FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET REQUEST: USAID'S FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

House of Representatives,
Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:10 p.m., in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gregory Meeks [chairman of the committee] presiding.
Chairman Meeks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order and, without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any point, and all members will have five days to submit statements, extraneous material, and questions for the record, subject to the length limitations in the rules.

To insert something into the record, please have your staff email the previously mentioned address or contact full committee staff.

As a reminder to members participating remotely, please keep your video function on at all times, even when you're not recognized by the chair, and members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves consistent with House rules.

Staff will only mute members as appropriate when they are not under recognition to eliminate background noise.

And I see that we have a quorum and I now recognize myself for opening remarks.

Let me start by thanking Administrator Power for appearing before our committee today and for your leadership at USAID. And, without question, your tenure has been at a time when the world is in turmoil, and to say -- you know, to say just the least, but it's when your leadership is needed the most and you've delivered and continued with your with your efficacy and with your energy and your focus to get us through these turbulent times.
The crisis in Ukraine has only added to the critical work USAID does around the world, and with nearly 6 million refugees fleeing the country and more than 8.7 million needing assistance inside of Ukraine, I was proud of the House's action -- very quick action, in fact, last week, providing an additional supplemental to support the people of Ukraine and those impacted by the crisis, including more than $4 billion in humanitarian aid.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine has also exacerbated an already worsening food security situation around the world. The blocking of the port of Odessa has further restricted exports that could feed 400 million people, staples that countries around the world rely upon for basic food needs.

And already we're seeing how the Russians' invasion -- the Russian invasion is affecting food prices, particularly in high import countries such as Egypt and Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Furthermore, without the fertilizer that is usually produced and exported from the region, crop production elsewhere is also at risk with potentially destabilizing impacts.

These constraints on global food supply, combined with drought in the Horn of Africa, humanitarian crises in Yemen, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and elsewhere are worsening the impacts of climate change, all of these present and dire threats for vulnerable communities around the world. These are issues that
will affect everyone across the globe.

The administration's budget includes an ambitious request for climate-related assistance, which is incredibly important to helping address the economics, security, environmental, and agricultural impacts of the climate crisis.

Similarly, I'm heartened by the request for nearly $4 billion in U.S. aid, specific global health funding, including for global health, security, and pandemic preparedness.

Over the past year, we have seen much progress in the fight against COVID-19 with the United States providing more than 500 million vaccines around the world and supporting multilateral efforts through the Global Fund, COVAX, and others to leverage the collective strength of the global community as we saw last week at the President's COVID summit.

However, without more funding, we risk squandering those gains, particularly in countries that have not yet been able to make vaccines fully available and acceptable to their populations or have vulnerable health systems.

So I look forward to hearing more about the administration's budget request for global health, including how we can work together to improve pandemic preparedness and build the capacity of countries to detect, prevent, and respond to outbreaks.

We must also make sure we fully empower our development professionals to be ready to meet the tremendous challenges
they're working to face. They are on the front lines working in countries with democratic backsliding, political instability, and military coups or even just intense conflict.

And, thankfully, the United States has the premier developmental workforce in the world, a workforce that will be even better situated to achieve the goals of USAID as we work to improve diversity within its ranks, taking advantage of the tremendous talent that the United States has to offer.

So I appreciate the efforts USAID has made in partnering with minority-serving institutions to create a more diverse pipeline into USAID's workforce. But we must also ensure that retention and advancement opportunities support diversity.

This also means making sure that there is equity across hiring mechanisms so all USAID staff have opportunities to advance and continue to serve the agency's great mission, just as we worked in a bipartisan manner to advance these priorities with the passage of the State Department authorization.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the administration on a complementary effort for assistance authorities. It is also critical that USAID improves its diversity of partners that the agency works with to implement its programs around the world.

Members of this committee are very interested in how this budget request advances your initiative to increase the number
of local partners and deliberately build their capacity and
engagement and assistance decisions and implementation.

So I look forward to hearing your opening remarks,
Administrator Power, and I now recognize my friend and partner
on this committee, Ranking Member McCaul, for his opening remarks.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome,
Administrator Power, to the committee to discuss the agency's
foreign policy and international development priorities. From
the devastation in Ukraine to the continuing humanitarian crises
around the world, your mission is becoming more and more
critically important.

It's imperative that Congress and the administration work
together to understand these complex challenges and ensure the
use of taxpayer dollars to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives
is made. The needs around the world are really growing, as well
as here at home.

USAID must double its efforts to ensure rigorous monitoring,
vetting, and transparency that every dollar is achieving results.
You and I have had a lot of personal conversations and I
appreciate the time you spent talking to me about that very issue.

As you and I both know, and everyone, the situation in Ukraine
continues to deteriorate. In fact, the city of Mariupol fell
just yesterday. I thought it was interesting how the prime minister of Greece at a joint session of Congress talked about how Catherine the Great brought the Greek refugees from Crimea. It was then taken by the Ottoman Empire to a city that they named Mariupol, which is actually a Greek name -- the city. So I think it was very timely today to hear from him. But it's also created a huge extraordinary humanitarian crisis.

It's been inspiring, really, to see Ukraine and its neighbors open, particularly Poland, offer open arms to refugees, accepting over 3.3 million innocent Ukrainians. The chairman and I have been there.

The leader -- Republican leader and I went to Romania to see their efforts, as well as Poland again and the Ukraine border. Every European nation needs to contribute to supporting Ukraine and the strong response to the refugee crisis again, from Poland to Romania to Hungary and Moldova, which we will be attending shortly to Slovakia has really been critical.

Continued blockade of the Black Sea and the port of Odessa, as you and I have talked about, could have devastating consequences on the world's food supply. Ukraine is breadbasket for the world.

They are the wheat supply globally, and the failure to be able to export those commodities will lead to starvation of
millions of people around the globe. This impending food crisis will exacerbate conflict and further destabilize the fragile states that we see, particularly, I think, in Africa. We must act now to address this threat.

As the chairman mentioned, we passed the $40 billion supplemental of both lethal weapons and humanitarian aid at a time when, I think, it is most needed. But I do want to be clear it's Vladimir Putin's actions that are pushing 40 million more people into an urgent humanitarian disaster, whether it be Ukrainian, to blocking off and choking Ukraine from the Black Sea in an effort to starve them, the likes of which we haven't seen since Stalin -- Ukraine -- starved his own people in Ukraine so many years ago, and it's really interesting to see history repeat itself and the parallels that we see to World War II. Our adversaries are exploiting this crisis to advance their malign agenda and undermine the rule of law.

USAID must recognize this threat and be more strategic in utilizing foreign aid as a key tool to counter the malign actions of both now Russia and China as they are now allies in this unholy alliance that they formed and forged at the Beijing Olympics.

I continue to be concerned about China and their Belt and Road Initiative. Their debt trap diplomacy efforts are selling developing countries with unsustainable debt while security
strategic investments and gaining leverage, and on that point, Administrator, the idea that 20 African nations abstained from the U.N. Security Resolution. Abstaining from supporting Ukraine against Mr. Putin just shows how much of a grip the CCP has over these 20 African nations.

They also use their leverage to coerce countries to break diplomatic relations with Taiwan and to refrain from criticizing China's appalling human rights violations. I know you wrote a piece on genocide in your prior lifetime, I should say.

China recently blindsided both me and the Biden administration with a security pact of the Solomon Islands, which is particularly concerning, basically buying their way in to take over the very islands my father's generation liberated.

These are the very same islands again, that go back to World War II. Now they're under the thumb of the CCP. The Biden administration's fiscal '23 budget request to undercut, I think, a deepening of engagement in the Indo-Pacific and we have to look at the threats not only to Europe but to Asia as this crisis unfolds.

When I meet with the partners and allies around the world, I ask why are they entering into dangerous agreements with the CCP and they tell me because we're not there. I think we need to be on the field to win and we need to compete, and I think your agency along with the Development Finance Corporation, which
was created by this committee, has a solemn obligation in this
comppetition, this great generational competition that we do have,
you know, with China.

It's also important we help understand that it's American
generosity that's changing lives and that's why with Mark Green,
your predecessor's, request I implemented the Branding
Modernization Act to see that the United States flag, when we
send food and medicine, that they know that it's coming from the
United States of America, for China, certainly, puts their flag
and raises it very high.

The legacy of U.S. efforts to save lives and support the
development of healthy, more prosperous, more stable communities
is something we all can be proud of. But we are witnessing the
largest invasion in Europe since the Nazis, since World War II,
since my dad's war.

When we went to Poland, they said it's eerily reminiscent
of 1939 and the parallels are real when Hitler invaded Poland,
and I really commend the Polish people for the burden they have
beared in accepting these refugees in what, I think, is one of
the greatest examples of being a good neighbor for humanitarian
purposes.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now turn to
the chair and ranking member of the International Development
Chairman Castro, you're now recognized for one minute.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman Meeks, and thank you, Administrator Power, for your important work at USAID. I look forward to hearing from you on the efforts of USAID and the state of international development today, and I hope today you will speak to the need for the United States to continue to lead on pandemic recovery, including on vaccines, treatment, and development assistance and what resources are needed to accomplish those goals.

Your efforts are absolutely essential, and I have appreciated our partnership on the issue and hope this hearing is an opportunity for you to demonstrate progress on making our foreign assistance more effective, sustainable, and equitable by working with local partners.

There's much more on innovation, climate finance, and your work in the Western Hemisphere that also merit discussion, and I look forward to working together and discussing USAID's important mission today.

I yield back, Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I know we would hear from Ranking Member Malliotakis but there's a special guest in the building, the prime minister of Greece, and they just asked her to have a private meeting with him so she's not here.
So we'll go straight to Administrator Samantha Power, who has led the U.S. Agency for International Development for over the past year. She's someone that's not a stranger to us on this committee where she's testified before us on several occasions in different capacities over the years also.

So I'm going to skip reading her extensive and dynamic biography and the -- which is so impressive and just go straight to the administrator. You'll have time to deliver your opening remarks and, without objection, your prepared written statement will be made part of the record.
Ms. Power. Thank you so much, Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul, Representative Castro, and distinguished members of the committee.

I am very grateful to be here for the opportunity to discuss the fiscal year 2023 president's budget requests for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I do look forward to having the chance to respond to some of what you, Mr. Chairman, and you, Ranking Member McCaul and you, Representative Castro, have raised in your brief opening statements.

But if I could use mine here to frame the broader discussion that I hope we can have over the next few hours. It is no overstatement to say that right now, right here, arguably, just like back in 1939, we are gathering at a profound juncture in human history.

For 16 straight years, we have seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline. The world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the end of the Cold War, and for several years, as we have seen vividly, graphically, horrifically, in recent days in Ukraine, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen on the world stage, claiming that they can
get things done for their people with the speed and effectiveness
that they say democracies cannot match.

Today, we see just how empty that rhetoric is, just how dark
the road to autocracy can be, from Vladimir Putin's brutal war
on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine to the People's Republic of
China's campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in
Xinjiang.

Now, with autocracies on their back heel, is the moment for
the world's democracies to unite and take a big step forward after
so many years of losing ground. If the world's free nations,
with the United States in the lead, are able to unite the efforts
of our allies, the private sector, and our multilateral
institutions, if we can marshal the resources necessary to help
partner nations and freedom-loving populations, we have a chance
to extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to
billions more people.

