

CHAIRMAN GREGORY W. MEEKS
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021

Good morning. Before I get started, I want to thank Chairwoman DeLauro, and the members of this committee for allowing me to testify before you today. I would also like to thank my friend Barbara Lee for being an excellent partner in our new roles as Chairs of the SFOPS subcommittee and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, respectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that many of the most pressing challenges facing the world today are global in nature and require a global response. As Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I firmly believe foreign affairs budget must reflect that reality.

This means, first, investing in our workforce. Following years of neglect, it is past time that we commit to building a strong civil and foreign service that not only represents this country abroad, but reflects all of our diversity here at home.

I applaud President Biden for more than doubling the amount of money dedicated to broadening recruitment, diversity, and inclusion programs at the State Department in his FY 2022 budget request. We should answer the President's commitment with action of our own.

I am proud that last month, the House passed State Department authorizing legislation that addresses barriers to diversity from the entry level to the Senior Executive Service. While this is an important milestone, we must continue this work by making robust investments in programs to increase the diversity of our national security workforce, like the Gilman International Scholarship Program and the Rangel and Pickering fellowship programs.

As the United States re-engages with the world, multilateral engagement is critical. This starts with fully funding America's commitments to the United Nations, including paying down our arrears. The UN has long served as a force multiplier for the United States, helping to protect our interests and promote democracy,

peace, and stability. I urge this committee to support \$2.7 billion for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities account.

The United States also has a responsibility to revive efforts to address those areas in which it has historically underinvested, to include advancing our economic ties to Africa. I fully support the President's request for \$80 million to support Prosper Africa, an initiative that aims to promote and facilitate two-way trade and investment with Africa. I look forward to working with the Administration to further develop and strengthen these efforts.

I am heartened by President Biden's commitment to renew U.S. leadership in Central America through a four-year, \$4 billion infusion of funds to address the root causes of migration. This represents a long overdue recognition that we cannot thrive without secure and stable neighbors. We must also recognize that the success of these efforts depends on the stability of the entire region and redouble our work to support efforts like the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, which has been critical in helping our Caribbean partners combat violence and crime. We must also make investments to strengthen health systems around the world to ensure we are better able to address future global health threats. I hope this Committee will robustly support proven programs such as the President's Malaria Initiative, which improves the lives of millions while helping partner countries develop more robust health infrastructure. I encourage you to increase funding for PMI to \$902.5 million in FY 2022.

I also urge you to make a greater commitment to funding family planning and reproductive health programs, which are so important to ensuring better health outcomes and more equitable development around the world. Funding UNFPA, a critical multilateral partner in supporting maternal and child health, access to comprehensive health care, and combatting child marriage, is crucial to this approach.

Finally, last month, I unveiled the Ensuring American Global Leadership and Engagement, or EAGLE, Act. This bill will reinvigorate our institutions and diplomatic efforts to effectively respond to the China challenge. I hope to work hand-in-hand with you as we move forward with the EAGLE Act, the appropriations process and other legislation to ensure that America can rise to meet the challenge of leading and reengaging with the world.

Thank you for your time.