

Chairman Ed Royce
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Statement before the Committee on House Administration
February 11, 2015

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Foreign Affairs Committee's work.

When my colleague and friend Eliot Engel came before you two years ago, circumstances were very different. Then, we were both new to our positions leading the Committee. We were facing a budget cut of almost 12% - which tied us with Financial Services and Transportation for the largest percentage cut. And the world was a more stable place, relatively. Two years later, times have changed.

From Benghazi, to Syria, to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to the threats of Iran and North Korea, to the rise of the Islamic State, our security and prosperity is increasingly at risk. Our talented and dedicated staff works tirelessly to keep us, and all our Members, well informed and ready to react to never ending crises. We do a good job - my measure is that almost every Committee Member wanted to stay on the Committee - unlike in previous years.

And we are lean. I am proud to tell you that we did more with less - a lot less. \$991,400 to be exact - almost a million dollars less. We eliminated a subcommittee (a reduction of 3 majority subcommittee staff positions) and one administrative staffer. We streamlined our Committee's organizational structure to compensate for the *seven* vacant staff positions - on the majority side alone - that we were unable to fill due to our budget cuts. We moved to "paperless" hearings and markups, carefully reviewed every administrative cost, and cut or eliminated any non-essential or duplicative service that we could find. We are working hard and smart.

But the workload only promises to increase, and we are certainly understaffed. Currently, we have 7 unfilled positions on the Committee's majority side - positions we cannot fill under our current budget. I understand the challenges your Committee faces, Madame Chairman, and I am not here asking you to fund 7 positions. But I am here to ask that you fund two of these positions, with an increase of only 2% to our budget for 2015 and 2016.

A 2% increase would amount to approximately \$150,000 and would be split 2/3 and 1/3 between the majority and minority. The majority's share of this \$150,000 would allow me to fill 2 vacant positions (ideally on our oversight and investigation team).

With the many current crises facing us, and difficult issues on the horizon - such as an Authorization for use of Military Force (AUMF), just about the most consequential thing this Congress can do - our committee will continue to be challenged. In addition to an expected AUMF, we will continue to be extremely active legislatively, with bills to sanction Iran, North Korea, reform the Broadcasting Board of Governors, reauthorize the State Department, and much more. Last Congress we had 18 bills become law. And we have a bigger agenda this Congress. And in foreign affairs the surprises are relentless, such as a Russian invasion of Ukraine last year.

We have managed to do very good, bipartisan oversight, including pressuring the State Department to get an Inspector General in place and USAID to be more cooperative with GAO. But frankly, we are overmatched. On the majority side, we have only 2 full-time oversight and investigation staff, matched against several big bureaucracies.

In conclusion, Foreign Affairs is a very active committee that Members increasingly want to be engaged with, legislating on critical issues, including war and peace. We are lean - too lean I'd suggest - and could use, would appreciate, and certainly put to good use a small increase in our budget for a few more oversight and investigation staff.

Thank you