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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:
“The FY 2018 Foreign Affairs Budget”
June 14, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

Today, Secretary Tillerson will testify on the Administration’s budget and reorganization plans for the Department of State.

First off, Mr. Secretary, it’s a pleasure to welcome you to the Committee. This is the second oldest committee in the House, tracing its origins to the Continental Congress, when Benjamin Franklin was chairman. The State Department dates back to 1789. This Committee and your Department manage an essential responsibility of our government set at its founding: defending our nation.

The Committee strives to be bipartisan. We are fortunate to have a Ranking Member, Mr. Engel, who shares that approach. We as Americans have so much more in common than not in common when it comes to foreign policy. We look forward to working with you, Secretary Tillerson, including on matters of Committee oversight of the Department. We wish you success in your tenure.

For generations, America has been the leader in the world. This has required great sacrifice. But our commitment to stability, open markets, the rule of law and human rights, and our work through alliances has paid off greatly. We’ve made mistakes no doubt – sometimes by overreaching in our commitments and sometimes by not reaching at all. But our nation has certainly been a force for good. If we do not lead in security and commerce as well as values and ideas, the vacuum will be filled by others, including jihadists and others wishing us grave harm.

Leading takes resources. Sufficient resources are needed for our military, for sure, but also for our diplomats working to end the many conflicts impacting our security. That’s what the generals say. In today’s well-connected age, in which threats can come from anywhere, we need a very broad diplomatic presence. That takes resources too, especially to keep our diplomats safe.

Resources are also needed to support our humanitarian relief, development, and health specialists. Their work abroad benefits Americans at home. Consider that a modest emergency investment in West Africa’s health stopped cold what looked like an emerging Ebola panic in our country a few years ago. Other programs work to keep weapons of mass destruction out of terrorist hands, and open the door for U.S. businesses. These important missions help keep us safe and more prosperous.

Mr. Secretary, I'm confident that you will find new efficiencies in your Department. There is waste to attack. But many here remain concerned by the hand you were dealt with the budget and look forward to strengthening it. Congress also has a responsibility not to hamstring the Department with mandates and restrictions. These have accumulated over years, compounding your management challenges.

For our partnership to succeed, we need to communicate. Often. Too often, administrations go it alone, as frankly, the last Administration did. Iran and Cuba policy are examples. Let's break that pattern.

Lastly, I'll mention two foreign policy tools that need sharpening. Food aid badly needs reform. Other nations need to contribute more, yes, but we should be getting a bigger bang for our buck, especially as famines are raging in the Middle East and Africa. So does international broadcasting. We need to confront Russia, North Korea, ISIS and others in the battle of ideas. Last Congress, the committee advanced some important reforms. We look forward to continuing those efforts with you.