mexican TCOs and their networks. Two weeks ago, INL Assistant Secretary Kirsten D. Madison traveled to Mexico, accompanied by DEA and DoD counterparts, to discuss the next phase our security cooperation with Mexico, including the need for Mexico to develop and share a comprehensive and whole-of-government counternarcotics strategy that incorporates clear goals and targets, and a means to monitor effective progress against those targets.

#### **Central America**

INL's Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) programming counters drug trafficking, combats TCOs, and decreases irregular migration to the United States by improving the capacity of Central American governments' law enforcement, immigration, customs, and justice sectors to address these threats before they reach the United States. Since surging in 2015, these programs yielded decreased homicide rates, most notably a more than 50 percent reduction in El Salvador from its record calendar year 2015 rate as the "murder capital of the world" and a more than 50 percent reduction in Honduras since 2014.

Earlier this year, the President directed the Department and USAID to reprogram foreign assistance funding from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras over concerns these governments were not doing enough to prevent irregular migration to the United States. This action sent a clear message that we needed these governments to do more to reduce migration flows. The Secretary recently announced the governments demonstrated action and ownership to address this issue and resumed targeted foreign assistance funding for certain programs to deter irregular migration. We are hopeful this ownership and action will continue in the future.

The flow of cocaine through Central America profoundly affects these countries' security environments, giving undue influence to TCOs, and overexposing the region to the effects of the drug trade, including pervasive violence, and endemic corruption. INL programs work to strengthen laws, enhance law enforcement capabilities, support cross-border law enforcement cooperation, and equip criminal justice system actors in Central America to secure convictions—all important factors for improving the overall security situations in each country.

In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, INL will continue to address the security-related drivers of irregular migration. Transnational gangs, such as MS-13 and Barrio 18, perpetuate high levels of violence, insecurity, and extortion. With an MS-13 presence in more than 40 U.S. states, communities across the country are forced to grapple with homicide, drug dealing, prostitution, and other crimes carried out by the gang. Working closely with Central American partners and interagency colleagues, specifically the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, INL combats transnational gangs by building the capacity of 56 vetted units and specialized task forces to investigate cases and to serve as reliable, trusted partners of U.S. law enforcement. These units arrested more than 5,000 criminals in 2018. INL and the FBI work with the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to support Transnational Anti-Gang (TAG) vetted units and an associated Regional Criminal Gang Intelligence Platform to target transnational criminal gangs such as MS-13 and Barrio 18. The Salvadoran TAG has facilitated the arrest of more than 150 MS-13 members in the United States since 2015.

Due to the transnational nature of Central American gangs and TCOs, our efforts increasingly focus on multi-national approaches. This includes enhancing intelligence-sharing,

such as the El Salvador-based Regional Border Intelligence Center (GCIF), that identifies criminals and transnational crime trends in Central America, Mexico, and the United States. This fusion center enables real-time collection, analysis, and dissemination of criminal intelligence among the United States, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Spain, and participating Central American countries. From June 2017 to May 2019, information sharing facilitated by GCIF led to the identification of 1,330 gang members, the majority of whom were previously unknown to the United States; 132 human smugglers; and 56 drug traffickers. Addressing transnational gangs requires a regional approach.

In Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama, where maritime narcotics trafficking is most prevalent, INL supports maritime and air assets, which enable these nations to surveil and interdict in previously inaccessible areas. In 2018, with U.S. support, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama interdicted more than 115 metric tons (MT) of narcotics through maritime seizures. El Salvador, a country with historically and comparatively low drug trafficking, even seized nearly 13 MT of illegal drugs in the same year. With the FY 2020 request, INL will continue to support and expand maritime interdiction efforts with an eye towards enhanced bilateral and multilateral information-sharing and operations.

Central American governments will not achieve long-term successes without improving citizens' trust in institutions. Citizens often do not report crimes, especially crimes of corruption and extortion, and when citizens do report, the alleged perpetrators often go unpunished. INL will continue efforts to strengthen the rule of law to ensure partner governments are holding criminals accountable. Programs will focus on building prosecutorial capacity and building asset forfeiture and anti-money laundering initiatives to cut off transnational criminals from illicit profits.

#### ***Caribbean and Haiti***

The Caribbean remains a viable trafficking route for Colombian cocaine, and INL programs will continue to promote regional cooperation among the 13 Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) partner nations, while building bilateral capacities to stem the flow of drugs. The FY 2020 request includes support for citizen security and law enforcement, as well as continued efforts to increase regional cooperation through programs such as CBSI-Connect, which links law enforcement officials in the Caribbean via an online training and video conference platform. INL will continue to build maritime interdiction and prosecution capacities and support enhanced targeting of containerized cargo through our agreements with the U.S. Coast Guard and UNODC, which supported increased drug seizures from 5.5 MT at the inception of CBSI to 22.6 MT in 2017. We will continue to enhance the ability of our partners to target and dismantle TCOs in the Caribbean Basin by targeting their assets, an increasingly vital tool in fighting TCOs. Trinidad and Tobago recently became the sixth CBSI partner to pass civil asset recovery legislation with INL assistance. These laws permit our partners to investigate, freeze, and recover criminally-obtained funds and property.

In Haiti, INL focuses support on building capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP). As a direct result of INL support, the HNP added over 7,000 trained officers since the devastating earthquake in 2010, increasing the total force to more than 15,400 officers in 2019. Specific efforts will include INL investment in the HNP School, training for the HNP's

specialized units, including crowd control, and technical and advisory support for the HNP's leadership. INL efforts are focused on supporting the HNP's development as a professional and accountable institution that can manage Haiti's internal security in the aftermath of the October 2019 transition from the police-only UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) to a non-peacekeeping UN Special Political Mission (SPM).

***Conclusion***

INL programs in the Western Hemisphere address direct threats to United States safety and security. There are continued challenges, but we are seeing an impact. Between 2013 and 2018, there was a 24 percent increase in the number of kilos of illicit drugs seized hemisphere-wide. These seizures, often done by or in coordination with our regional partners, take drugs off the streets of United States communities like Newark and Fort Myers. From Colombian President Duque's quadrupling of manual eradication groups, to homicide reductions and increased maritime interdiction efforts in Central America, our programs are delivering and saving lives. We see the greatest impact where we have the political will of committed partners. More work remains to be done to further sustain this impact and increase security in the United States and throughout the hemisphere. Our FY 2020 request is critical to making further gains.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you. Secretary Kozak, I am going to start with something that is close to home. You know, in May, I sent a letter with eight of my colleagues from New Jersey to Secretary Pompeo asking the State Department to help me solve an issue of land bonds owed by the Peruvian Government to pensioners in my State. It is about \$57 million.

Is there any way that we can approach Peru to see if they can pay what they owe 72,000 pensioners in my State that are concerned about the money that Peru is not paying? So I would ask you if you could in your travels when you speak to the Peruvian Government, tell them that we are well aware that they have not paid their bills.

And as someone who in 2009 voted for the Peruvian free trade agreement, I kind of feel that it was a slap in the face what they are doing to the State of New Jersey. So do you have any idea if they intend to pay this?

Hon. KOZAK. Yes, Mr. Chairman, and indeed your letter to the Secretary has had effect. The Secretary himself has raised it with the senior levels of the Peruvian Government. I already, in my interactions with them, have raised the same issue. And it is interesting you mentioned the 2009 agreement. What has happened is that that agreement had a provision in it that allowed American claimants to bring arbitration cases with Peru and at least the holders of the bulk of those bonds have brought such an arbitration case in my understanding. I believe it is to be heard at the beginning of next year. In the conversations we have had with the Peruvians, they are saying they will, of course, abide by the result of that arbitration. So, I think it is in a process now that hopefully will lead to a result in the not too distant future. It is very much on our minds and we appreciate you having brought it to our attention.

