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June 24, 2014

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GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP FY 2015 STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

I thank the Chairman for yielding and for his leadership on so many issues in the State and Foreign Operations bill. I also want to thank Mrs. Lowey for her dedication to the subcommittee. We work closely together to try to find solutions our Members can support.

We have many amendments to consider today, so I will just give a few brief highlights of this year's bill.

The funding provided is \$48 billion, which is \$708 million below the enacted fiscal year 2014 level and \$277 million less than the President's fiscal year 2015 request. To make room for many priorities within this allocation, the bill excludes funding for 11 accounts and reduces funding in other areas.

A top priority this year is global health, and the bill increases funds above the request for polio and HIV/AIDS programs. The bill also maintains last year's level of funding for embassy security and construction to keep U.S. diplomats safe while they represent the United States abroad. We continue our strong commitment to Israel and Jordan, and increase funding for countries in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe.

This bill rejects the poorly timed cuts proposed by the president for programs in Mexico and Central America. The bill also increases funds to combat human trafficking, with a specific focus on Guatemala and supports technologies that can assist Central American countries in identifying trafficking victims. Each of these investments will help address the thousands of unaccompanied children flooding our borders by improving economic opportunities and security in Latin America. However, we know that these changes will not happen overnight, and I will continue to work with my colleagues on the committee on a comprehensive solution to the problem.

The bill continues funding to combat wildlife poaching and trafficking. Many Members have expressed their support for these efforts because we do not want to see unique wildlife become extinct on our watch and we know that funds from the illegal wildlife trade fuel criminal organizations.

The bill continues aid for Egypt with the expectation that the government will continue the relationship with the United States and uphold the peace treaty with Israel. Aid is tied to these requirements as well as other conditions related to Egypt's democratic transition. We also expect the new President to overturn the June 2013 convictions of many American and international democracy workers.

The bill has tough conditions on aid to the Palestinian Authority. The bill includes a new condition - no funds can go to a Palestinian government that results from an agreement with Hamas. Since the current government was put in place because of such agreement, the committee defers assistance for the Palestinian Authority. Aid is off-the-table until it is clear that this government is committed to peace and security.

The bill continues to reduce assistance for Afghanistan. Funds are only provided for projects that can be sustained by the Afghan people, and the bill does not allow funds to be provided for new reconstruction, such as the large infrastructure projects that have been built over the last decade. We also do not know yet if the new government will cooperate with the United States, and have conditioned funds on whether a Bilateral Security Agreement is signed.

In Iraq today we see a real crisis unfolding, only a few short years since our troops withdrew. This bill continues the fiscal year 2014 levels for security assistance and humanitarian aid to help address these challenges.

I hope that all Members can support moving this bill through committee today. I yield back to the Chairman.

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