

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Royce (R-CA)**  
**House Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**Hearing on “Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget”**  
**April 17, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

This hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order.

Today, we are privileged to hear from Secretary of State John Kerry. Of course, Secretary Kerry hails from Massachusetts. Our Committee mourns those lost in the terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon. The attack on this iconic American event is another reminder of the dangerous world in which we live.

Secretary Kerry comes today to testify on his Department’s budget request. Needless to say, given Washington’s chronic budget deficit, wasteful spending is intolerable. Even good programs must be subject to prioritization. We can’t do everything. Along those lines, it is inexcusable that the State Department has been operating for four plus years without a presidentially-nominated, Senate-confirmed Inspector General. This Committee is committed to its responsibility for overseeing the spending and other operations of the State Department - - and that is a bipartisan commitment I am pleased to join Mr. Engel in carrying out.

The threats facing our nation, unfortunately, are mounting. Iran, North Korea and Syria are just the ones in the headlines. The terrorist threat is constant, with al-Qaeda franchises continuing to grow. Mr. Secretary, our plate is full, and we look forward to working with you to advance our nation’s interests.

Regarding Iran, we can’t be moving fast enough to increase the economic pressure on Tehran. The Ranking Member and I have introduced legislation to do just that. I hope the Administration would come to see the need to send nothing but the strongest signal that Iran’s drive to develop nuclear weapons will be stopped. Greater economic pressure must be part of that message. The current policy is simply not working.

Likewise with North Korea, we need to be imposing crippling financial sanctions on its increasingly belligerent regime. In 2005, the Treasury Department was allowed to counter North Korea’s illicit activities: it’s counterfeiting, drug running, and weapon sales. That tactic dramatically curtailed North Korea’s access to the foreign currency it needs for its nuclear and missile program that increasingly threatens us. We must get back to that policy.

A robust human rights policy is especially critical in the case of North Korea. The Kim regime will never be at peace with its democratic neighbors --or us-- so long as it’s at war with its own people, including running a brutal labor camp system. Promoting human rights here is in keeping with American values, but also presents a critical tactical tool. Sadly, it is clear that U.S.

international broadcasting, essential in promoting human rights, is in disarray. Secretary Clinton said so much when she last appeared before this Committee.

Another challenge facing us Mr. Secretary is seeing a successful transition in Afghanistan. The consequences of failure would be great. Our struggle against terrorism would be set back significantly.

We appreciate the risks that the men and women of the State Department take, and I want to express my condolences to the family of Anne Smedinghoff, recently killed in Afghanistan, along with three other Americans.

This Committee, and several others, have been examining the events of Benghazi. We understand that the State Department has implemented many of the reforms recommended by the Accountability Review Board in order to better protect the Department's employees. That's good, since the Board found quote, "systemic failures and leadership and management deficiencies at senior levels" under the Secretary's predecessor. But the Committee remains concerned about the Review Board *process*. We have outstanding requests for information from your Department Mr. Secretary that *must* be answered. These include why the four State Department employees the Board singled out for poor performance are still on the payroll. Seven months after Benghazi, the terrorists are still alive and free.

Mr. Secretary, there are great challenges for our nation. Too many challenges. The difficulty of prioritizing is compounded by our fiscal crunch. Through it all though, I look forward to working together to ensure that America maintains its traditionally positive and essential role in the world.

I will now turn to Ranking Member Engel for his statement.