Mr. SIRES. You know this is theirs. A way to invest and they asked the people in different countries do certain things and then we do not get paid. I think Argentina had some issues with that also. So I would just—it is very hard to get the people to invest and then not get paid. That is just—I do not understand that.

I want to talk a little bit about something that is very bothersome to me. I remember the Merida Initiative. I guess this will go to you, Mr. Glenn. We have invested close to \$2 billion in Mexico under the Merida Initiative. And the homicide rate in August was the highest on record. Is it worth it to continue to invest money in Mexico? I mean, the other day I saw that the Sinaloa cartel took over a town of a million people and Mexico basically walked away. That is very disturbing to me as someone who supported the Merida Initiative right from the beginning.

Where are we with this Merida Initiative?

Mr. GLENN. First, if I may, I want to recognize and thank the many members of the Mexican law enforcement and military who wear the uniform and who are patriots to their nation and who are dedicated to the fight against transnational organized crime. They are there. Many of them are personal friends of mine and are respected colleagues and associates. They are passionate about the work that they do. They believe in upholding the rule of law.



And one of the things that we have been able to do through the Merida Initiative is to equip and build their capacity to be able to confront organized crime. We know that they are capable. We know because we helped build that capacity.

As I mentioned in my testimony, I think what is of greatest importance at this moment is that Mexico develop and share with us a comprehensive strategy to confront transnational organized crime. Without that strategy and without us knowing what that strategy is and being able to match our funding and our abilities with their strategic direction we won't see progress. But obviously, the events of last week were very concerning to us.

Mr. SIRES. But it has been 10 years that we have been giving money to this initiative and we still do not have a plan to deal with international organized crime. Is that what you are telling me?

Mr. GLENN. I think what we need to see is a greater political commitment from the highest levels of government in Mexico.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you. Ranking Member Rooney.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I might start by asking Administrator Barsa about what programs we have in place to deal with climate change in Latin America. I think you mentioned that during your testimony and I know that AID is doing some things that I have heard about.

Hon. BARSA. We do. Well, certainly we do not have—regarding climate change, we are certainly not in the position to adjudicate causality or anything like that, but we certainly do have programs to deal with the effects of weather in any number of sectors. Certainly, our work in the Amazon in Brazil, we are looking at how the weather effects working with indigenous groups on preservation of the rain forest.

We had some announcements we made today about \$2 million for increased ability to monitor hurricanes and weather events. We announced a few days ago \$5 million to invest in the Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum which is also going to increase energy resiliency within the Caribbean.

We are also looking at programs certainly in the Western Highlands of Guatemala and other places. We are certainly cognizant of the effect of weather changes, so we are looking for food security, where applicable, that cuts across the region any number of activities.

Mr. ROONEY. Secretary Kozak, do you have any comments? We were talking about this the other day, there were articles about Guatemala with the impact on the coffee production.

Hon. KOZAK. Yes, sir. There has been a drought in the region and some severe consequence for a lot of the growers there. And AID has been working programs.

I think what I would add is that in addition to trying to deal with the immediate effects of climate and so on, what we are looking for is some real reform in these countries so that people are not in a position where a bad turn in the weather with a hurricane coming through or a year's worth of drought or something is going to destroy them or destroy their lives. We need to see these economies become much more robust and growing and have more diversity in the types of activity.

So there is both the immediate problem of how you deal with these effects of weather disasters, but then the broader problem, how do you end up with economies that are not heavily dependent on subsistence farming and that kind of thing.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you. The other question I might ask and start with you, Secretary Kozak, is now that we have got this new thing in Bolivia, what do you think we can do there?

Hon. KOZAK. Yes, sir. Well, one thing we did do was fully support the election observation mission that the Organization of American States put in place, as well as some affiliated election observers. The Bolivians have had the opportunity to have a good, clean election. It was in the process of moving forward and then inexplicably they stopped counting the votes and then announced inconsistent results.

Our urging to them, and we are making it both publicly and privately, is that they respect the votes that were cast by the Bolivian people. It is not that hard to determine how they cast their votes. They have actas that show the count. And they should do that and abide by the result. If they do not, we are making clear that there are going to be some serious consequences in their relationships throughout the region. Prior to this, they have been considered a democratically elected government even though they sometimes have had policies and attitudes toward us that were not all that productive, like throwing out USAID a few years back. But we treated them as a legitimately elected government.

Mr. ROONEY. The Post ran that article last week about how it may be socialistic, but it seems to be working for the people.

Hon. KOZAK. Well, at this point, I think it is not working for the people if you do not let the people make a choice.

Mr. ROONEY. Right.

Hon. KOZAK. Right now, my colleague, Ambassador Carlos Trujillo, is at the OAS. They are having a permanent council meeting on this and I think you will see a pretty strong response from the whole hemisphere. It is not just a U.S.-Bolivia thing. It is democracy in the region versus an effort to interfere with it.

Mr. ROONEY. How many votes do you think you will get?

Hon. KOZAK. I am not going to speculate, sir. My guess though is it is going to be pretty strong in terms of the democracies in the region. I mean this is the kind of thing that the Inter-American Democratic Charter and so on was designed to deal with. You cannot have elections and then just ignore the results.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you.

Mr. SIRE. Congressman Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you. And I want to thank the panel for being here with us today.

Last spring, the Mexican Government announced—I am going to change the subject a little bit to Mexico and some followup to what the chairman was talking about. Last spring, the Mexican Government announced the Safe Highway Pilot Program. I am not sure, maybe Mr. Glenn might be familiar with this, but I was particularly excited. I flew down to Mexico City. I met with Secretary Durazo because I have a huge concern of the trade route from Monterrey to the border to my district in Texas where a lot of trade and tourism crosses. And it has become highly dangerous. In fact,

I have not crossed into Reynosa in 11 years and sometimes they say it is safer than others, but at the end of the day it still is not completely safe and it is not where it used to be.

They agreed to honor my request and they put Highway 40 into this pilot program of safe highways. However, to this day, I have not seen time bars. It really has not become a reality. I have seen nothing come to fruition and unfortunately, this is very impactful to trade and I am surprised when we are talking taxes and tariffs in our trade agreement that we are not talking about security costs and extortion costs that many people in the business community including Americans doing business in Mexico are forced to pay. And it does not seem like it has been addressed forcefully enough.

Are you aware of the risk drivers of both cargo and tourist passengers face driving down Highway 40 or other highways I am sure in Mexico? They told me this was the 17th most dangerous, but to me, it is the most important, that they are dealing with. Are you familiar with this program or any other programs intended to address the insecurity on Mexico's highways and trade routes like Highway 40? And what steps is the U.S. Government taking to address these concerns?

I very rarely hear about here on the Hill or anywhere else and I thought that not addressing this while we are talking about trade and USMCA would be a missed opportunity. I have grown up in South Texas. I remember the day when we would cross the border and it was just another extension of our community. Nice to drive to Monterrey and spend the weekend and come back. As a lawyer, I did a lot of business in Mexico. And all that changed about 12 years ago and has progressively gotten worse. I will have government officials come and tell me that things have improved and it is safer now, but it is really not.

What are we doing and what more can we do to address this? And do you think right now while we are talking about USMCA, do you think that this would be the appropriate time to address this and maybe apply some pressure to get something done?

It is appalling that we have spent \$2 billion which I know is the right investment if you get the right results, but I do not see the results and this is my second term in Congress and it is pretty frustrating to see what is happening in Mexico. And I know trade has been successful, but there are a lot of issues happening on the border. I hear of exporters that have an extra line item on the Mexican custom brokers that are to pay the bad guys, if you will, and many, many stories as I am sure you guys have probably heard about.

What do you have to say about this? What can we do? I am really disenchanted with what is happening and I am very concerned. It has impacted the local economy in South Texas. We had a lot of tourism. We had a billion dollars a year of legitimate Mexican business deposits in banks in South Texas. They have been impacted. The tourist industry has been impacted. Our sales taxes are down all because of insecurity.