This has been USAID's mission since its inception more than
six decades ago, and I'm really and truly grateful to you for
your continued bipartisan support of our efforts to save lives,
strengthen economies, prevent fragility and conflict, promote
resilience to all of these shocks, and to bolster freedom around
the world.

USAID's work is a testament to the fact that America cares
about the plight of others, that we can competently accomplish
mammoth goals that no other country can, and that the work we do abroad also matters to Americans here at home. It makes us safer, it makes us more prosperous, and it engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation and creates a better future for generations to come.

Thanks to your past support, the U.S. has helped get more than half a billion COVID-19 vaccines to people in 115 countries. We have led life-saving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine.

We have helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the U.S. while working to strengthen worker protections, and we have assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We are also making strides to become a much more nimble agency at a time of these intense demands that you all have alluded to, shoring up a depleted workforce by welcoming new recruits and operating with greater flexibility.

The Biden/Harris administration's fiscal year 2023 discretionary request of $29.4 billion will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so the United
States can seize this moment in history.

Last week, with bipartisan support, you here in the House of Representatives took a major step in that direction by passing a nearly $40 billion package for Ukraine, and we are hopeful for its imminent passage in the Senate.

Yet, the challenges we face are significant. Putin's war has displaced more than 14 million people, including two-thirds of Ukraine's children. It has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies around the world, further taxing the already overwhelmed international system.

Up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity in 2022 due to Putin's war. Two difficult years of the COVID-19 pandemic have set back development gains, and despite the United States' leadership in vaccinating the world, the job remains unfinished.

Multi-billion-dollar climate shocks appear each -- more each year with more frequency and these challenges only compound suffering in places where there are already humanitarian crises like Ethiopia, Syria, and Yemen.

Yet, as grave as these challenges are, I sincerely believe this opportunity, this moment, this point of inflection, provides us so much of an opportunity to meet the moment and meet the needs and advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

By providing the resources necessary, the United States can
galvanize commitments from our allies and our private sector partners, and demonstrate to the world that democracies can deliver in a way that autocracies cannot. These actions are key to reversing years of democratic decline and creating a more stable, peaceful, prosperous future.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to grasp this opportunity to build that brighter future for us all.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Ms. Power follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Well, I want to thank you, Madam Administrator, and what we're trying to work out here is to make sure that we keep the hearing rolling while votes are on, and so we're just paying close attention to the vote and we're going to try to have members go in and out.

Mr. Bera will come shortly and I'll run to vote and then I'll get back here in time for you to go to vote and I guess you'll work the same thing out so that we can get in, and the Administrator has graciously said that she will be here to answer all of the members' questions and we're going to try to move as quickly as we possibly can so that we don't run into the long series of votes that, I think, start somewhere in the area of 4:00 o'clock.

So I thank you for your testimony and I now recognize myself for five minutes to ask questions.

And a couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to go to Ukraine and I visited President Zelensky in Kyiv, and one of the things that he was asking and talking about at that particular time was a Ukraine -- the rebuilding -- the goal of rebuilding Ukraine in a post-war scenario, both infrastructurally and institutionally.

So I was wondering if you were considering ways for USAID or of partner agencies around the world to do just that.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief on this because I think the discussions are quite preliminary. Our
overriding premise with regard to discussions of reconstruction and the best way forward is to follow the lead of the Ukrainian authorities.

They, themselves -- I believe it was just last week -- have released a kind of notional structure, internal kind of interagency structure, for how those plans are being developed.

I, in the last two weeks, have spoken with the minister of social services or social protection, the minister of agriculture, and the minister of health to get an early glimpse into how they are thinking about even right now building back better, you know, not just doing temporary repairs but, for example, in the health ministry building back health structures that have been destroyed.

We know that more than 200 medical facilities have been destroyed by Russian attacks, how to build them back in a manner that then advances the health system from where it was before.

So I think the discussions are preliminary. I will say Europe has come forward and already made very clear that they intend to dedicate significant resources to this cause.

So we also, of course, want to leverage whatever we do to make sure that our partners are contributing significantly. I think that's already happening in the humanitarian and the
development space. But reconstruction, of course, given what's estimated already to be about $270 billion in damages, that's going to be a very, very significant set of investments.

Chairman Meeks. The fact of the matter, you know, some was talking, I don't know -- I'll just ask this question anyways -- you know, I guess this is the 75th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, which helped Europe stay together, and so I'll just ask the question. What do you think the -- do you have any thoughts about, similarly, a Marshall Plan for Ukraine?

Ms. Power. Well, I think it's one tribute, and Ranking Member McCaul spoke about his father and World War II. It's one tribute to the success of the Marshall Plan that the European Union is very likely, again, to be driving and investing -- driving significant reconstruction efforts and making very, very significant investments.

I think where we would look, Mr. Chairman, as the Ukrainians develop their planning, is to stay in constant dialogue with you about what we might mobilize.

I would note that the international financial institutions and multilateral development banks are going to be a big part of the equation, and right now, again, our emphasis is on getting markets up and running because with territory liberated from Russian hands, in addition to reconstruction, people are actually willing to live in really difficult circumstances just to be near
their homes, their schools, in their communities, and so we need
to make sure right now that we're supporting them in that fashion.

But it's going to be a big job.

Chairman Meeks. But let me just switch real quick because
it's important. You know, there's a report that one in five women
report experiencing sexual and gender-based violence and
humanitarian emergencies, and, sadly, we have seen that crisis
around the entire world.

We must ensure they have the protection services including
counseling, safe spaces for women and children, protection
against gender-based violence and reducing the risk of human
trafficking are available in these places, in these spaces.

So can you speak to the importance of USAID's Safe from the
Start programming to support protection for populations in places
like Ukraine or Ethiopia or Afghanistan?

And let me also add, secondly, that this huge global food
crises are being exacerbated by Putin's war in Russia, again,
will increase the likelihood of GBV for women and girls and a
food insecure population.

And so is the administration's budget sufficient in ensuring
programming that is robust and comprehensive, and how does this
funding differ from previous enacted levels?

Ms. Power. Well, I hope we'll have time to talk at length
over the course of the hearing about the global food crisis and
the impacts of Putin's war on -- there are specific circumstances in different countries. But in the brief time we have left here in this exchange, let me speak, if I could, to the first part of your question.

Chairman Meeks. Since I'm the chair you'll have a little bit longer to answer that question.

Ms. Power. Oh, do I have longer? Okay. So then I'll take each in turn. So on sexual and gender-based violence, just to say it is horrific.

It is, as you've described it, you know, again, it'll take time to get the documentary record on all of this or to have processed all of the complaints and all of the testimonies of women and girls who have suffered sexual violence.

But it is as systematic and prevalent as anything that I have seen in what is now a nearly three-decade career of documenting atrocities, including rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war.

I think there are a couple different aspects to the response. I think one -- we won't go into it here but the war crimes and atrocity documentation, making sure that that evidentiary record is built, first sent to the commission of investigation that was set up at the U.N. Human Rights Council.

The ICC has said it's opening up an investigation. There's domestic prosecutions where the Ukrainian domestic prosecutor
general is building cases and files already. All of that needs
to go there.

But what you've focused on is so important, which is the
psychosocial, the trauma, the healing, the recovery, and there,
you mentioned some of our programming. We're also supporting
a hotline -- an anti-trafficking hotline that was used before
the war but now, unfortunately, is seeing much more activity.

Just last week, I think, we trained Ukrainian psychiatrists
in how to deal with IDPs and these new internally displaced persons
and the new issues that they're reporting having suffered even,
you know, as they were being displaced from their homes or as
survivors of sexual violence.

So in a sense, Mr. Chairman, it involves a combination of
expanding programming that we were doing because of the prior
conflict and because of our steady state investment in women and
girls empowerment and the prevention of gender-based violence,
but then as these large international organizations and others
come in to make sure that they have protection services as part
of their mandates.

So not just food, water, medicine -- all of that is essential
-- but also that they are able to meet the needs of women and
girls who have gone through these horrors.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you. Let me now yield to the ranking
Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, on the issue of war crimes, the chairman and I passed almost unanimously a war crimes bill.

As I understand, the Senate Foreign Relations will be taking that up and, hopefully, will be on the President's desk very soon. It's a good sign or message from the United States Congress on behalf of the American people that we view these as war crimes and we will prosecute you.

And I was pleased to see Ukraine taking the lead just last week with individuals who killed, I believe, a 63-year-old woman. And, you know, that the images of the maternity hospital, the pregnant women who died, the building with children so big in Russia you can see it from the satellites and they bombed it -- the schools. Then the anecdotal stories we got in Poland from Ukrainian women about the raping, the torture, killing of -- whether it be little girls with, say, the Wagner Group to Russian soldiers to mothers being raped in front of their families. And it just goes on and on and on.

I believe as the dust in Mariupol is settling, we're just going to hear more and see more images and it's just horrific, and they need to be held accountable for that.

I have two quick questions. I know we're going to have to go vote. But the first -- you and I talked about -- and when
I was over there they expressed frustration about getting this aid that we have passed in Congress actually to the conflict areas where they need it the most.

I know it's a very difficult thing to do. But they talked, as you and I discussed as well, about using trusted partners in Ukraine that have networks and logistics. And I understand you need certifications. You've got to deal with, you know, metrics because you don't want to be back here in front of us and us, you know, grilling you on that. And so I get that drill.

But what have you done to try to expand that aid into Ukraine?

Ms. Power. Thank you so much. I think it's a really important question and I think the entire international humanitarian community needs to be operating in a manner that takes account of all that Ukraine has to offer, that this is just fundamentally a very different operating environment than the kinds of places many of our traditional partners operate.

So on our side that also means for our humanitarians who work for USAID and identify partners to support to be thinking differently, as you and I have discussed, and I really appreciate, actually, the language -- we haven't discussed this subsequent to our phone call -- the language that you all had put into the supplemental that stresses the importance of not only working with international but also local organizations.

So I think that's an important signal. But for now, first,
it's important to note that the international humanitarian organizations like World Food Programme offer a lot.

They offer scale, and they've already set up, I think, more than seven hubs -- seven warehouses inside Ukraine proper. This is a dramatic increase, of course, because they were not even really operating in Ukraine before this phase of Russia's long war that began in 2014 -- this horrific phase began.

So that -- those startup costs were real. I think they were a little slow at the beginning because they weren't there and now they've staffed up, and I think the numbers that they're reaching, which is close to $4 million, is reflective of that.

They're also working with 200 organizations themselves as partners, and so a very significant share of them of those organizations are local organizations.

Second, we have just last week finalized an agreement with an international NGO, basically, to oversee a consortium of local organizations and that'll be about $120 million, not the kind of scale of resource we invest in the World Food Programme's or the UNICEF's, but I think these organizations will have lower overhead. They will reach parts of the countries that the international organizations are not yet present, and I think you'll start to see a real return on that.

There are also organizations -- the last thing I'll say,
just quickly, because I know they have such a constituency up here -- organizations like World Central Kitchen, we are -- even though we are not funding them at the moment, they are such a visible manifestation in the spirit of your branding initiative, sir, of the American people's generosity.

