

Written Statement
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Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight
“Compliance with Committee Oversight”
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Chairman Cline, Ranking Member Swalwell, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to appear before you again to continue our discussion regarding the Department of State’s commitment to being responsive to congressional oversight.

Last I appeared before this subcommittee, I cited our congressional engagement from 2022 and the beginning of 2023. So far in the 118th Congress, the State Department’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs, also known as “H”, is lined up for another record-breaking year of congressional engagement. Since January, H has supported 88 congressional hearings, more than 2,900 briefings and meetings with Members and staff, responded to more than 1,000 letters from Congress, produced 474 reports to Congress, and facilitated 512 CODELs and STAFFDELs around the world.

Regarding our commitment to oversight, the State Department is currently responding to 29 open and wide-ranging investigations from 6 separate House committees. When I testified in July, the Department had provided more than 16,000 pages of documents across committees. We are now up to over 25,500 pages.

In response to this Committee’s inquiry into the Department’s Global Engagement Center, or GEC, we have produced more than 1,900 pages of documents— up from 1,200 in July. The GEC’s offer to brief Members and staff of this subcommittee still stands, and we would welcome the opportunity to further engage with you on the GEC’s day-to-day work in furtherance of our national security. GEC principals have also testified before other House committees in a demonstration of the Department’s responsiveness and cooperation with oversight inquiries.

As noted in my previous testimony, the GEC focuses on the international information space, and works to identify, analyze and expose harmful foreign disinformation and propaganda emanating from places like Tehran, Moscow, and Beijing. The GEC does not focus on the domestic information space. As we continue to make productions and show the breadth and depth of the GEC's work abroad, we ask that Congress repeal the termination clause included in the GEC's mandate so that the U.S. Government can continue the effort to expose foreign information manipulation beyond 2024. There is no other part of the U.S. Government that can easily take on this work.

In addition to the GEC request, the Department has provided Chairman Jordan and this Committee with all available information on three specific visa cases in response to requests from the Committee. Should there be additional cases of interest, we look forward to reviewing and responding to those requests as appropriate.

Secretary Blinken and the Department's leadership maintain that Congress is a partner in foreign policy, and we remain committed to working with you in good faith on your oversight priorities.

Across all congressional oversight inquiries, career Department employees have been pulled off their day-to-day missions to support the document production and review process. The Department has also hired more oversight staff to assist with the growing number of congressional document requests. As we work to respond to more than two dozen requests, I would be remiss if I did not share the Department's concern over the House's proposed 14 percent cut to the State and Foreign Operations budget. This drastic cut would not only hinder the Department's ability to respond to congressional oversight in a timely manner, but would also endanger the Department's national security objectives, particularly as the United States faces new and enduring challenges with the People's Republic of China, in Israel and the Middle East, Ukraine and beyond. Of course, not passing the Administration's full supplemental request impacting all these priorities would have a similar effect.

Again, I thank the subcommittee for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you again and look forward to your questions.