When I talk to my friends in Monterrey, Mexico and they say hey, I am going to be in town for the weekend, why do not you come up? I am like, you know, I do not go anymore because I feel like I am risking my life and my family's life. These are the good

people in Mexico that are not allowed to come because of the insecurity. And I think we could do a lot more. I think we have really failed and here, a \$2 billion figure that has been expended and you still cannot drive to Monterrey. Clearly, something is broken and what can we do to make it better? And what information would you have that maybe I do not have? Thank you.

Mr. GLENN. Thank you, Congressman. I would be happy to address the security aspect of that. The Mexican Government is currently undergoing a transition from what was the Federal Police that had responsibility for the highways and highway safety. Basically, they are highway patrol. With the creation of their National Guard, the Federal Police is being disbanded and absorbed into that National Guard entity.

My view from at least Washington is that that transition, transitions that are that big normally is rough and they are going through some difficulties in transitioning to that new National Guard structure. And it will be some time before they are fully on their feet.

At the moment, as far as I know, the Mexicans have not asked formally for assistance in the formation of that National Guard. Of course, we stand ready to provide assistance that is tied to U.S. national security goals if they so sought.

Again, I would go back to the criticality of the Mexican Government at the highest levels developing a national security strategy and one that is specific to counternarcotics and organized crime. Without that, it is difficult to organize a reaction.

Mr. GONZALEZ. This transition is the last year. How about 9 years prior to this while we were dishing out \$2 billion and really I think we should have more accountability and wanting to see a result of that investment, especially places that Americans visit and do business in. I am really upset.

I just sent a letter to the Mexican ambassadors and I am for this trade agreement. I am for trade. It has transformed our region and it has been good for all three countries involved, but I am about to pull my vote if they do not do something about this and I think we need to do more and I think while we are talking about trade, it would be a missed opportunity to not talk about the insecurity when we are talking about taxes and tariffs and we are paying extortion fees and extra security costs, how is that not a tax or a tariff?

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Congressman. Congressman Buck. Sorry, Mr. Curtis, you do not look like Buck.

Mr. CURTIS. That is the nicest thing you have said all day.

Mr. SIRES. I apologize.

Mr. CURTIS. No worries. Thank you very much. Thank you to each of the three of you for being here. I would like to use my comments to emphasize three points that have been bouncing around in my head in relationship to travel that I have had in this region. And the first is more of a comment than it is a question. And that is my strong belief that your success in this region is incredibly important and vital to the United States, that every bit of success you have adds to the peace and prosperity that we have here in the United States, that our investment in time and energy and the men and women that work not just for you but in that region for

the United States are doing very important work. So I just would like to emphasize that and thank you all and the many people that you represent.

The second is the concern about China, their influence in the region. It seems to be widespread. China has engaged in an aggressive campaign to convince countries to switch their allegiance from Taiwan to China. I actually have a bill that addresses this. It is called the TAIPEI Act and I hope this committee will pick this bill up and quickly address it.

I worry that our effort, our U.S. dollars spent in that region are a small percent compared to the influence of China and their maligning influence. And I am wondering if you can address that and give us some hope that we can counter these efforts or that we need to do more.

Hon. KOZAK. Thank you, Mr. Curtis, first for the nice words about our people. All three of our activities are working in the region and they are out there every day on the front lines for exactly the reasons you indicate—trying to improve things because it does contribute directly to our security and prosperity.

Second, on China, we have put a substantial effort into this, and my principal deputy has been in our bureau the main spark plug behind this thing. And I think we are making some progress. What we are trying to get across to people in the region is to say “look, yes, you should trade with China. We trade with China. It is a big country. It is a big market. But trade on your terms. Trade on terms that are fair and reciprocal and transparent.”

China is following, to me, what appears like a 19th century imperialist model in merchantilism and government agencies and so on. And this is why we cannot compete directly in terms of what kinds of money they put out there to bribe people or to stick other countries with unsustainable debt and this kind of thing. But what we can do is say to the other countries, “look, here are the kinds of things that they have been doing around the world, do not fall for it. Do not get tricked into this. Deal with them, but deal with them on 21st century terms, and deal with us and we are ready to compete on a level playing field.”

I think we are seeing real progress at the national level. National governments are becoming much more cautious and reading the fine print and so on. What we are seeing now (and maybe it is a sign of that success) is that China is trying to move to the municipal and provincial level in these countries and see if they can find ways to make inroads there. So we are going to keep trying to compete with them on that basis.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you. Mr. Barsa, you are ready to say something. I can tell.

Hon. BARSÁ. Well, I am ready to say something because I am so proud of the model that USAID has for the region compared to the Chinese model. Our model of development is truly a model where we have countries on a journey to self-reliance.

Administrator Green has said the goal of our foreign assistance is to get countries to the point where foreign assistance is not needed. So the best thing that we are doing right now is providing a contrast to the Chinese model, which is one of dependency. It is really not development in any form.

Mr. CURTIS. I have seen that and I agree with you. And my worry is the tantalizing nature of their deal versus our long term, sustained help sometimes, I think, does not get compared to what you would like it to.

Hon. BARSÁ. Well, to followup with what Ambassador Kozak said, one of the things we are also doing is we are sharing lessons learned, so oftentimes the Chinese will come in selling “X” and delivering “Y”, so we want to make sure other countries have informed decisions and they get these stories about how these—

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you. I am going to run out of time. I am going to make my last point and that is of Venezuela and my great fear that despite all of our best efforts, it is still not enough, knowing that we have got to find a way to help the good people there and the countries that surround them and helping them as well. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I am out of time and I yield.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Levin.

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am going to have my beloved chairman give me the hook when we are out of time because I have a lot of questions and I do not know if there are other folks waiting on the other side. I definitely do not want to block anyone else. And then I have to go to the floor to give an amendment.

I thank you all so much for coming. I want to start by asking a question about a country that others, or some questions that others may not ask about which is Haiti. Earlier this week, The New York Times reported on the ongoing political and economic crisis there and I want to read you a little excerpt from that powerful and very bleak piece.

“Gas shortages are worsening by the day. Hospitals have cut services or closed entirely. Public transportation has grounded to a halt. Businesses have shuttered. Most schools have been closed since early September, leaving millions of children idle with no end in sight. Widespread layoffs have compounded chronic poverty and hunger. Uncertainty hangs over everything.”

Ambassador Kozak, has the State Department engaged with the Moise administration on anti-corruption and accountability efforts in the wake of the Petrocaribe investigation?

Hon. KOZAK. Yes, Mr. Levin.

Mr. LEVIN. You have. And can you tell me what progress has been achieved?

Hon. KOZAK. I was going to give you the broader engagement with Haiti.

Mr. LEVIN. Well, I am particularly interested in this.

Hon. KOZAK. On Petrocaribe—

Mr. LEVIN. Anti-corruption and accountability in the wake of the Petrocaribe ongoing scheme—

Hon. KOZAK. I do not know if my colleagues have anything on that, but no, we have not addressed that particularly. I have not. But I have been on the job for less than a month.

Mr. LEVIN. Oh, my goodness, yes.

Hon. KOZAK. So people may have.

Mr. LEVIN. All right, but if you would followup, I would appreciate that.

Hon. KOZAK. I would say though that the broader problem that you just described is very concerning to us. The first foreign minister I met with when I took the job the first day was the foreign minister of Haiti. And what we are trying intensively to do is get the two elected parts of the Haitian Government to do what they are supposed to do and work with each other and form a government and get over it.

Basically, you have got the Executive having named a government that Parliament will not, cannot, does not seem to be able to get to taking a vote on whether to approve it or not. Instead, they are trying to get the President to resign or some elements are. And that is what has caused the chaos and the paralyzation.