We are looking forward and thinking through in addition to all of the support they're getting from the private sector -- is there more that we can do to partner with them, for example, as we work with the Ukrainian minister of agriculture in our traditional development lane -- is there a way to work with an organization like World Central Kitchen as they now move into the business of actually trying to get seeds to farmers for the next planting season.

Mr. McCaul. If I could just close, and my time has, you know, expired -- and thank you for that. I also -- I met with David Beasley and I've dealt with him a lot. He has a lot of credibility on the Hill on both sides of the aisle in the World Food Programme. So I'm glad to hear you invoke that organization.

Also, he emphasized to me with the closing of Odessa, and, really, all -- the entire of Ukraine and ports to the Black Sea in an effort to choke off Ukraine and starve them. They can't export their wheat.

So when we were in Romania, for instance, we were trying
to find a way they could truck because the gauges don't work on
the railroad to truck it to Romania to the NATO port we visited
and then they -- the Russians bombed the railroad bridge to stop
that. And I just worry -- and I know my time has expired -- but,
you know, perhaps you and I can talk offline.

What is this going to mean in terms of global food shortage
and supply, particularly in African nations like in Egypt? What
is it going to mean for the world? And I think you're going to
see famine and you're going to see instability as a result of
that.

When people say why is Ukraine important that's why it's
important. It's also important as President Xi is looking at
Taiwan. That's important to me and our foreign nation
adversaries. It's also important because of energy.

It's also important because a third of the global wheat
supply comes out of there. And so I know my time is expired but
would love to get your take on that as well.

Mr. Bera. [Presiding.] Great. Thanks. The gentleman's
time has expired. Let me go out and recognize myself for five
minutes of questions.

We are, rightfully so, talking a lot about how Putin's
invasion of Ukraine has disrupted global food supplies. Prior
to the invasion we knew we have a massive food insecurity, water
insecurity, crisis in the world, and we will post-invasion, and,
you know, I know USAID has been focused on Feed the Future and real investments here.

But I do worry with increased -- with climate change, a warmer planet, the massive displacements of individuals are going to continue to impact these fragile states. So a couple questions.

My home institution is the University of California Davis, and they benefit from being one of the 21 innovation labs that USAID partners with in terms of academias. I'd be curious, one, how the administration's budget is looking at utilizing the expertise that our academia has and universities like UC Davis.

And then a second area that I've been spending a little bit of time delving into is alternative proteins and some of what's happening in that space in terms of taking bio waste and so forth, fermenting and so forth, and thinking about right now, the technologies aren't at a price point where you can go into Africa and work with communities.

But I think that is all coming because of investments going into some of the alternative protein -- alternative food spaces, potentially, you know, the reduction in water utilization, the ability to take, you know, bio waste and turn that into food and the reduction in the amount of water that you have to use. And I'd be curious if this is a space that USAID is looking at
partnering with academia but also funding programs abroad.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congressman. Let me say a few things, and maybe on the very specific question of adjustments that are being made in our programming as it relates, again, to a greater emphasis on bio waste, maybe I could just get back to on the specifics on that.

But, first, just to come back to the premise of your question, which is so important, which is there was a food and even imminent famine crisis before Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and I think that developing countries say that to us a lot.

I, last week, met with the ministers of agriculture and permanent secretaries of agriculture for Kenya, Zambia, and Tanzania, and, you know, we are in the scrum with them just trying to figure out, okay, what are the adjustments we can make if we already have a Feed the Future program on the ground.

Now, with the supplemental, potentially, securing imminent passage it gives us the opportunity to work side by side with them and allow their own country planning and their articulation of urgent needs to help us work with others in the interagency to figure out if -- again, Senate willing -- you know, how that additional $760 million in food security resources could be spent and that's, again, built on top of our Feed the Future programming.

I think Feed the Future's investments in those research
organizations are key. I will say there's usually a little bit of a lag between what you hatch, you know, in a university lab room and what you're able to get into the capillaries of the international system, it goes without saying.

But already, you know, on issues like precision targeting of the fertilizer that is out there, we know that Russia and Belarus contribute 40 percent of the world's fertilizer -- export 40 percent of fertilizer. That's a problem. There was a problem before the invasion insofar as supply chains were screwing up the export of those fertilizers in any event.

But working -- for example, I heard today about a program in Ethiopia where we have managed to work with farmers in select areas to get 80 percent more grain out of the fertilizer that they are using. It turns out there's just a lot of inefficient use of fertilizer in countries that have had adequate supply in the past.

Well, now when there isn't adequate supply that has to be the learning there and the -- again, the targeting of that fertilizer and the efficient use of that fertilizer has to be accelerated.

I think the organics are great supplements. Nobody wants to be dependent for fertilizer on single sources and I think export vulnerability has been exposed in this crisis, just as it was in different domains during the pandemic.
But, you know, thinking through what the right diversified portfolio, you might say, of fertilizer is for any country, which might include, you know, compost or manure or something in the moment, but, ultimately, is going to need the scale of chemical fertilizers as well.

Mr. Bera. Great. And I notice my time has expired. So let me recognize my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Chabot, for five minutes.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and let me apologize, Madam Administrator, for members going in and out of here.

As you know, we have got votes going on on the floor. Some of us have meetings out in the hallway at the same time. So it's been a bit chaotic. So I apologize for coming and going myself as well.

The U.S. is, I think we all know, the most generous donor nation on the globe, contributing hundreds of millions of dollars, really, billions, probably, to many causes, hopefully, with the goal to make the world a better, more stable place.

Unfortunately, the world is probably becoming even more dangerous, as I think you mentioned in your testimony -- in your opening statement -- and our share of global GDP is decreasing.
So in the future, we aren't likely going to be able to continue to cover as much ground as we used to, at least financially, relative to giving aid -- that sort of thing.

Can you give me some examples of discussions that the administration, you, or others, in your capacity have had with either our allies or our partners on sharing that burden and some examples where other countries have picked up the slack?

Ms. Power. Congressman, it's such an important question. It's something also that really hits home with me because in my prior life, I was U.N. ambassador and spent much of my day every day trying to leverage what we did to catalyze contributions from others.

Let me give you a couple positive examples. Germany -- we were -- I had an exchange a minute ago with Ranking Member McCaul about the World Food Programme, which I think has a lot of support up here on the Hill, rightly -- Germany, back in 2012, contributed $150 million annually to World Food Programme.

Today, that number is $1.4 billion. They're also, of course, making contributions through the European Union as well. It's complicated for European countries because they have to -- they give bilaterally but also give through their European Union share.

That's one example. I would say that while much is made of China's investments in the international system through the
Belt and Road Initiative -- you know, the challenges associated with that in terms of debt traps, the lengthy and often -- the inadequate oversight, the inadequate environmental protections, all the rest, but a lot of money spent in developing countries, not a lot of investments commensurate to growth in GDP in international institutions apart from where there's an assessed contribution where it's automatic in terms of GDP and GNI.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you. Let me, if I could just stop there, because I've only got two more minutes and I wanted to get another question.


Mr. Chabot. And I appreciate your response. And, you know, relative to China and the Belt and Road Initiative, I think, you know, we all know and, as you mentioned, the debt trap, many countries, you know, end up signing on to something they probably didn't, at the beginning, really understand what they were getting into.

You know, Sri Lanka and a whole lot of others are examples of just that and end up -- China ends up being advantaged to the disadvantage of the other -- of a country. And we need country -- you know, countries in the Gulf states, as we know, are quite wealthy, do do, you know, some good. They help in different areas but they need to step up.

Japan has been pretty good over the years in contributing
to various causes. But the United States has limited resources and a lot of problems of our own. So we need other countries to step in as well.

Finally, the U.S. spends a lot of money we don't have on things that, unfortunately, don't necessarily have to do with our national interest.

So I have a question. Can you identify for me some programs that USAID looked at this year and maybe said that program is nice, might even help some people, but it isn't clearly connected to U.S. security interests, our national security interest, so we just can't afford to fund it anymore?

Ms. Power. Thank you. Just parenthetically, on the Ukraine development, humanitarian economic assistance, that large pie of what people have contributed right now -- this is to your prior question. I'll come to the question you just posed. U.S. share so far, despite all the generosity and the resources that we have expended, is 11 percent of the overall international contribution to the crisis in Ukraine right now.

So that's -- that kind of ratio, of course, would be nice to sustain, but agree very much on the Gulf countries. I think with regard -- I mean, first thing that I would use your second question to underscore is that we are massively earmarked.

When I entered the agency, in terms of our development assistance 96 percent of our assistance was earmarked by region
or by geography and by sector, leaving us very little flexibility
to make that kind of -- to step back and make the kind of
allocations that you're describing.

You know, I think that in every country where we work --
I'll give you an example -- in Central America -- Northern and
Central America, as we have seen corruption revelations now from
Guatemala, El Salvador, et cetera, we have just cut off funding
to, for example, the supreme court, the attorney general's office,
to those bodies we were working with, thinking that we could make
progress on the rule of law.

But once we saw the rule of law itself being violated by
those institutions, we stopped those programs and actually began
to channel some of that funding to independent media and civil
society organizations, who are watchdogs of those institutions
themselves. So that's one example. I'm happy to follow up with
you with other examples.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you very much. My time has expired.

Yield back.

Mr. Bera. Great. Let me go and recognize the gentleman
from New Jersey, Mr. Smith, the ranking member on the Subcommittee

Mr. Smith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator Power, again, welcome back to the committee
and thank you for your service.
Just on the issue of human trafficking, especially now as it relates to the Ukraine and surrounding areas, at least three or four times a week I'm in touch with people who are on the ground.

I've been part of hearings, as the Special Representative for the OSCE PA for human trafficking. I'm talking to ODIHR and all the others that are involved in this, and there's obviously a serious exploding problem that, I believe, is only going to get worse.

You know, the vulnerability of women and children, you know, really, some of them come across the border. They have some resources. They quickly spend down those resources and now we're in a window where they're at even greater risk of deception and exploitation.

So my question is with the existing funds, could you give us a sense as to what you're doing now? And with the almost near certainty that you'll get about $4.3 billion when the $40 billion is approved by the Senate, maybe as early as -- it should have been done already but by, say, Thursday, I know you're planning and, you know, you'll get back to us, I'm sure, within 30 days with what you're doing.

But there's got to be some very aggressive planning going on on how to mitigate this harm, especially to women and children.
And secondly, if I could say, you might recall I was the prime author of the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018, and after chairing seven hearings on the lack of response to those fleeing ISIS, particularly the Chaldean Church and the Yazidis -- this is years ago, of course -- the money was then provided and we also established in the bill the new partnership initiative. I'm wondering how that is being implemented.

And if you could, for the committee, explain why Iraq's persecuted Christian community in the Nineveh Plain was dropped from the USAID OTI Iraq Resilience Project in October of 2021.

The Nineveh Plain, also traditionally home to a number of Yazidi individuals, was the only geographic area dropped, meaning -- and I found it puzzling and mind boggling. I have been there, particularly visiting with the Christians who fled ISIS, and if you could give us insight into that and hopefully -- the concern is that those communities be supported.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congressman. I'm going to have to get back to you, if I could, on your last question. In terms of, you know, being -- this group being dropped from a specific program, I've just got to get -- I'm happy to do it by phone.

