

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Alan Grayson (D-FL)
of the Subcommittee on Energy

Joint House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
&
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
“Eastern Mediterranean Energy: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Regional Priorities”
September 8, 2016

Thank you Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Chairman Weber for holding this joint hearing. As Ranking Member of the Science Committee’s Energy Subcommittee and a member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, I am particularly interested in this topic and I look forward to the discussion on this unique nexus of energy innovation and diplomacy.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here. While your written testimonies provided an update on the activities at your respective Departments, I am particularly interested in hearing how you are working *together* to maximize taxpayer dollars and ensure these programs are carried out effectively.

The United States has a number of important R&D collaborations in the Middle East. Most notable among them is the strong partnership between the United States and Israel – a relationship that has spanned several decades.

The U.S.-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation, also known as the BIRD Foundation, has a strong record of commercializing technologies over its nearly 40-year history. During that time, product sales from over 800 BIRD Foundation projects have exceeded eight billion dollars.

In addition to the BIRD Foundation, collaboration through the U.S.-Israel Binational Science Foundation has resulted in successful international R&D partnerships for both countries. Work also continues in the area of energy efficiency and energy security between the U.S. and Israel, among other countries in the region. I look forward to hearing more from Mr. Elkind on DOE’s efforts in both of these areas.

The energy security landscape in the Eastern Mediterranean has shifted dramatically over the past several years with the discovery of considerable natural gas deposits off the coast of Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, and potentially Lebanon. A stable and secure supply of energy to the region can do

more than just provide economic growth. If negotiated peacefully and fairly, these discoveries can mend geopolitical divisions and have positive environmental impacts.

A shift to natural gas power generation has the potential to dramatically lower the region's greenhouse gas emissions. While natural gas should not be seen as a permanent solution, and offshore drilling should be closely regulated, it is a considerable improvement over oil-fired power plants or coal for that matter.

In the long-term, I hope the United States' R&D partnerships in the region can bring more renewable alternatives and other forms of low-carbon power to the Middle East, as any meaningful long-term plan to cut global carbon emissions must include energy transformation in this region as a high-priority.

Thank you again for holding this hearing. I yield back.