Our Ambassador there, along with a broad core group of other countries, is working tirelessly to try to get all the different sides to sit down, come together and try to find some kind of an accommodation so that you can get the government—

Mr. LEVIN. Well, if the government is a kleptocracy and is stealing hundreds of millions and billions of dollars meant for the development of the country, I am not sure how effective that approach will be.

Earlier this month, the Miami Herald reported that human rights defenders are calling for investigations into police brutality and misuse of tear gas by the Haitian National Police.

During these recent protests, Ambassador, has the State Department raised these serious human rights concerns with the Haitian Government?

Hon. KOZAK. We have raised human rights concerns generally, but let me say, I mean our experience and I go way back with Haiti. Twenty-five years ago, I was special negotiator with Haiti and went through some of the crises then.

One of the few institutions there that has been performing recently well is the Haitian National Police. It has gone from being a very small organization that was incapable of policing the place to now having the capability. Are there abuses committed from time to time? Yes. We have helped to build the capacity of the police force; part of that capacity is to do internal investigations when there are allegations of abuse. So we are urging them to use those mechanisms to deal with abuses when they occur. But I would not want to tar the entire organization since it has actually been doing a pretty good job of trying to control the unrest without committing—

Mr. LEVIN. Oh, dear. Well, we will have to talk more about that in the weeks and honestly, I hope we can because I am very, very concerned about what has been happening, the massacre in La Saline, the response after that. I may not share your sunny view of them.

I just want to get to another aspect of this. You mentioned 25 years. OK. The New York Times piece I mentioned talked about the United States' troubling history in Haiti. It notes that during the cold war, American governments supported, albeit at times grudgingly, the authoritarian governments of Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier because of their anti-communist stance.

By the way, I was there in 1980 and again later and I saw this first hand as a young student.

In January, Haiti broke with precedent and voted with Washington at the OAS to reject the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro. Now let me be clear. I believe Maduro is a dictator. He has caused the people to suffer. But I also want to be clear on why our government does what it does or perhaps just as important in this case what it does not do.

Does the Administration's failure, Ambassador, to more vocally defend human rights and good governance in Haiti and the our government has said very little about this and it is a disaster happening. Does that failure have anything to do with Haiti's vote at the OAS earlier this year?

Hon. KOZAK. I would say not, sir. I have headed the Human Rights Bureau before I just transferred over to this job, and in that capacity we have contributed over the years to the development of many of the human rights groups in Haiti in developing their capacity and they do a fine job of calling out—

Mr. LEVIN. Well, they are crying out for our help, sir. They are crying out and I respectfully ask you that the administration take a much more public stand on human rights in Haiti.

Thanks for your forbearance, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Congressman Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time and I appreciate your efforts. And I am hoping my words come out as soothing as Mr. Curtis', but maybe not.

Mr. Rooney opened up with our foreign assistance is a critical foreign diplomacy tool too valuable not to be utilized properly. And I appreciate those words. And I am a guy that came up here to get rid of foreign aid, but I found out that you are not going to get rid of foreign aid. We led the charge on the BUILD Act which developed the United States International Development Finance Corporation, but I want it used properly.

And so as I listen to all three of you and I appreciate what all three of you do in the agencies you work with, what I want to do is not grade you, but I want to grade the results. And I think Mr. Gonzalez, you could hear the frustration on the other side.

So our foreign aid goes to rule of law, good governance. I look at Haiti. You were just talking about forming a government in Haiti. Democracy promotion, infrastructure. Again, I am going to point to Haiti because Haiti today has less than 20 percent of their population has potable water in the 21st century in the Western Hemisphere.

Those for anti-corruption, I have got an article that President Pena of Mexico is accused of taking a \$100 million bribe from El Chapo, the anti-drug production and trafficking and we have been to Colombia. I was there four or 5 years ago. They were down to 180, 185 hectares. They are up over 500 hectares. And I know the policies of what happened. And I know that President Duque is working to reduce that in half.

And so when I look at all this and I look at the amount of cocaine coming out of Colombia, other Central American countries, Peru, and 95 percent of the cocaine coming into America goes through Mexico. Mexico has over 70,000 hectares of heroin growing. That is not for medicinal use. That is directly into my country for our citizens.



And so, if we were to grade not you, maybe not the agency you are in, but the U.S. Government, I guess the results of what we have done. Because we have spent billions and billions of dollars. You know, if I look just at the war on drugs, it is over \$1 trillion since Nixon started it.

If we look in Mexico, it is over \$2 billion on the War on Drugs.

And so if we are to grade the United States' policies on a scale A to D are flunking, where would they be?

Hon. BARSÁ. Congressman, thank you for your question. So let me start by saying I never would have accepted the nomination for this position if I did not feel that the mission of USAID was in furtherance of U.S. national security and national interest.

So yes, there are anecdotes, certainly I found them cognizant of where maybe aid did not work as intended, but on the counter balance, there are stories and anecdotes where differences can be made. For example, if I may, in Colombia, USAID has numerous programs to help solidify the peace and deal with the Venezuelan crisis as well. So just for example, Colombia has had to deal with five decades of war.

Mr. YOHO. Right.

Hon. BARSÁ. Chaos at all levels. So an example of the USAID programs making a difference is we are working with the Duque Administration for land titling in a place called Ovejas.

Mr. YOHO. Right.

Hon. BARSÁ. This is a USAID program. So what is happening, this program here is getting people who did not have title to land titled to the land. What we found is when people have title to the land, the recidivism goes down to less than 25 percent. But again, it is an incremental program.

When I was being confirmed—on the Senate side mostly—I think I was unique in that I said I would be coming back to Congress with an example of failures because I think it is only natural, as we have tried different things, that not everything is going to work. But I committed to them and I committed to you and members of this committee as well to modify and we have metrics in place to measure what we do and we think—

Mr. YOHO. How long have those metrics been in place?

Hon. BARSÁ. Metrics have been in place since the beginning of our programs, but what I have been since I have arrived here I have looked at metrics this way.

Mr. YOHO. I am going to cut you off there, because I want to get some points across. You are all talking about well, and it is almost like a checklist, well, we do good governance. We do democracy building. We do this and we check the boxes off. The rhetoric is there, but the actions are not or the results.

And I look at our policies and yes, we agree with everything you say and it would be wonderful if they would follow through, but then I look at what President Trump did. We are blocking trade until you do something about helping us with the border. We need tougher action in what we are doing and I am not saying maybe that is the best thing, but it was effective.

And I need to hear from you guys and feel free to call my office, slip something under the door anonymously, as long as it does not blow up, and just let me know what—and it is probably our fault.

And if you guys would just say if you knuckleheads in Congress would allow us to do this, we would get better results. Because what we are doing, I am not seeing it work, as good as it should for the amount of money put into it and the amount of effort that you guys put in.

And I appreciate what you said about the Mexican law enforcement. They are out there every day risking their life, but you have got corrupt mayors. You have got corrupt—I mean a mayor cannot get elected hardly to speak out. They get murdered the next day. Or the president. If the president of the country of Mexico is that corrupt, how in the heck do you expect anybody else to be?

So we have got to do something different and if they want to go to China, I hate to say let them, because they are going to be coming back and realize that China is going to dictate to them everything they do. And I think we need to focus on what we are going to do with the allies that believe the way we believe and the things that we do and we need to draw that line in the sand. You are either with us or you are not. You choose. I am not going to dictate to you what you do. It was more of a rant.

Anybody got any further comments if the chairman will allow me?

Mr. SIRES. You have 30 seconds.

Mr. YOHO. Thirty seconds, if somebody wants to chime in.

Mr. Glenn, you have your hand up first.

Mr. GLENN. I appreciate the concern. It is one that we all deal with every day as we do our jobs. How do we make this more effective? How do we make it work?

Just one piece of data, 49 percent of the cocaine interdicted in the Western Hemisphere is done by partner nations. They are capable and able to do that because of the assistance that we provided. If they were not interdicting that 49 percent, it falls on us to do it and it is expensive.