Mr. Smith. Please do.

Ms. Power. I'm not at the staff level. I know how important
the issue of religious protection and religious freedom, you know, have long been to you and, certainly, are to me. So let me look into that, and the larger Iraqi funding questions that you're referencing.

If I could speak to the protection crisis -- the exploding protection crisis that you're describing, first, USAID, on human trafficking over the last 20 years, as I understand it, has spent about $340 million in programming. A lot of that leadership and, perhaps, some of those earmarks and directives have come from you. But this is incredibly important programming.

However, this is a new crisis that creates new challenges that requires new structures, and I think that we all know -- and many of us, again, have visited the border countries -- I've visited Slovakia, Moldova, and Poland a couple of times since February 24th -- you know, when 95 percent of the people coming across the border are women and children, a lot of generosity -- families showing up at the border crossing saying, let me take you, but also some very, very unsavory characters.

I think it took time, frankly, for Europe, particularly those countries that are members of the EU, to bring additional resources to bear to support border guards who weren't accustomed to this kind of flood of individuals -- vulnerable individuals.

I think we, USAID -- and PRM is at the State Department,
of course, funds the refugee assistance part of our portfolio -- but USAID within Ukraine, we have spent, of the, you know, roughly, $400 million on food, medicine, water, repair, shelter, and the like about -- around $25 million on protection assistance.

But in some ways, just focusing on the humanitarian -- and that would go to organizations like UNICEF and others who are setting up, you know, programs and shelters and the like for internally displaced because that is USAID's jurisdiction here -- but through our development assistance, you know, we are training Ukrainian psychiatrists and psychologists about how to talk to women and girls who've experienced something like human trafficking or just displacement and the ravages of displacement.

We have set up a hotline inside Ukraine and spent a good degree of development resources -- I'll get you the specific number. It doesn't do you any good to have a hotline if nobody knows what the number is.

So actually creating PSAs and ensuring that things -- advertisements for that number arrive on people's cell phones or that they can see billboards, pamphlets, and the like. So the infrastructure was there before the war.

We have made investments in the fight against human trafficking. But now we just need to scale them to an extent
that, again, was not contemplated before, combining our
traditional programs and using those structures and those
partners that we have long worked with, but with the generous
infusion of assistance, not just the $4.3 billion that you,
rightly, pointed to but also in our development programming that's
about strengthening Ukraine's capacity also to deal with this,
which is an issue well beyond this conflict, even if, as you say,
it has exploded during this conflict.

Mr. Smith. Thank you. Look forward to following up.

Ms. Power. Absolutely.

Mr. Bera. Let me now recognize the gentleman from South
Carolina, Mr. Wilson, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on
Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism.

Mr. Wilson. Thank you, Congressman Bera, and Madam
Administrator -- Madam Ambassador, thank you so much for your
service.

The United States Agency for International Development --
Congressman Steve Chabot is correct -- it actually reemphasizes
the generosity of the American people, which is unparalleled in
world history, and then your service is so important because I've
seen it firsthand.

I've had the opportunity to visit Tacloban, Philippines, the recovery efforts from a super typhoon. I've been to most
of Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, to see the recovery efforts of an
earthquake to provide a U.S. Marine field hospital for females.

I've seen the refugee camps in Jordan, Sudan, and then I'm really grateful in visiting villages in Guatemala the extraordinary efforts that you perform along with the World Food Programme with Governor David Beasley. So over and over again, what you're doing is so important.

And then also it was so inspiring to me. Every time I went to Afghanistan to see the schools being built for girls, the bridges, the improvements of life, and it's just so sad to me that has now been abandoned and the people are left behind.

But with that in mind, looking to the future, and, sadly, with Putin's war, we have the illegal occupation of sovereign Ukraine and we witnessed the proliferation of disinformation from Putin, and I really appreciate very much Chairman Greg Meeks, our ranking member, Greg McCaul, their most recent aid package, the largest aid package in the history, as I'm aware of, almost in the world, and what a message that sends to the people of Ukraine and what that message sends to Putin and, hopefully, a message to the people of Russia that this is a futile effort, which is only to benefit Putin with oil, money, and power.

But with that in mind, what is USAID to doing to counteract the disinformation and are there any specific programs to help our allies of Moldova and Georgia?
Ms. Power. Thank you so much. So, in short, the first Ukrainian supplemental -- and we'll have to work through the details of what we will do if we were so fortunate for the Senate to pass the second supplemental -- but on the first, we have allocated about $230 million, and that's not only to counter disinformation but that's a big -- a big part of what we are going to be doing.

And, again, bear in mind -- and I can get you the exact numbers -- but prior to the Russian invasion, the fight against disinformation but also, critically, the growth and support for Ukraine's independent media was an absolutely critical component of our so-called social resilience programming.

So now what we have sought to do is to scale that support. Sometimes, Congressman, it entails providing flak jackets and helmets to independent journalists via our program OTI so that they continue to be out in the field able to themselves document what's true.

There's a Center for Media and Disinformation that is actually government affiliated, and actually a number of independent journalists left civil society and went to work for this center for combating disinformation. I'll get you the exact title of it.

That is something that we have increased support for as the government seeks to react in real time to memes as they develop,
whether on Telegram or on Twitter or Russian-backed television.

So, again, some of it is helping those who are already doing this work manage the displacement and the crisis so that they can continue their work. But many others are getting into this line of work who were performing other jobs that are deemed less of a priority in wartime.

The other thing I'd say --

Mr. Wilson. Thank you for your efforts. I need to get one more question in.


Mr. Wilson. I know, but the people of Tunisia have been such an inspiration. They were the founders of the Arab Spring. But, sadly, the current regime is backsliding. What's being done and, particularly, with Millennium Challenge to assist the people of Tunisia?

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congressman. Just briefly, just to say in Moldova we are increasing funding as well for our disinformation work. About half the people of Moldova right now have shown themselves to be very influenced by Russian TV, in particular, and that's reflected in the public opinion on the war in very disturbing ways.

As it relates to Tunisia, I would just say that the '23 budget requests that I'm up here to talk about today, unfortunately,
has in the request a lower sum for Tunisia because of the
disappointing turns by the current government, the crackdown on
civil society, the move away from the rule of law and from
democratic institutions.

We would look forward, of course, to restarting and finding
a way to get that assistance going again if the government would
get the country back on a democratic path. So, mainly, our
support is for civil society, media, and looking at the
Independent Electoral Board, which we have long sought to
strengthen and we thought was doing very important work, but now
have to look to see what the membership of that board will be.

On the MCC, I would have to get back to you on that
specifically. But given the governance circumstances in
Tunisia, that's going to affect the indicators, which are so
important to the question of whether MCC makes its investments.

Mr. Wilson. Thank you so much for your service. I yield
back.

Mr. Malinowski. [Presiding.] Thank you, Administrator
Power. Seeing no one else I will now recognize -- oh, yes, I
recognize myself. Yes. I'm just joining the flow here. Thank
you.

Let me just start with a brief comment. I noted your
exchange with Ranking Member McCaul about Ukraine reconstruction,
with Chairman Meeks as well. Just note that this extraordinarily expensive enterprise, as I think we agree now, could very well be aided if we found a way with our allies to be able to make use of some of the frozen and blocked Russian assets, whether we're talking about yachts or even central bank assets.

I asked Secretary Blinken when he was sitting there a couple of weeks ago whether the central bank assets were something the administration would be looking at and he said yes.

I do want to note that the administration gave us a legislative proposal to enable this very late in our process for considering the Ukraine supplemental. That's a problem because it's kind of hard to pass things in the other body as standalone bills. So if we're late in getting it into the supplemental, we do have a problem.

We're going to need really high level administration engagement working with our leadership to find a way to get this done. Otherwise, we're probably going to be looking at no action until maybe the NDAA at the end of the year. So I just wanted to note that for you.

A couple of other things I wanted to ask about -- COVID vaccination -- global vaccination efforts. Do you think it would be better for the United States to spend a few billion dollars beating this disease in the developing world or a few trillion dollars beating it, once again, in the United States? That's
a loaded question but --

Ms. Power. It's a trick question. I think the best way for me to answer that question other than to say yes, it would be better, is to just note that what we are doing is working. It is working so powerfully.

It is working in terms of public opinion polling, where our global vaccination drive is having analogous effects to what PEPFAR did for America's standing in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

It is working in the sense that when President Biden held his last COVID summit back in September, 13 percent of lower middle income countries where the populations -- where 13 percent of the populations were vaccinated that number is now 52 percent in lower middle income countries. In low income countries, of course, where the issues really have arisen, the numbers have gone from September 1 percent, roughly, to around 13 percent, and I could give you country by country breakdowns.

Just Cote d'Ivoire, where we launched Global VAX to support the delivery -- not just the delivery of vaccines, but the delivery into the arms of people who were looking for vaccines, the number of people who were fully vaccinated in December when we launched this was 15 percent. This is of eligible members of the population. Now it is up to 38 percent of adults fully vaccinated in Cote d'Ivoire because of U.S. investments.
What does that mean? That means in Cote d'Ivoire the risk of new variants getting started there is substantially lower than it would have been before we --

Mr. Malinowski. But we're running out of money?

Ms. Power. We have obligated almost all of our American Rescue Plan funds. We have purchased vaccines, and now risk not having the ability to actually fund getting those vaccines into arms. And for all of us who care about waste, the idea of having gold-standard Pfizer vaccines go to waste because we can't afford to support health workers who are working overtime or a pop-up clinic or fight against disinformation, it is -- it would be really devastating for U.S. interests, the interests of the health of our own people, if we let these programs grind to a halt.

Mr. Malinowski. And, of course, there is another country with less effective vaccines waiting in the wings?

Ms. Power. As it happens, there is, and we, though, with our -- the countries that we are working, which is all of the countries that are struggling to get their vaccination rates up, they are very clear about what vaccine and what vaccines they would wish to distribute to their populations.

We just need the resources to be able to get those shots in arms and it is a bargain. It is a really modest sum of money when you think about all the money that is spent domestically, rightly, vaccinating our public, ensuring -- being able to take
care of tests out of people's insurance, and so forth.

The least we can do is everything we can globally to make sure that another new variant doesn't come and set back the progress that we are making, trying to return to a -- or to get to a post-pandemic America.

Mr. Malinowski. Thank you. I would say it's -- I think it's the greatest opportunity for American leadership since the end of the Cold War. We have done a lot. We haven't done enough.

It would be an absolute travesty if we allowed China to step in because the United States Congress is unwilling to spend a few billion dollars to do something that saves us trillions of dollars in terms of our own economy and the global economy.

With that, I will call upon Representative Scott Perry of Pennsylvania for five minutes.

Mr. Perry. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, thank you for being here. Forgive me for using the way back machine here but there's something that's kind of sticking with me that I never got answers on that I'm just curious about.

So this goes back a ways. October 13, 2017, you were asked by the ranking member of HPSCI regarding the unmasking of General Flynn, and I think you replied that you don't -- you didn't recall unmasking him.

Since that time, a lot of -- obviously, a lot of time has
elapsed. Do you seek to correct that at all? Only from the context that from our records here you unmasked him seven times in a little over a month and a half period of time and the fact that you didn't recall that just strikes me as odd.

Ms. Power. I was U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

Mr. Perry. Right.

