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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**  
Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing:  
“Strengthening American Diplomacy: Reviewing the State Department’s Budget,  
Operations, and Policy Priorities”  
May 23, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

“I’d like to welcome Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Congratulations, Mr. Secretary, on your service in the U.S. Army, House of Representatives, as CIA Director, and now, as our nation’s 70th Secretary of State. The committee looks forward to working with you, in a bipartisan way, to meet our challenges and seize our opportunities.

We have made important progress on a major security challenge, routing ISIS on the battlefield. This is a big development, one that you’ve played a role in, Mr. Secretary. We must maintain the momentum. Islamist terrorism will threaten us for years to come.

Increasing pressure on Iran and checking its hegemonic moves is imperative. Our partner Israel is on the front lines. But Iran’s ICBM program is a danger to us. Your Monday speech, Mr. Secretary, outlined a much-needed strategy to match Iran’s range of hostile activities. The challenge now is to present a unified front with allies.

Last budget hearing I said that our nation’s longstanding commitment to global stability, open markets, alliances, the rule of law and human rights has paid off greatly. If we don’t lead, others will. Our formidable military force though is only one side of the coin. You, Secretary Pompeo, have rightly recognized that diplomacy must lead our foreign policy.

American diplomats serve on the front lines. We need them well-trained. I’m encouraged by the Department’s interest in strengthening the Foreign Service Institute. And we need sufficient funding to combat wildlife and drug trafficking, build open markets, save lives during natural disasters, and do the many other things our aid accounts support. The appropriations process will adequately fund diplomacy and development, I believe.

The National Endowment for Democracy, in particular, should be strongly supported. Let’s face it: democracy is on the ropes worldwide. Supporting it is a moral and strategic good. NED is backing critical programming in Venezuela and Nigeria and worldwide. It’s no time to cut this programming.

On the challenge of Russia, yes, we should cooperate with Moscow when possible. But we must diligently protect our national security. The administration has rightly provided lethal arms to Ukraine, which remains under siege by Russian proxies.

A far more severe threat is Moscow’s information war. This committee has heard that Moscow’s goal isn’t so much to make Western citizens think this or think that. Russia’s goal is to destroy all confidence in objective thought. By undermining fact-based discussion with lies, our enemies hope to gravely

damage Western democracies. The State Department must aggressively counter disinformation through its Global Engagement Center, other means and with Department officials speaking out for the truth.

We wish the administration success negotiating with North Korea. It'll be a tall task to strike a viable, effective nuclear agreement. Ranking Member Engel and I have led efforts to ratchet up the financial pressure on North Korea over many years. Keep up that pressure, Mr. Secretary. It's a big reason why the Kim regime wants to talk with President Trump. And as this process plays out, work closely with Congress. We're stronger together."