Mr. YOHO. Oh, it is terrible. And then we have got to look internally on why are we using so much drugs in this country. I mean we have got the demand. I appreciate what you all do and I hope you do not take that too critical. Thank you.

Hon. KOZAK. Yes. I would just add, I think you have heard from all three of us about the results of the programs versus the political will of our partner governments. You can have really good programs where all your metrics and evaluations show that you have created a capability. The cops are capable of investigating a crime, uncovering corruption, and all of that. But if you have a senior official who is taking money from El Chapo or something, you are not going to get the result.

So it is more of a political than a program problem and I think you pointed that out too. I mentioned that our President had said with the three countries in Central America, we are going to cut this off until we see some political—

Mr. YOHO. And I supported that.

Hon. KOZAK. Yes, so that is the kind of—

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Chairman, remember when we were down there on that first condel? I went out and we were in Mexico and they were talking about the \$2 billion and the DEA and all this stuff we are doing on drugs and we have been doing it for year after

year after year, but yet, drugs keep coming and coming and coming.

And I asked, I said, do you guys have the want to end this? And they said, well, of course we do. Well, the results are not showing that and I shared a story about my mom wanted me to play the piano and for 7 years she sewed and got the money for little Ted to play the piano. Seven years later, I cannot play the piano. You know why? I did not want to.

Do they want to change? And if they change, they will change.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SIRES. I do not know about little Ted, but—I have some questions. I have been dealing for years with Colombia and one of the things that struck me was the amount of growth that President Santos left behind of the coca growth. And now President Duque has to deal with what he was left with.

Once it starts, it is very difficult to stop.

Where are we in terms of trying to reduce the amount of growth in Colombia?

Mr. GLENN. Maybe I can begin and John can finish because that is kind of how we see this going.

Eradication efforts and interdiction efforts are key at the front end of this. There has to be a deterrent to the behavior. The cultivation of coca is too lucrative. There is no alternative development program. Without there being a stick to disincentivize it that will be more profitable and replace a farmer's revenue that they get from coca. So we provide the stick. We provide the disincentives for the activity.

Because of President Duque and his commitment to eradication, we are seeing great advancements. They are working on getting aerial eradication which is a tool. It is not the solution. It is a tool that they can use to effectively go about eradicating coca. They have quadrupled the number. I think they have gotten up to 159, if I am not mistaken, manual eradication forces. That is a vast increase over what they were left with when they took over the presidency.

So we are seeing positive developments.

Mr. SIRES. Did President Santos drop the ball on this?

Mr. GLENN. I do not want to say that President Santos dropped the ball. I think he had a different vision. He thought that peace would bring a commensurate reduction without having to go with the stick. I think the stick is absolutely necessary.

Hon. BARSA. Thank you, Congressman. As was stated, USAID and INL work hand-in-glove throughout the world, particularly in the Western Hemisphere and in Latin America and in the Caribbean. So with the advent of peace, the Duque administration now has more access to areas where they previously did not have access to, but thanks to the partnership with INL, there are more secure places for USAID programming to take place.

I mentioned the land titling that is just one program that helps with downgrading recidivism for growth of coca. There are other programs as well. We work with the private sector to increase growth in the private sector.

I was recently in Colombia. The first event I was at there with something called the Rural Financial Initiative where it is private

sector banks going out to rural areas, areas previously controlled by FARC and narcoterrorism and they are helping campesinos and others with private sector loans and banking services. What this allows is the growth of entrepreneurship in these areas, denying spaces for narcoterrorists to operate, leading to licit economies. So those are the examples we have in terms of helping make these areas more secure and we are seeing progress.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Secretary, I have been reading about Chile. I just cannot believe that just because they raised the tolls on—they should come to New York—on the train that it has caused all these problems. But do you see anything else that is causing that?

Hon. KOZAK. I must say, Mr. Chairman, I share your suspicions that there is more to it. We have seen and we are still analyzing, but for example, we had some pretty good reports the other day that there was a lot of external actor activity on social media stirring up violence with misinformation and this kind of thing; coming from Russia in this case.

Mr. SIRES. That is what I—I just read an article about that, that basically this was the most stable country over the last few years and this is another example of where Russia tries to undermine our efforts everywhere in the world. They are not good friends, you know. Their intention is to destroy this country.

And I really do believe that what is happening in Venezuela is all part of an invasion without arms, sending four million people out, trying to to destabilize Colombia, trying to destabilize others, trying to destabilize the entire region. And I know that they probably had a hand in it. But I would, you know, I know that you probably are keeping track, as I am, of what is happening in Chile and the influence, the external influence that is happening there. Thank you.

Ranking Member.

Mr. ROONEY. Yes, I was going to ask a question, but I think I would rather just followup on what you raised because it is so important. We have got these experts here, you know, there is activities of Hezbollah, like I mentioned, particularly down by Paraguay; these Russians. We got Iran, rumors of Iran in Nicaragua. It may be just while you are all here together, just generally, if we could get your thoughts on how widespread and what these people who oppose the United States are doing and any thoughts about what we might do about it in the short run?

Hon. KOZAK. I can start. I mean you named most of the bad actors there. I would add to that Cuba which built up a capability throughout the region going back decades with influence in different organizations, unions, student organizations, journalism, and so on. They were able to turn that up and down. You have got Hezbollah operating, as you mentioned, in the area with Paraguay and Argentina. And then Russia, Russia clearly is involved with Venezuela. They very visibly sent troops there to try to buck up Maduro. They are providing the life line in terms of Rosneft marketing oil when nobody else will buy Venezuelan oil and they are using Rosneft basically to evade the sanctions and provide effort there. So a lot of the malign actors are acting against our interests and against the interests of our partners in the region. We are working it, we are working it hard, but it is very much a factor.

This is not all home grown. There are a lot of people playing around in a very bad way.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Anybody else have a thought before we wrap up?

Hon. BARSÁ. Certainly, for USAID programs for democracy and governance throughout the region, what we are seeing is certainly the primary malevolent actor in the region is Cuba as most repressive, so we have our programs supporting democratic governance, civil society within Cuba. What we are seeing replicated is the use of the Cuban play book in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and in other countries as well.

And it is not just the play book, sometimes you will hear stories and allegations of Cuban actors physically in these countries as well, so there is no doubt whatsoever that Cuba is the most—biggest malign actor in the region and seeking to destabilize democratically elected governments and free society.

Mr. GLENN. I would just mention quickly that one aspect of foreign assistance that does not get recognized as much is the facilitating effect that the money has in terms of helping our U.S. inter-agency law enforcement interact with partners in Latin America to confront these kinds of issues and to be the premier partner so that it is not Russia, it is not China, when they look for assistance and when they look for help on criminal issues in their own country they turn to the FBI. They turn to the DEA. They turn to ICE or CBP or HSI or the Marshals or TSA or any number of the partners that we help to facilitate.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you.

Mr. SIREN. Well, thank you all for being here today for this important hearing. Promoting the democratic transition in Venezuela, addressing the root causes of migration from the Northern Triangle and confronting the challenge posed by China will require sustained commitment from the United States to support our regional allies.

I look forward to continue to work with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to deepen our engagement with the Western Hemisphere. I thank all the witnesses and all the members that are here today. With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:49 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade**

**Albio Sires (D-NJ), Chairman**

October 23, 2019

**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 by the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>):

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019

**TIME:** 2:00 pm

**SUBJECT:** The Trump Administration's FY2020 Budget and U.S. Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean

**WITNESS:** The Honorable Michael G. Kozak  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable John Barsa  
Assistant Administrator  
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean  
U.S. Agency for International Development

Mr. Richard H. Glenn  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*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 202/225-5021 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 SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, CIVILIAN SECURITY, AND TRADE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date October 23, 2019 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:34 Ending Time 3:49

Recesses 0 ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Albio Sires

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [x]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [x]

Executive (closed) Session [ ]

Stenographic Record [x]

Televised [x]

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Trump Administration's FY2020 Budget and U.S. Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an \* if they are not members of full committee.)