Ms. Power. Worked around the clock to advance U.S. interests, read intelligence in order to prepare myself for negotiations with, for example, the PRC, the Russian Federation, other actors in the U.N. system that sought to accrue advantage for their national interests.

Mr. Perry. Good. Right.

Ms. Power. And I did absolutely nothing other than advance the interests of the American people.

Mr. Perry. I'm not saying you did. I'm just asking.

Ms. Power. I'm not going to discuss --

Mr. Perry. Seven times you don't remember it at all.

Ms. Power. I'm absolutely not going to discuss intelligence.

Mr. Perry. I'm not asking you to discuss intelligence.

I'm asking you to discuss your --

Ms. Power. You're are absolutely --

Mr. Perry. No, I'm asking you to discuss whether you remember, because you said you didn't recall. It says, I don't
recall making such requests. But yet you unmasked General Flynn seven times in about a month and a half from November 30th to January.

So it's about a -- a little less than a month and a half. And I'm just trying to clarify whether you remember now or you still don't remember ever doing that.

Ms. Power. I think it'd be helpful -- I'm not sure if you've had the chance to be briefed by the intelligence community about the process by which individuals who are members of the executive branch and, I believe, the legislative branch review intelligence, reveal intelligence, the question of how, for example, the identity of U.S. citizens that appear in intelligence gets --

Mr. Perry. Right. I am familiar --

Ms. Power. It is not -- it is not a principle.

Mr. Perry. So --

Ms. Power. May I finish, sir?

Mr. Perry. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Power. It is not an official in the executive branch whoever unmasks anybody. All the official in the executive branch does is read intelligence, poses questions if there are questions that the intelligence demands. So any questions you have about unmasking should be referred to people who actually unmasked these individuals.
Mr. Perry. No, I'm not asking about the intelligence. I'm just asking you what you did. I'm just asking you what you did.

Ms. Power. And I am telling you I am not going to discuss intelligence that I read --

Mr. Perry. And I'm not asking you to, for the record, but I am asking you about the unmasking. And I'm just wondering, so you saw some intelligence, however it came to you, with one side of it that then includes an American on the other side. That makes sense.

What do you learn? Like, what's the purpose of learning who asked the question or who was involved in the conversation on the American side?

Ms. Power. I'm not going to refer to any specific piece of intelligence.

Mr. Perry. I'm not asking you to.

Ms. Power. I will say -- no --

Mr. Perry. Just tell me generally that.

Ms. Power. I will -- yeah, exactly.

Mr. Perry. Okay.

Ms. Power. I will say, generally, that when one reads intelligence questions may arise where it is important to understand what it is that it is on the page, and in the event there is something that you are reading that you cannot understand where you, literally, cannot understand the content of what you
are reading that you think might be important to do your job --
only to do your job, not because of anything to do with anything
other than representing U.S. interests.

In my case at the United Nations, occasionally, you pose
a question to the intelligence community in order to understand
the intelligence you are reading.

Mr. Perry. Okay. So --

Ms. Power. There is no straight motive. There's no
ulterior anything. It's a desire to understand what you're
reading.

Chairman Meeks. [Presiding.] And I'm confused, Mr. Perry.

I want to let you know this is a HFAC hearing --

Mr. Perry. I understand, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. -- not a HPSCI hearing --

Mr. Perry. I understand --

Chairman Meeks. -- and this hearing -- the purpose of this

hearing is for the budget questions in dealing with USAID. So

I want to make sure that your questions are relevant to the issues

of which this hearing has been called for.

It sounds to me from just walking in and listening that we

are at a HPSCI hearing and we're not.

Mr. Perry. We're not. I'm trying to understand why she

needed to know the name and that she didn't remember seven times

in a month and a half period of time unmasking the person.
These questions, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, have never been adequately answered and this is the first opportunity I've had to ask these questions. I'm happy to ask questions about budget as well. But I've got five minutes, and these are questions that are pressing and have been for some time.

Chairman Meeks. And it should be pressed in the appropriate committee at the appropriate time on the subject matter that committee is hearing.

Mr. Perry. So if you're not a member of said committee, you never have an opportunity to represent the folks back home that you -- that are your bosses to ask the question that they wish to ask? That's the position of the committee?

Chairman Meeks. The committee is that we want to make sure that we are dealing with relevant subject matters of which this hearing was called and which the witnesses were asked to testify.

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, the ambassador was the ambassador to the United Nations. She's here talking about USAID. This is the Foreign Affairs Committee. All these things are relevant, whether or not you're interested.

Look, you know, I respect you, Mr. Chairman, and I get that this is uncomfortable line of questioning. But the fact that it's uncomfortable, nonetheless, doesn't mean that we shouldn't endeavor to ask the questions. That's my job here. And, quite honestly, I've sat through many, many hearings where folks on
your side of the aisle asked all kinds of things that were completely irrelevant and we allowed them to do it every single time. That's how this goes.

And, you know, this is your committee, Mr. Chairman. If you want to shut me up, okay, it's on the record. But these are germane questions to foreign affairs and that's this committee.

Chairman Meeks. I respect you, too, Mr. Perry, and I generally -- I let you go as --

Mr. Perry. We only had 30 seconds left, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Meeks. I know, but I just wanted to make sure that we understood the subject matter of which we were here and to make sure that we're --

Mr. Perry. I do understand, Mr. Chairman, and I will tell you this, too. And I'm not accusing the ambassador of this, but there are many times that I send correspondence to the administration and I never get an answer.

So this is my opportunity, and I'm not saying that she's responsible for any of the other folks in the administration.

But this is my opportunity to speak on behalf of my bosses, my constituents, and I feel like it shouldn't be hampered or encumbered by different opinions here, with all due respect.

Chairman Meeks. You always treat me with respect, as I will always treat you with respect, and I appreciate it.
Mr. Perry. So do I have 30 seconds or are we done?

Chairman Meeks. Well, I'm going to give you 30 seconds if you have a budget question.

Mr. Perry. I have a question on the same line that I had before.

Chairman Meeks. I'm going to give you 30 seconds.

Mr. Issa. A point of order, Mr. Chair. I think he was actually at a minute, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. No, he had 30 seconds at the time that I intervened.

Mr. Perry. I won't argue --

Mr. Issa. It was at a minute.

Mr. Perry. All right. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. Perry.

I now recognize Representative Bill Keating of Massachusetts, who is the chair of the Subcommittee on Europe, Energy and Environment and Cyber, for five minutes.

Mr. Keating. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Administrator, for being here. I thank your husband as well for his service in our district here. Very helpful.

You know, I know this has been touched on before but it can't be touched on enough. In my view, there's going to be more -- many more by multiple amounts of people that die from starvation and hunger this fall because of Putin's action in Russia and what's
occurred to the breadbasket, what's occurred were Belarus and Russia have 40 percent of the world's fertilizer.

You've addressed that, but there's one aspect I was wondering if we could do things to address, looking forward, to this awful crisis that is going to occur and that's the issue of hoarding, too, by some countries.

I notice that India has just stopped all its exports at this stage and that's a problem. Are there things we could do to try and ease what could well be the hoarding of food supplies instead of equitably spreading them around, given the crisis we're going to face?

Ms. Power. Thank you. Well, I know that Secretary Blinken and his legion of diplomats are out in the world and have been since the very beginning of the crisis because this is an obvious risk as soon as Russia began to blockade the southern ports of Ukraine, in particular, blocking the export of a third of the world's grains -- a third of the world's wheat, I should say.

And we are -- you know, there have been a number of countries that have made decisions along the lines of India's. I would note that India's deal that they had -- the government's deal that they had done with the World Food Programme to give the World Food Programme significant access to their grains, I believe, is still going forward.
I also think there's a humanitarian assistance exception to what India has announced. But Indonesia, as well, has followed suit just in the last week. So, again, we are urging countries to think in terms of the collective good.

Often, it's an emotional or domestic political reaction, not one actually even borne of sound economic practice from the standpoint of feeding one's own people. But in addition to doing this diplomacy and urging our colleagues in international institutions like the WTO and the multilateral development banks to do the same, you know, we're also just working with countries who may be in a position, not tomorrow but in the coming months, to be able to plant more, bring more wheat to export.

I was just talking to the Zambian minister of agriculture, who believes that they could be in a position with some more inputs, potentially, to do that. And so this assistance that is pending now before the Senate and we hope will be passed -- maybe even while we're sitting here -- you know, the resources there that would allow us to work with countries to see what share of the supplies that are being held back by Putin's war could somehow be compensated for or what share of those supplies that aren't going to market --

Mr. Keating. Thank you. I think it also underscores the need for planning. If you look at a country like Ethiopia, they won't be hurt as badly because they put a process in place.
Just quickly on another subject, too, I just got back from Poland where I spoke to President Duda. Just a week before I spoke to the mayor of Warsaw, and I think the same can be said for other countries in the region, but they're taking an enormous burden.

Three million Ukrainians have come over including out of country people to Poland. They 180,000 people, remarkably, in their school systems already. The population of Warsaw is up 17 percent. It's just an enormous undertaking that they're doing, to their credit. Can we do more?

What could we do and what's budgeted for helping Poland, helping these countries, helping cities that are taking the bulk of the people that are coming over as well as, perhaps, helping Romania and Moldova, some of those countries as well?

Ms. Power. Well, I would put Moldova very high up the list, as Moldova has received the highest per capita number of refugees. Many have moved on, of course.

But for such a small country that's not part of the European Union, that doesn't have the same resources injected by that broader super system or supra system, it's very, very challenging.

For Poland, I met with the mayor of Warsaw and he, of course, ran through a number of the very significant challenges they are facing. I think USAID's jurisdiction is more -- it's not within the European Union, per se. PRM at the State Department is
providing UNHCR and others resources, including -- there'll be additional resources if the second supp passes the Senate.

But, for example, one of the things that we can do is work on the Ukrainian side of the border with the education system with which we have had, you know, programs over many, many years to ensure that Ukrainian teachers are able to teach those students who happen now to live in third countries because so many of the -- including of my own staff -- Ukrainian staff -- who might now be refugees in Poland, Romania, or elsewhere, most of their there -- at least my staff anecdotally, most -- in some cases, many and others depending on the community are still actually doing their Ukrainian classwork online.

And so we work with the Ministry of Digital Transformation, we work with the Ministry of Education to be able to ensure that Ukrainian teachers are getting paid inside Ukraine or getting paid by the government of Ukraine, perhaps, through some of the direct budget support --

Mr. Keating. The gentleman's time has expired. I have to --

Ms. Power. -- so we can keep that education afloat.

Mr. Keating. Thank you very much.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Darrell Issa of California for five minutes.

Mr. Issa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Chairman, I'm
going to ask your indulgence for a very short line of questioning for the ambassador on a previous subject.

Ambassador -- over here.

Ms. Power. Yes.

Mr. Issa. Is it fair to say, from my understanding and your views, that the unmasking that was talked about for quite a while is the result of administrative people using your credentials, your right to unmask, to deliver information that you ask for and that, per se, there's not a written order that says, please unmask General so and so? Is that a correct statement?

Ms. Power. I am so hesitant to answer this question because it really is not the appropriate forum. But --

Mr. Issa. No, I just -- but we --

Ms. Power. -- yes. But the short answer is yes.