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [x] No [ ]

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

Chairman Albio Sires submitted Questions for the Record (attached).

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or TIME ADJOURNED 3:49

Ricardo Martinez
Subcommittee Staff Associate

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
*WHEM SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING*

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
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X	John Curtis, UT
X	Ken Buck, CO
	Michael Guest, MS



STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Western Hemisphere Subcommittee

Chairman Albio Sires (D-NJ)

Opening Statement –  
“The Trump Administration’s FY20 Budget and U.S. Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean”  
Wednesday, October 23, 2019

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- Good afternoon everyone and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.
- I have wanted to hold this hearing since the beginning of this Congress.
- Unfortunately, the former Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs refused to testify before this subcommittee, despite numerous invitations and requests.
- All recent Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretaries of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs testified multiple times before the House Foreign Affairs Committee during their tenures.
- It was a disservice to Congress, to the constituents we are elected to represent, and to those diplomats who served under Assistant Secretary Kim Breier, that she chose to stonewall Congress.
- It should go without saying, but testifying before Congress is not optional.
- I am appreciative that Ambassador Kozak immediately recognized the importance of this hearing and I am encouraged that we have an Acting Assistant Secretary with such a distinguished record of public service.
- The challenges facing United States leadership in the Western Hemisphere are immense.
- In Venezuela, the Maduro dictatorship has managed to cling to power, even in the face of a severe humanitarian crisis that it created.
- I commend the Colombian people and the Colombian government for their admirable response to the Venezuela crisis.
- I am proud of our diplomats and staff on the ground, who have worked tirelessly to promote a democratic transition and provide humanitarian support and development assistance to the Venezuelan people.
- That said, I am concerned about the impacts of this crisis, the longer it drags on, and I will be asking our witnesses today to provide a clear strategy for our Venezuela policy going forward.

- In the Northern Triangle, forced gang recruitment, extortion, domestic violence, poverty, and the impacts of climate change are among many factors forcing people to migrate north.
- Unfortunately, under this administration, U.S. policy toward the Northern Triangle ignores that complex reality.
- In March, the Trump Administration announced draconian cuts of over 400 million dollars in U.S. assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.
- Administration officials reached this decision without consulting Congress or even assessing the impact of our assistance programs on migration flows to the United States.
- Since imposing those cuts, administration officials have coerced Northern Triangle governments into signing safe third country agreements, which aim to deny people who are fleeing violence the right to seek asylum in the United States.
- The Trump Administration seems to believe that we can stop migration by criminalizing desperation.
- I strongly disagree with this approach.
- I believe that the U.S. must instead work as a partner to help create conditions so that Hondurans, Guatemalans, and El Salvadorans can see a future in their home countries.
- We must also reclaim our commitment to combating government corruption in Guatemala, an effort that the Bush Administration and bipartisan members of Congress long championed, but which this administration has backed away from.
- I am convinced that China's increased presence in the region poses a threat to U.S. interests.
- However, cutting our foreign assistance to the region by nearly 30%, as this administration proposed in its budget request, will only worsen that problem.
- We will not overcome the challenge posed by China by cutting foreign assistance and strong-arming our allies.
- True alliances, based on mutual respect, are America's comparative advantage over China.
- We need to deepen our engagement with the region in order to regain our competitive edge.

- Moreover, if we are going to play a leadership role in addressing the many crises facing the region, we must be seen as an honest broker.
- We must call on Bolivian authorities to ensure the election results reflect the will of the people.
- We must stand in solidarity with the Haitian people, who are suffering under crippling poverty and are asking only that their political leaders finally start doing what they were elected to do.
- And we must continue to support brave activists in Cuba and Nicaragua who are demanding basic human rights, even in the face of severe repression.
- I look forward to a productive discussion on these and many other challenges in the Western Hemisphere.
- I hope we can all agree on a path forward for the United States to deepen engagement with our allies and advance our shared interests in the Western Hemisphere.
- Thank you and I now turn to Ranking Member Rooney for his opening statement.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**Questions for the Record from Representative Albio Sires  
The Trump Administration's FY 2020 Budget and  
U.S. Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean**

**House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade  
Wednesday, October 23, 2019**

**For the Honorable Michael G. Kozak**

**Question 1:**

All three countries lack a fully developed infrastructure to process asylum claims. In 2018, Guatemala only processed approximately 53 asylum petitions out of 257 requests. By contrast, 62,000 people from El Salvador and Honduras sought asylum in the U.S. last year, the vast majority of whom passed through Guatemala on their journey to the southwest U.S. border. What was the basis for the Trump Administration's determination that Guatemala is prepared to handle this dramatic increase in asylum petitions?

**Answer 1:**

Pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1158(a)(2)(A), before an Asylum Cooperation Agreement (ACA) can enter into force, the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security must certify that individuals seeking asylum who are removed to Guatemala will have access to a full and fair procedure for determining their asylum claim or equivalent protection and following an exchange of diplomatic notes. Individuals who would be persecuted or tortured in Guatemala will not be sent to that country pursuant to this same statutory provision. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will screen individuals to ensure that only populations who do not fall into one of the predefined exceptions are transferred to Guatemala under the ACA. Through its international humanitarian partners, the Department has provided support to help strengthen the capacity of Guatemala's asylum system. We understand DHS will also calibrate ACA transfers so as not to exceed the government's capacity.

**Question 2:**

Guatemala and Honduras have both experienced significant unrest over the last year. In reaching its decision to impose these asylum agreements, what specific country conditions in Guatemala and Honduras did the administration assess?

**Answer 2:**

Under U.S. law, before an Asylum Cooperation Agreement (ACA) can enter into force, DHS and DOJ must certify that asylum seekers transferred from the United States have access to full and fair asylum procedures or equivalent temporary protection in the relevant third country. Guatemala and Honduras committed to improving their asylum systems when they joined the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework in 2017. In signing the ACAs, Guatemala and Honduras have demonstrated a shared commitment to expanding access to international protection.

**Question 3:**

What was the basis for the administration's apparent determination that the increase in asylum-seekers in Guatemala and Honduras would not ultimately contribute to a worsening of the already-precarious political and security situation?

**Answer 3:**

Under U.S. law, before an Asylum Cooperation Agreement (ACA) can enter into force, DHS and DOJ must certify that asylum seekers transferred from the United States have access to full and fair asylum procedures or equivalent temporary protection in the relevant third country. The Department is moving forward with targeted foreign assistance funding for programs in the region that complement the security plans for each government and support our international humanitarian partners to assist governments in building their asylum capacity. We understand DHS will also calibrate ACA transfers to avoid exceeding the receiving government's capacity to process asylum requests.

**Question 4:**

Is the recently announced assistance of approximately \$143 million intended to be a reward for these three governments for conceding to the Trump Administration's pressure campaign and signing asylum agreements? How will the newly announced assistance be used to implement these agreements?

**Answer 4:**

Following the demonstrated progress by these governments in addressing irregular migration and at the President's direction, the Department of State and USAID are moving forward with distributing \$143 million in targeted assistance for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This funding will support programs to advance our joint efforts to deter illegal migration to the United States, while bolstering the existing security plans of each government. This funding will also provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers, provide alternative opportunities for migrants to seek asylum and other forms of protection closer to home, and expand regional governments' asylum capacities through efforts with international organizations.

**Question 5:**

What is the administration's current strategy and what are the immediate next steps being planned for promoting a peaceful transition to democracy in Venezuela?

**Answer 5:**

The United States supports the Venezuelan people, interim President Guaidó, and the National Assembly, the only democratically elected institution remaining in Venezuela, in their efforts to return stability, prosperity and democracy to Venezuela. We are using diplomacy and a whole-of-government approach to engage the international community – including 57 other nations that recognize Guaidó – and to strengthen support for Venezuela's democratic actors.

We continue to identify those who are responsible for human rights abuses, corruption, and undermining of democracy, and thus subject to additional sanctions or other restrictive actions under domestic authorities. We are also providing humanitarian support to Venezuelans inside Venezuela and to refugees in the region to help address the dire health conditions caused by the former Maduro regime.

**Question 6:**

What conditions would the U.S. be willing to accept in the event of a negotiated transition to democracy?

**Answer 6:**

The United States seeks a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Venezuela. The first step in achieving such an outcome is an election under the auspices of a transitional government that will ensure that all government institutions support the conditions necessary for free and fair elections. Allowing the Venezuelan people the opportunity to democratically select their political leadership is exactly what the interim government sought to negotiate during the Oslo Process.

**Question 7:**

In what tangible ways is the administration pushing for the MACCIH's mandate to be extended? Has Secretary Pompeo raised this issue with his Honduran counterpart and with President Hernandez? If yes, in what specific situations has he done so? If no, why not?

**Answer 7:**

The Department strongly supports the renewal of the mandate of the OAS Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). Since 2016, the U.S. government has provided foreign assistance for the historic and important work of MACCIH. MACCIH was an initiative of President Juan Orlando Hernández and the Honduran legislature which we have strongly supported from the start. The Department supports MACCIH

as a comprehensive, long-term effort to improve the rule of law in Honduras and we believe its work strengthening Honduran institutions is not yet complete. We continue to campaign in support of the extension of MACCIH's mandate through sustained engagement from senior officials and targeted social media outreach.

While the Secretary has not yet had the opportunity to meet his Honduran counterpart, who assumed his role in August, I have personally delivered this message to the Foreign Minister on multiple occasions. I have also underscored our support for MACCIH's renewal to President Hernandez, as has our Embassy in Tegucigalpa.

**Question 8:**

What impact have the Trump Administration's assistance cuts had on U.S. support for the MACCIH?

**Answer 8:**

The Department and USAID did not sub-obligate FY 2017 assistance previously obligated under country-level agreements or obligate FY 2018 assistance for the OAS Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH), consistent with the President's directives regarding foreign assistance for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. We understand there was no operational impact on the Mission, or its work to strengthen Honduran institutions to combat corruption because the funding needs of those programs had already been met by other contributions.

**Question 9:**

Did the administration pressure the Guatemalan government to extend CICIG's mandate? If so, in what specific ways did it do so? If not, why not?

**Answer 9:**



The United States respects the sovereignty of Guatemala and understands the fight against corruption is key to addressing the region's challenges. We expect Guatemala to continue to make progress on combatting corruption and impunity and have made that clear to them. The United States remains committed to supporting Guatemalan institutions and the Guatemalan people in their ongoing fight against corruption and impunity. We take that fight seriously, knowing that the rule of law, reduced corruption, and an end to impunity are key to security, stability, and prosperity not only in Guatemala, but throughout the region and the world.

The departure of CICIG does not affect the Department's commitment to continue working with Guatemalan judicial partners to build their capacity to fight corruption and impunity.

**Question 10:**

Would the State Department consider this case to be resolved if the pensioners' lawsuit were thrown out on jurisdictional grounds?

**Answer 10:**

Gramercy Funds Management initiated arbitration with Peru in 2016 pursuant to investor-state dispute settlement provisions outlined in the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement. Through this agreement, Peru consented to address investment disputes with U.S. nationals through binding international arbitration. Peru has expressed its willingness to comply with the eventual decision of the arbitral tribunal.

I am not in a position to comment on jurisdictional or other issues that are before the tribunal in the ongoing arbitration. We will continue to monitor the case. As part of our existing engagements with Peru on economic and trade-related issues, we will continue to encourage Peru to pursue policies that maintain a transparent investment environment and support U.S. commercial and investment interests.

**Question 11:**

What specific steps is the State Department taking to advance an expedient solution to this issue, particularly given that the arbitration hearing scheduled for early 2020 would be just a step along a lengthy, multi-year arbitration process?

**Answer 11:**

A hearing on all issues in the case will take place in February 2020. Shortly thereafter the tribunal will deliberate and issue its decision. Peru has expressed its willingness to comply with the tribunal's decision.

The Department has raised the agrarian bonds issue with Peruvian counterparts on numerous occasions, including in meetings with President Vizcarra and Foreign Minister Popolizio. Department officials continue to monitor developments related to the agrarian bonds, meet regularly with bondholder representatives and Peruvian officials, and encourage Peru to maintain a transparent investment environment.

**Question 12:**

In the Brazilian Foreign Minister's recent visit to Washington, did Secretary of State Pompeo express concerns directly to the Foreign Minister about police killings in Brazil?

**Answer 12:**

Secretary Pompeo raised human rights issues with his Brazilian counterparts including Foreign Minister Araujo during his January 2019 visit to Brazil, and the Minister reaffirmed Brazil's commitment to respect human rights. The State Department will continue to support the work of civil society; promote human rights, public security, and social inclusion; and promote accountability of human rights abuses at the highest levels, including through the new U.S.-Brazil Strategic Partnership Dialogue, which we launched on September 13.

**Question 13:**

Do you believe there could be a role for the U.S. in working with the Brazilian police on better protecting human rights?

**Answer 13:**

Our governments are enthusiastic and motivated to work together, based on our shared values and steadfast commitments to promoting security and human rights. As the two largest democracies in the hemisphere, we are deepening our cooperation across a range of areas, including security and promoting human rights and democracy. We seek to provide trainings and capacity building to the Brazilian federal and state governments and local law enforcement agencies, when appropriate, on effective law enforcement techniques that respect human rights.

**Question 14:**

What are the main pillars of current U.S. policy toward Guyana?

**Answer 14:**

The United States is committed to advancing democratic governance, economic prosperity, and security in the Western Hemisphere, including in the Co-Operative Republic of Guyana.

The current Guyanese government has exceeded its constitutional mandate, as it was supposed to have conducted national elections prior to September 18, 2019. The United States, in coordination with the European Union and the UK, has publicly stated the government is in breach of Guyana's constitution and urges President Granger to take steps toward conducting national elections.

**Question 15:**

What steps is the State Department taking to ensure that elections on March 2nd are free, fair, and transparent?

**Answer 15:**

The Department will provide, at the government's request, pre- and post-election technical assistance and observation. USAID will assist in post-election activities, including civil society and youth engagement.

**Question 16:**

What specific evidence does the State Department have that demonstrates the role of Russian actors or institutions in shaping or influencing events in Chile?

**Answer 16:**

On October 23, the Global Engagement Center received reports from private sector partners that draw on open source social media. These reports demonstrated that 9 percent of social media posts regarding the ongoing protests in Chile (measured from the outset of unrest on October 18 until October 23) originated from Russia-linked accounts. The accounts involved have been previously observed in social media activity on socially contentious and political issues attempting to sow discord in the United States.

While not the root cause of the civil unrest in Chile, we condemn activity on social media from external actors like Russia that seek to exploit unrest to intensify discord through disinformation. These Russian posts are examples of tactics used by digital external actors to exploit the unregulated space of social media platforms. As it has done so many times, the Russian Federation is choosing to use disinformation and propaganda through social media accounts to intensify conflicts and increase internal discord in sovereign states far beyond its borders.

**Question 17:**

How is the Trump Administration defining foreign interference efforts in the Chilean case? For instance, is misleading or false reporting by Russian state-backed media outlets regarding the situation in Chile considered by the Trump Administration as a type of foreign interference?

**Answer 17:**

The Russia-linked accounts that spread disinformation in Chile engaged in inauthentic activity and used false personas to attempt to shield their connections to Russia. This constitutes foreign efforts to interfere based on the obfuscation of Russia's role and the goal of sowing discord. Russia also uses state-backed media outlets generally to spread disinformation, including through outlets aimed at audiences in Latin America. While not the root cause of the civil unrest in Chile, we condemn activity on social media from external actors like Russia that seek to exploit unrest to intensify discord through disinformation.