Mr. Issa. Okay. That's all I wanted.

Ms. Power. Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Issa. I just wanted to make sure that we sort of understand that that term is sort of like you signed something versus your indicia on something. It's not always quite what it seems to be.

Ms. Power. Correct.

Mr. Issa. Today, going from the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations previously, to this job, you managed to find the hardest possible alternative to your earlier job at the most
important time. So I have a couple of questions.

We have dealt a lot into the wheat situation and it appears as though you have a great deal on that. The two areas that it appears that you don't have the ability to help surge wheat is the U.S., which is a different cabinet position's job, or independent agency, and one that I wanted to bring up, which is currently you are prohibited from operating in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe, when it was Rhodesia, was the breadbasket of Africa.

If this committee were to relook at and the administration were to relook at considering that question, do you see potential for USAID to operate in that country, at least to the benefit of their ability to produce and feed themselves? I've been to that country and I've seen the effects of three decades-plus of dictatorship.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congressman. I've also been to Zimbabwe at a time, actually, when people were having to carry cash in pillowcases because the inflation was so --

Mr. Issa. Now they use $20 bills, so they've taking care of that problem.

Ms. Power. You know, I am, and our agency, is driven by the humanitarian imperative, and the needs in Zimbabwe are going to be acute. I would actually want to look into what those restrictions currently are because, again, in terms of our funding
to World Food Programme and others, certainly, U.N. agencies are already operating in Zimbabwe. So what you're saying is surprising me a little bit. But the need to meet -- 

Mr. Issa. Okay. And maybe respond for the record. I mean, if you were operating in that country, your ability to help people begin farming effectively would be very different than the aid that is currently in Zimbabwe.

I want to switch to a country that, when you first came into office, was not on your list and that's Lebanon. In this short period of time of the last two years, it's gone from being a country that had a huge problem.

A far greater percentage of its population were refugees than any other country on Earth. Far more refugees are there today than are in Poland or almost as many as are in Poland, except as a percentage it's 50 percent of the population.

What's happened differently is that their -- the value of their currency and their economy has diminished by 95 percent. So for an agency that normally takes months or years to target a country, how are you reacting to a country that overnight went from middle income to near the bottom?

Ms. Power. Thank you. Well, let me just say that, you know, of course, Lebanon just had its elections and --

Mr. Issa. And congratulations for throwing Hezbollah out in an election.
Ms. Power. I thought you might appreciate the results. But I think -- I mentioned that because the paralysis of governing institutions cannot be really separated from the economic downturn and spiral that the people of Lebanon have had to endure.

I think, you know, largely, what we have done is worked, as USAID does, you know, trying to provide technical assistance and technical advice as to how to shore up different aspects of the economy. Right now, though, with 81 percent of Lebanon's wheat coming from Ukraine, we are focused on humanitarian assistance --

Mr. Issa. And no storage capability.

Ms. Power. And no storage capability because of the explosion, and so forth. So I think that this supplemental -- I don't have the country breakdown for you yet. But, again, with new resources, $4.3 billion coming online for humanitarian assistance, that's a part of the equation, but it's stopgap.

It doesn't get at the underlying causes of this unraveling of quality of life and standard of living for the people of Lebanon. And so I think when we look at our food security, which is a separate allocation in the supplemental, thinking through other things that we can do in the agricultural sector with the new government when it comes in that, hopefully, will be more dedicated to making hard choices in the economic reform area,
you know, it's those structural changes that are really needed to stop the free fall.

Mr. Issa. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for this hearing, specifically, and for bringing us the kind of a witness that we desperately need on a regular basis and, again, thanks for your indulgence on that first question. I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Ted Deutch of Florida, who is the chair of the Subcommittee of the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism, for five minutes.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Chairman Meeks. I join Mr. Issa in praising you and our witness today. So glad to have this opportunity, Administrator.

Following years of hard work, Nita Lowey -- the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act was finally enacted into law in December of 2020. As authorized, MEPPA directs $50 million for each of the five fiscal years following enactment and, as you well know, the fiscal year 2023 budget request urges Congress to maintain $50 billion under the Economic Support Fund, which is consistent with previous year's authorization.

Over the last year, the Department of State, USAID, and DFC have been hard at work implementing both the people-to-people
Partnership for Peace Fund and the Joint Investment for Peace Initiative, which resulted in the first three MEPPA awards being announced in the past two months.

They'll support Palestinian and Israeli private sector initiatives to build partnerships to increase economic growth and to lay the foundation for peace through people-to-people programs. Our support for grassroots programs as well as building a viable Palestinian economy remain fundamentally central to the goal of preserving the possibility of a negotiated settlement leading to a sustainable two-state solution, and former chairwoman Nita Lowey said, for whom the act was named, I quote, "I firmly believe these programs are important to build the foundation for such a peace to take root and endure. It has been really exciting to watch this become a reality." And we're all excited to see where it goes.

And as you approach the halfway point and the first year of MEPPA implementation, can you give us an update on the process for awarding grants under the people-to-people Partnership for Peace Fund that USAID overseas and when we might see additional grants awarded?

Ms. Power. Thank you so much, Congressman, and thanks for pushing us throughout the teething phase, I guess you'd call it, of MEPPA. I think I had to appear here last year and answer as to why we hadn't, you know, been able to kind of compress the
You know, there were some startup investments that had to be made, at least having the chairman and ranking member of this committee nominate their board members. So we do have a fully constituted board.

We do have George Salem, who was named as the chair of the board. We have had our first board meeting in April. It's great to see Nita Lowey back in action in that fashion. And as you mentioned, we have three organizations that have received a grant so far.

You know, it is $50 million a year, you know, each year for five years. We have two solicitations -- I think this gets to the heart of your question -- one on peace building and one on building economic bridges that are out.

I think the more that, you know, we can talk about this being up and running, I think, you know, so a lot of attention to it when the legislation passed. I'm not sure, again, yet how broadly understood it is.

I think our Deputy Administrator, Isobel Coleman, traveled to the region, in part, for this reason to be traveling into the Palestinian territories, talking to Israeli officials, the COGAT and others, about, you know, how do we really maximize the pool of community members on both sides of the line that would wish to be a part of this.
So on the solicitation timing, I don't have that specific
in my head. But, again, I would expect in the coming months
to have more announcements.

Mr. Deutch. Great. Thank you. And can I just ask,
obviously, MEPPA is overseen by Meghan Doherty, the deputy
assistant administrator, quite ably, but it requires an
interagency approach and I wonder if you could speak to how MEPPA
is working to ensure that these grants are driving broader
administration policy in this space.

Ms. Power. Well, as you know, Congressman, USAID is part
of in every respect but, certainly, on anything to do with Middle
East policy we are part of the interagency process. So the
NSC-led process brings to the table everything from the
intelligence community, the Department of Commerce, USTR, DFC,
of course, the State Department, Treasury, and others.

So I think as part of that process we are able, working with
our colleagues, to, you know, have a ever refreshed sense of what
our objectives are. There is lead, time, again, between the
solicitation and then the rollout or the granting of an award
to a particular organization.

But I think that there's been extensive communication,
again, through the regular interagency policy committee process.

Mr. Deutch. Thanks -- thank you, Administrator, and, Mr.
Chairman, I wonder if there might be an opportunity in the reporting from our committee about today's hearing to post a link to that solicitation so that everyone is well aware of the opportunities available under this.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you. The gentleman's time has now expired. I now recognize Representative Ann Wagner of Missouri, who is the vice ranking member of the full committee, for five minutes. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this hearing.

Mrs. Wagner. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this hearing, and I thank Administrator Power for her time and service.

Administrator Power, since you last appeared before this committee in July of 2021, the world has become a significantly more dangerous, unstable, and unpredictable place. The Taliban's tragic and appalling surge back to power, thanks to the administration's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan, plunged innocent Afghans into dire humanitarian circumstances. Putin's brutal invasion has forced millions more, more than a quarter of Ukraine's total population, to flee their homes and seek the assistance of neighboring countries. U.S. development and humanitarian activities abroad recognize the inherent worth of all people and leverage the boundless human capacity for generosity, cooperation, and ingenuity to overcome the global challenges.
I have said this before, but I think it is particularly true today as the U.S. and our allies unite to protect and serve the vulnerable, the oppressed, and the persecuted our values make us the partner of choice for countries seeking self-sufficiency, security, and the ability to determine their own futures, and as we work to consider the aggressive imperialist agendas of China, Russia, and other dictatorial states, strong and confident American leadership is more important, ma'am, than ever.

Administrator Power, I co-chair the Congressional Caucus on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. ASEAN countries are deeply worried about China's clear intent to dominate the region and are urgently calling for increased U.S. engagement, especially in the infrastructure sector.

Can you tell me how USAID is supporting infrastructure development in Southeast Asia and what sorts of project USAID plans to prioritize?

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congresswoman.

First, let me say that I agree with everything you've said about the importance of U.S. leadership at this moment.

Second, I had the privilege of attending the ASEAN summit last year week chaired by President Biden. I was in a session chaired by Vice President Harris.

The entire interagency turned out in force to engage with the heads of state who had traveled here for a very unusual
gathering that, I think, will be the first of many, and your question really was the question, at least in the session I was in, that we were delving into, particularly as it relates to transitioning to renewable energy.

The Development Finance Corporation, of course, has a big role to play there as many countries are very eager to meet their newly ambitious emissions targets to bring down emissions quickly, to draw on solar, hydro. There's so many opportunities in the Mekong and beyond to draw on hydropower.

USAID's work is concentrated there and you'll see in the '23 funding request a request for additional resources, particularly, again, in the energy and climate domains, but also helping countries that have withstood the COVID pandemic where we have provided hundreds of millions or tens of millions of vaccines, really helping that region cross the 70 percent threshold that WHO recommended on COVID vaccination more quickly than many other regions in the world.

Mrs. Wagner. Administrator -- Administrator --

Ms. Power. Yes?

Mrs. Wagner. -- if I could, and I hate to interrupt but I've got just a short period of time left. I want to get one more question. How does USAID programming in Southeast Asia and in the Indo-Pacific region as a whole help our partners resist China's coercive economic and diplomatic and financial policies?
Does USAID have a roadmap to help countries that are highly dependent on China reduce their vulnerability to China's malign influence operations?

Ms. Power. Well, first, let me, again, embrace the premise, I think, where you started and where you're now finishing, which is that is what either openly or privately so many of these countries are really, really eager to do. They're eager to be in a position to secure resources that don't entail decades of debt mortgaging the futures of their young people in order to have to carry that debt into the future.

They're eager for environmental impact statements so that infrastructure projects don't harm the environment but, in fact, are rooted in withstanding climate events, let's say, but also built in such a fashion that actually hastens that transition, again, to clean energy.

So I think everything from the Countering Chinese Influence Fund, which you all have generously supported, to the investments we make in an open and secure internet in the digital sphere to these kinds of investments that, again, don't come with the transaction -- with the strings attached that PRC investments come with. I think these are the domains in which USAID and our partners across the U.S. government have been --

Mrs. Wagner. Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady's time has expired.
Mrs. Wagner. My time has expired so I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia, who is the president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, for five minutes.

Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for having this hearing today.

Welcome, Administrator Power. It's so great to have you here and I just want to thank you for your leadership. I've been involved with AID going back to the late 1970s and I think you stand out in putting an imprint on AID that, I think, puts us in a really positive direction. So thank you for your leadership.

Let me ask about the Global Health Security Act you and I worked on and the chairman co-sponsored. It passed out of this committee multiple times. It passed on the floor of the House multiple times.

We got it into the National Defense Authorization Act as a provision of that draft bill. We negotiated with the Senate and, of course, at the last minute, whimsically and arbitrarily, one member of the Senate just decided he didn't want to do it, and an important piece of legislation, an important -- more importantly, piece of public policy died and so now we have to do it all over again.
Could you just comment on why you got involved in that effort and why you thought -- not the bill as such but the need to have a global health security policy and to restore a coordinator position, either at NSC or at the White House, was so important and what role AID might have played in that and, hopefully, will in the future?

Ms. Power. Thank you so much for championing this and thanks to the chairman as well. You know, I do think it is extremely important that we see reflected in our budget and in our institutions -- in our governing institutions -- the priority that we must place on this key component of our national security.

You know, I think that our '23 budget requests reflects the budgetary piece of that. That's something I'll have to take up with the appropriators and appeal to them to make investments not only in the vaccines of today or the therapeutics and tests of today but in the ability to strengthen countries' health infrastructure in everything from surveillance to labs to the training of health workers, where President Biden just issued a new health worker -- a training initiative that, I think, is so important.

But we have to look ahead. We can't keep having to reinvent the wheel every time there is a new global health emergency of this magnitude. And, you know, I lived some of the investments
that were made since 2014 after the Ebola crisis, such as the creation of the African CDC, certainly, changes at USAID that put us in a position to be much quicker on the draw this time around when COVID struck.

But, you know, when you think about the loss of life in this country by virtue of a pandemic reaching our shores, and when you think about the number of families whose lives have been, you know, permanently deprived of people, we just -- the human stakes are so high of preventing anything like this from happening again, and, again, that's resources but it's also just ensuring that every agency in the U.S. government is singing from the same hymn book and making the kinds of investment, whether Treasury through the World Bank, or the intelligence community, you know, in terms of what it is collecting on in the global health space, or what we do in terms of program, all of that being brought to bear together in the way that your bill would have done, I think, just so important for the future.

Mr. Connolly. I think it's important to note, too, that Mr. Chabot and I introduced that bill on a bipartisan basis several years before COVID-19 struck. So it wasn't in response to COVID-19.

It was actually in response to the Ebola crisis where we were caught flat footed globally, and WHO did not have its finest moment and lots of quick work had to be done by AID and others
to compensate for the tears in the fabric, shall we say, in terms of the immediate health response.

At some point, Administrator Power, I'd love to sit down and talk to you about upgrading the underlying legislation that authorizes AID, which we haven't passed an aid authorization bill since 1986 and we haven't really updated the underlying authorization act since the early '60s.

Lots has happened in between and we might want to think about trying to streamline the objectives and goals and purposes, which number over 250 now in the existing law.

In any event, I'd welcome that opportunity. Mr. Chairman, my time is up and I thank you so much for this opportunity.

Chairman Meeks. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman's time has expired. I now acknowledge Representative Brian Mast of Florida for five minutes.

Mr. Mast. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, ma'am, for attending today.

I'll just go from a quote off your website to begin with to set the stage for my question. USAID improves the lives of the Palestinian people, and this is an important word, to -- to set conditions for a viable two-state solution.

How does improving the lives of Palestinians work to set conditions? How does us paying to improve their lives work to set conditions?
Ms. Power. Well, I think that part of the logic, for example, of the Middle East Partnership Act that was passed by this body and by the Senate and that we have now begun to implement is that as you create economic development in the Palestinian territories but, particularly, when you can create, you know, kind of cross line trade, cross line partnerships, in water sanitation, those kinds of connections -- those human connections -- give rise to more trust, create a different kind of climate than that which exists right now, which is inhospitable.

Mr. Mast. Are they ready today for -- to be a second state?

Ms. Power. Pardon me?

Mr. Mast. Are they ready today to be a second state?

Ms. Power. Well, as you know, there is no assistance provided by USAID to the Palestinian Authority under law, and I think the --

Mr. Mast. Are they ready to be a second state?

Ms. Power. I think --

Mr. Mast. You were setting conditions for the last 20 years. Are they ready to be a second state after billions of dollars?

Ms. Power. Well, I don't think, in fact -- I mean, given that all assistance was cut off, in fact, to the territories, I don't think it's accurate to characterize the last 20 years in that fashion.

Mr. Mast. Are they ready today to be a second state?
Ms. Power. I think that there is no negotiation right now underway that is even, you know, engaging on that question, bringing the parties together to ascertain, you know, even what is a requirement. I think there's an awful lot of corruption that needs to be addressed within the Palestinian Authority and we --

Mr. Mast. If there's no negotiation to do this, then that begs the question of why support $185 million dollar request for West Bank and Gaza.

Ms. Power. I think there are plenty of reasons --

Mr. Mast. But to go to the question --

Ms. Power. Yeah --

Mr. Mast. -- are they ready today to be a second state, in your opinion?

Ms. Power. Again, there's no process underway that is about to culminate in Palestinian statehood. But I think our job is to --

Mr. Mast. So you're working to set the conditions. Have you met the conditions? Are they ready?

Ms. Power. I don't think the website said that we had set conditions.

Mr. Mast. I just read it to you.

Ms. Power. No. No. I --

Mr. Mast. To improve the lives of Palestinian people to
Ms. Power. I don't think it -- I don't think it was --
Mr. Mast. -- set conditions.
Ms. Power. Right, which is not saying that we had or anybody
had set conditions. It's saying working to actually improve the
economic welfare of people living in often very difficult
circumstances.
Mr. Mast. To set conditions. There's no comma or period.
To set conditions --
Ms. Power. I know. Right. But --
Mr. Mast. -- for a two-state solution. That's what the
website says, and down at the bottom --
Ms. Power. Right. The very thing that you're reading is
--
Mr. Mast. -- again, are they ready today to be a second
state? Real hard job, set the conditions. Are they ready?
Ms. Power. Our job -- our job as USAID is to invest in
programs that are going to improve conditions on the ground, which
will benefit not only the Palestinian people but the broader
region and will have --
Mr. Mast. To set conditions for a two-state solution,
period. That's the website statement. So are they ready today
to be a second state? I'm going off your website.
Ms. Power. But the website doesn't say that which you are
using as the predicate for your question so --

Mr. Mast. I'm reading it right from your website.

Ms. Power. No, no, no, no. I understand what you're reading from the website is on the website. But then your question is saying something entirely -- the website doesn't say --

Mr. Mast. I'm just -- are they ready today to be a second state?

Ms. Power. The website doesn't say they're ready or not ready. The website --

Mr. Mast. No, I'm asking you. I'm asking you to say are they ready or not.

Ms. Power. We could keep going back and forth like this but --

Mr. Mast. Clearly, we can. We have done it before now.

Ms. Power. But what I will say again is that the Palestinian Authority still practices, for example, the pay to slay program, which is outrageous, and I would say --

Mr. Mast. That would lead me to say they're not ready, as one example.

Ms. Power. It is something, absolutely, that is -- that no sovereign member state should -- of the United Nations should embrace. Our emphasis as USAID -- we are not involved in negotiations around a two-state --
Mr. Mast. So are they not ready? Are they not ready --

Ms. Power. We are not involved in negotiations around the two-state solution. We are involved -- we are involved in supporting --

Mr. Mast. We are involved if we're spending $185 million a year of our taxpayer money.

Ms. Power. -- in supporting initiatives --

Mr. Mast. We are involved. Every taxpayer -- ma'am, every taxpayer would agree we're directly involved if we're spending $185 million. So are they ready or not ready?

Ms. Power. We're involved in the region. We're involved in advancing the welfare of the Palestinian people through education, through sanitation programs --

Mr. Mast. So not ready yet?

Ms. Power. -- through food security programs. Again --

Mr. Mast. I would say not ready. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Power. -- I'm going to leave it to people who are involved in negotiations to discuss --

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize Representative Dean Phillips of Minnesota for five minutes.

Mr. Phillips. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Greetings to you, Madam Ambassador.

I just read moments ago that a GOP gubernatorial candidate
in Pennsylvania said that she would not support the eventual
ominee today if it is not her because, and I quote, "I have no
intention of supporting globalists," a concept shared by, in my
estimation, too many in our country right now.

So, perhaps, if you would just take a moment and express
to the American people why foreign assistance, why international
development, is in our country's best interest and democracies'
best interests and in our national security best interests.

Ms. Power. Thank you. I mean, for starters, every American
has an interest in seeing, for example, health systems around
the world be capable of picking up viruses before they turn into
epidemics and pandemics.

USAID and other foreign assistance is invested in
strengthening those health systems and building labs, in
shortening turnaround times so that that detection can occur.

Second, we have an interest in curbing radicalization, for
example, of young people.

When USAID supports humanitarian assistance or schools for
displaced persons we give people or support their ability to have
economic opportunities that they might not otherwise have so that
when a gang comes calling or a radical group or terrorist group
comes calling, young people might have another path that they
would be inclined to pursue.

When countries emit too much carbon and the planet continues
to warm, even as we begin to make transitions here, we will feel
the climate effects of other countries' growing emissions, in
some cases.

And so it is in our interest to engage, for example, those
countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are not -- or those parts
of the countries that are not electrified to ensure that they
go immediately to renewables, to hydro, to solar, to others, as
their populations grow and as young people come online.

So those are just a few examples of the ways we use
humanitarian assistance, foreign assistance, in a manner that
advances the interests of the American people.

Mr. Phillips. And as you pursue that mission and consider
the challenges, are they more relative to financial resources
or human resources?

Ms. Power. Could you -- could you --

Mr. Phillips. Yeah. As you pursue your mission --

Ms. Power. Yes.

Mr. Phillips. -- are your challenges as you see them more
predicated on a lack of financial resources or human resources
or both?

Ms. Power. Well, I think, as I said in my opening statement,
I think USAID's workforce has been depleted over the years. There
was a lot of staff turnover. There is a need to build a younger
more diverse and inclusive workforce.
So we have come to you with requests in that domain. But it goes without saying as well that the global needs are spiraling as we have more displaced people been than at any point since Hitler, more conflict than at any point since the end of the Cold War, and an intensification of humanitarian emergencies brought about by climate change, the pandemic, and now Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

So there are a lot of needs to go around and, you know, one of the things that's exciting that USAID does globally is invest in other countries' human resources with the idea of over time working ourselves out of jobs because no country actually really wants to be, you know, in any way dependent on USAID's assistance. They'd like to be in a position to be talking to USTR and the Department of Commerce and others rather than me most of the time.

Mr. Phillips. I hear you. I had the pleasure recently of being on a call when you introduced the youth policy initiatives at USAID as a co-leader with Reps. Manning, Curtis, and Fitzpatrick of the Youth Peace and Security Act. I celebrate that.

Maybe just take the last minute of my time on how your fiscal year '23 budget appropriately resources some of these youth initiatives that you've introduced.