**Question 18:**

Do you believe that the Trump Administration's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords has impacted the extent to which the U.S. government prioritizes the promotion of renewable energy, climate change resilience programs, and other efforts to address the drivers and impacts of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean?

**Answer 18:**

The United States proudly stands on its record as a world leader in reducing emissions, driving economic growth, and fostering resilience at home and abroad, independent of U.S. participation in the Paris Agreement. U.S. net greenhouse gas emissions dropped 13 percent from 2005 to 2017, even as our economy grew over 19 percent. The United States will continue to be a leader in assisting our partners, including those in Latin America and the Caribbean, to reduce emissions, protect natural resources like forests, increase resilience, and respond to natural disasters.

**Question 19:**

Do you believe climate change is a factor contributing to migration from the Northern Triangle to the United States? If so, how is this reflected in our current policy?

**Answer 19:**

Drought and poor weather conditions are among the many issues in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that contribute to the problem and we believe an economy that is not so dependent on weather is part of the solution and are pressing the governments to open up their economies. The U.S. government is also seeking to boost private sector investment in the region while moving forward with U.S. assistance to complement the security plans of these governments and assist the governments in building their asylum capacity.

**Question 20:**

Do you believe embassies in the region should be able to fly rainbow flags during pride month?

**Answer 20:**

The State Department recognizes LGBTI Pride Month as an opportunity to advance fundamental freedoms and human rights for all. This year, U.S. Embassies and Consulates were encouraged to make the full use of Department and interagency tools and resources to advance human rights policy objectives for LGBTI persons around the world. Recognizing that each country context is different, Embassies and Consulates developed individual plans to recognize Pride Month by holding events to raise awareness of violence and human rights abuses targeting LGBTI persons and determining appropriate exterior displays. Several embassies and consulates have displayed the rainbow flag on other flagpoles and on the side of buildings, among other locations, in order to demonstrate support and commitment to the international LGBTI community.

**Question 21:**

Given the frequency of attacks on LGBTQ rights defenders in the region, what steps is the administration taking to protect the work of this group?

**Answer 21:**

The administration is concerned about the myriad of contexts where LGBTI individuals are under threat around the globe. Our diplomats track and monitor arrests, violence, and abuses targeting LGBTI persons and engage government and parliament officials, regulatory bodies, and nongovernmental and civil society organizations in response to these emergency situations. The United States continues to provide strong programmatic and emergency support for LGBTI human rights defenders and civil society organizations through the Global Equality Fund and supports the Equal Rights Coalition, a group of 42 likeminded countries seeking to advance the rights of LGBTI persons around the world.

**For the Honorable John Barsa****Question 1:**

The Feed the Future program originally targeted efforts in 19 focus countries, one of which was Haiti. In the 2017 Snapshot, Haiti was dropped as a focus country. Yet Haiti still ranked 111th of 117 countries in the 2019 Global Hunger Index, reflecting a serious level of hunger and undernutrition.

- What was the rationale for taking Haiti off the list of focus countries under the Feed the Future program?
- Was a transition plan for Haiti ever submitted after it was removed from the focus country list?
- Under what circumstances would the U.S. Government consider making Haiti a focus country again under the Feed the Future program?

**Answer 1:**

In 2017, the U.S. Government, via a multi-agency deliberative process, selected twelve Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) target countries. These countries were selected through a data-driven review process, and selection was based on six factors: level of need, potential for agriculture-led economic growth, opportunities for partnership, opportunities for regional economic integration, host country government commitment to food security investment and

policy reform, and U.S. Government resource availability. The final outcome reflected interagency consensus, rather than any single agency's perspective.

Although Haiti was not selected as a GFSS target country by the interagency, USAID's Feed the Future investments in Haiti have remained consistent. USAID continues programming to improve food security and ensure that the USAID Mission in Haiti is measuring results and structuring programming in alignment with the principles of the Global Food Security Strategy. USAID considered Haiti's change in target country status while designing a new Feed the Future portfolio, and used the opportunity to expand investments to geographic areas outside the original Feed the Future Zone of Influence, as well as to strengthen resilience to recurrent crises to better address the complex set of socio-economic, political, and environmental crises that result in high levels of food insecurity and humanitarian assistance needs.

USAID also designated Haiti as a Resilience Focus Country, which reflects sustained USAID commitment to build the resilience of vulnerable communities subject to recurrent crisis, increasing their ability to manage through crises without compromising their future well-being. The overriding aim is to reduce costs of recurrent crises, including the unsustainable costs of responding to large-scale humanitarian emergencies in the same places every few years.

Resilience investments will prioritize two areas: the South Department for its vulnerability to hurricanes and other disasters, and the North, North-East, and northern Central Plateau due to recurrent drought. USAID's strategy will strengthen market systems and diversify livelihood opportunities to provide pathways out of extreme poverty and decrease reliance on humanitarian assistance.



**Question 2:**

Do you believe that the Trump Administration's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords has impacted the extent to which the U.S. government prioritizes the promotion of renewable energy, climate change resilience programs, and other efforts to address the drivers and impacts of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean?

**Answer 2:**

USAID remains committed to helping partner countries build and enhance resilience to climate-related events and to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.

For example, under the Partnership for the Conservation of Amazon Biodiversity, USAID supports technical cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) which includes Fire Management and Prevention. Since 2016, USFS technical experts have worked closely with the Brazilian government to build capacity for fire prevention and management within Brazil's vast protected areas system.

In Peru, where water availability is a concern, USAID support is helping to demonstrate how well-managed natural infrastructure projects to protect water supply in Peru can deliver water security benefits that are sustainable, cost-effective, and scalable.

In South America, USAID supports SERVIR-AmaZonia, a regional hub of SERVIR (a global initiative between USAID and NASA) to help governments to address the impacts of climate change in the Amazon by strengthening the capacity of governments and the public to integrate Earth observation information and geospatial technologies into decision-making about climate changes driving drought and fire, water resources and hydro-climatic events, ecosystem management, and weather.

In the Caribbean, USAID recently launched the Caribbean Energy Initiative (CEI), as a framework for its energy programs in the region. CEI focuses on building energy sector resilience in the region and is part of USAID's increasing efforts to support broader island

resilience. USAID has announced an initial \$5 million for CEI, which is projected to be a five-year, \$25 million total effort, subject to the availability of funds. CEI will support the Energy Pillar of the U.S.-Caribbean 2020 Strategy and the Administration's Growth in the Americas initiative (*América Crece*). The assistance is expected to have a geographic scope that includes all USAID presence countries in the Caribbean region, including the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica.

**Question 3:**

Do you believe climate change is a factor contributing to migration from the Northern Triangle to the United States? If so, how is this reflected in our current policy?

**Answer 3:**

Climate and weather events like droughts, heat waves, floods, and crop failures have a significant effect on the economies of Central American nations, and are believed to be among the factors driving illegal immigration to the United States, especially from the dry corridor of Central America.

As you know, at the direction of the President and the Secretary of State, USAID has ceased obligating new funds for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras until the governments demonstrate sustained commitment to reducing illegal immigration to the United States. We continue limited programming with program funds previously obligated to grants or contracts.

For example, current USAID activities in Central America that focus on training small coffee producers to use state-of-the-art agriculture technologies -- such as resistant varieties to prevent coffee leaf rust, and climate-smart agricultural practices -- are intended to increase the resilience of small coffee producers. We also have programs that are intended to promote drip irrigation, soil conservation, and agricultural practices, and rainwater harvesting systems among smallholder vegetable producers. And, because these countries' energy supplies are vulnerable to

natural disasters and other extreme weather events, USAID has programs that increase renewable energy and energy efficiency, ensure better management of natural resources, and reduce vulnerability to climate impacts throughout the region.