Ms. Power. Well, it does so in two ways. I mean, first, increasing a plus-up in our funding for youth programming. But
if that were the -- if you see the numbers there, you know, I think it's a little above single digits in terms of youth programming, maybe even a little below. That's not where the action is.

The action is in actually integrating -- I mean, that's not merely -- there's some action there but it's about integrating young people across the board in everything we do. And so as we move to co-design more of our programming in agriculture or on clean energy or in the digital space, especially with local organizations, local partners, to make sure that that's not just the same old, you know, set of individuals or organizations that we have always worked with, that we're really going out of our way to take account of the fact that 60 percent of the population in many, if not most, of the countries we work especially in sub-Saharan Africa are under 30.

Mr. Phillips. Most importantly, thank -- heartfelt gratitude to you and everyone at USAID for building the American brand that I know members on both sides of the aisle support. Thanks.

Ms. Power. Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize Representative Tim Burchett from the great state of Tennessee for five minutes.

Mr. Burchett. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that
plug from our great state. It is. I concur with you on that issue.

Ma'am, thanks for being here and the all the usual flowery things we say and then we go for the jugular, but I'm not going to do that.

What steps has the administration taken to press the Palestinian Authority to improve its educational materials? Specifically, I'm talking about the -- you've seen the videos and all the hatred that seems to be pushed out, and I'm wondering how you're ensuring that USAID partners do not promote this incitement with our hard-earned tax dollars.

Ms. Power. Thank you. Well, one of the domains where this has arisen -- I know there's been congressional concern over the years is UNRWA and questions about textbooks, and I know that something that doesn't -- isn't something USAID funds specifically, but from my last job in the executive branch, you know, I know U.S. U.N. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and Secretary Blinken are, you know, always engaging with UNRWA and UNRWA U.N. leadership is reviewing textbooks and the like to try to make sure that course work doesn't cross the kinds of lines that you're describing.

You know, USAID, in the -- until about a year ago wasn't funding work in the Palestinian territories. That funding had been cut off. So some of the investments that we had made, for
example, in independent media or in civil society organizations that themselves, you know, are fact based and not inclined in that way, particularly, the investments in local education systems, you know, those investments had been suspended, you might say, or picked up by other donors.

Mr. Burchett. Right.

Ms. Power. I think now our programming is, largely, in the kind of wash and sanitation area. We're looking for projects that we can work on also collaboratively with the government of Israel through the MEPPA program. But I think the main answer to your question is that, certainly, anytime I or my deputy I mentioned in a previous exchange was just in the region just where it is at the top of the list of issues to raise with any Palestinian officials that we encounter, and I know this is, again, something that Secretary Blinken --

Mr. Burchett. All right. Let me get on some more questions, ma'am. I appreciate your talkability here. But how are you --

Ms. Power. It's a strong suit, talkability. The Irish --

yeah.

Mr. Burchett. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Power. Yeah.

Mr. Burchett. It's like lawyers. They get paid by the word and I'm not a big fan of them, either. I'm not necessarily a
big fan of yours yet unless you answer these questions well and
then I'll be a fan.

How are you ensuring adherence to the Taylor Force Act?
I'm sure you're familiar with that. It's the thing where they
pay the family members if somebody's caught in a terrorist act
or they die and they pay them kind of a pension thing on that.

To me, it's sort of a bounty type situation. How are you
ensuring that adherence to the Taylor Force Act and other
restrictions of our assistance to the Palestinians? I'm
wondering what safeguards do we ensure that no assistance is going
to those associated with or supporting terrorism? And, you know,
I guess it's kind of hard to get inside their books, you know,
is what I'm saying.

We're always up here and say, oh, no, that pays for this,
not that, where we send them a blank check and sure as the world
they run out over here they're going to bring it in over there
and it's a very fluid amount, I would assume, their bank accounts.

So I'm kind of wondering how do we ensure that.

Ms. Power. Well, the law is fairly black letter in the sense
that it is the assistance will not directly benefit the
Palestinian Authority and we take the law incredibly seriously.

We have vetting requirements for all of our partners, again,
very -- our partners, by definition, would be nongovernmental so not the Palestinian Authority, and this involves, you know, everything from, you know, running the names of organizations and individuals associated with organizations through all the databases that the national security agencies that are part of the U.S. government have.

We have strengthened -- this is before my time --

strengthened oversight of the prime awardees. There's post award compliance reviews where you go back over, and that's within 18 months of implementation. We have a team on the ground. As you know, our USAID mission --

Mr. Burchett. Ma'am, I'm going to run out, but let me ask you, have you all ever stopped any funding because of that? Just a simple yes or no would be fine. I'm not trying to be a jerk but I'm out of time.

Ms. Power. Yeah. No. No. I don't -- in my time, because I only -- I would have to get back to you on the lifetime of USAID assistance in the region. But if I may just -- in my time we are just getting our assistance --

Mr. Burchett. A simple yes or no, ma'am. I appreciate it.

Ms. Power. I don't have the ability to answer what's happened over the 61-year life of USAID but I'll get back --

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Burchett. Thank you.
Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Joaquin Castro of Texas, who is the chair of the Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations, and Global Corporate Social Impact, for five minutes.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman. This budget reflects important priorities, including resources for climate, women and girls, and food security. But beyond funding, making serious progress on any of these issues is going to take far more innovation, new partners, and new ways of solving problems.

During the budget hearing last year, I asked you about the issue of innovation and asked you to prioritize it during your tenure, which you said that you would, and USAID's Development and Innovation Ventures Office has one of the highest returns on investment in all of USAID and the entire federal government -- a $17 social return for every $1 invested.

But it receives about just 0.1 percent of USAID's budget each year. So its potential for impact is, therefore, limited. In addition to increasing resources for this office, the DIV, can you talk about how USAID can better integrate this highly effective innovative unit into the rest of the agency and ensure that its efforts are not limited to just one part of the agency?

Ms. Power. Thank you. This is something that we are looking at, Congressman, and, of course, welcome ideas from you and your team as we seek to bring on a new chief economist.
As you know, the economist Michael Kramer was very involved in the DIV over its life and including doing some of the studies about the return on investment that you've mentioned.

But I do think this question of how to integrate, particularly at a moment like today where we're facing a food crisis -- a food security crisis -- of this magnitude, to be able to take small ideas, be able to move money quickly, nimbly, as the Innovation Ventures effort has done in the past and then potentially scale them over time, whether through Feed the Future or through, you know, a clean energy program.

So I don't have a complete answer for you. I will say, again, that we're very earmarked at USAID more than I had imagined and more than was true at the tail end of the Obama administration.

So that does limit our ability to move money around including to beef up that percentage that you referenced, which is a very, very small percentage of the overall budget, especially given the good that it has done in the past.

Mr. Castro. Well, thank you. And I want to ask you with regard to the chief economist, where are you in the hiring and selection of that person?

Ms. Power. I would expect -- I shouldn't get ahead of the process. But I would expect, certainly, us to have a chief economist in place over the summer at some point, hopefully. in
the early part of the summer. But anyway, yes, I think that's probably the best time line I can offer.

Mr. Castro. Well, thank you. And on a separate subject, under your leadership you've talked about initiating a, quote, "anti-sludge effort" to eliminate a lot of the unnecessary red tape to make it easier for new organizations to work with USAID and for USAID to be able to move more quickly.

This is particularly important for the success of your efforts on localization, and I believe these efforts are important to make USAID an effective organization.

Can you speak to the status of these anti-sludge efforts? How pervasive are unnecessary requirements in grants or procurement and what are you doing to remove that red tape?

Ms. Power. Well, first, Congressman, I would also -- I would attach this both to the localization initiative that you've championed for a long time and also to President Biden's broader initiative, which is captured in an executive order, on what he calls customer service, which is an interesting way, I think, to think about desludging or about reducing administrative and reporting requirements.

So whether that's, you know, working, in our case, with governments overseas to make it easier for small businesses to start up by reducing paperwork burdens, whether that is, as you noted, in our contracting process to shorten the length of
contracts, which can sometimes run 150 pages, I gather, to, you know, everything from onboarding of officials here as we try to staff up at USAID to meet these really difficult threats of the moment.

So we have -- in the front office, our deputy administrator is the lead on this, working across bureaus. Bureaus are needing to come forward with ideas for how they can cut sludge in the here and now, and then some of these longer-term reforms around procurement, around paperwork requirements on missions that keep them away from the fields.

They're in the fields in the sense that they're in other countries but they're away from the actual projects and beneficiaries because they're so busy filling out forms. That's going to be a longer-term process. Thank you for asking.

Mr. Castro. Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize Representative Mark Green, again, of the great state of Tennessee, ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, Migration, and International Economic Policy.

Mr. Green. I know it's a mouthful, Mr. Chairman, but I think you came up with the title of that committee.

Chairman Meeks. I did.

Mr. Green. So it's all --
Mr. Green. Thank you for holding the committee hearing and, of course, ranking member for your leadership, and, Administrator Power, thanks for being here.

Soft power is a crucial component to not only the projection of America's strength but also the protection of our strength, and as a complement hard power soft power helps strengthen our partnerships and grow those alliances stronger and I think that's a big part of where USAID comes in.

Your budget, as I recall, was, I think, for assistance last year $31.7 billion. So that's a big commitment. But with inflation raging, you know, at 40-year highs, we got to take a hard look at all the line items in the budget and make sure that those taxpayer dollars are wisely spent, and from my standpoint -- the folks in my district, the 760,000 people that I represent, they want to see that money directed toward national security objectives countering the Chinese Communist Party, particularly the Belt and Road Initiative, how we use our assistance to checkmate what China is doing and for reducing the push factors that lead to illegal immigration -- economic opportunities.

And one of the ways that we can strengthen, particularly, that is this bill that we just recently dropped, myself and Chairman Sires, a bipartisan bill. It's H.R. 7579, the Western Hemisphere Nearshoring Act, and it will reduce our supply chains'
dependence on Chinese manufacturing while fostering economic
prosperity among our southern neighbors.

And since it leverages private sector dollars and China
tariff money, it costs the taxpayers nothing, and I urge the
administration to take a look at that and, of course, to spend
our foreign aid and assistance with care and avoiding, you know,
sort of divisive cultural issues, prioritizing on national
security objectives.

My first question is, you know, the Chinese Communist Party
has vastly expanded in Latin America. Nineteen regional
countries are a part of the Belt and Road Initiative.

How is USAID working to counter the CCP's sort of debt trap
diplomacy and promote sort of our developmental side and pulling
those folks sort of back into our strong alliances?

Ms. Power. Well, let me try to be brief, since I was accused
of talkability a minute ago by your colleague. But, first, let
me say that I think there's much more emphasis being placed on
the Caribbean countries where, for example, USAID has a much
smaller presence but where you've seen the PRC really make
inroads, including -- I met recently with both the prime minister
of Jamaica and that of Barbados, and Barbados is a Belt and Road
country right there.

And so we are looking at -- and I think you'll see this
reflected, I hope, at the Summit of the Americas -- but whether
some of the financing arrangements that currently exist that make it hard to do substantial investments -- you know this better than I do -- in our hemisphere because a lot of the countries are technically middle income countries, you know, how those arrangements can either be altered or supplemented in a manner that would allow more of the investment along the kinds -- along the lines of what you're describing. I think the -- sorry.

Mr. Green. Well, if I could jump in real quick.

Ms. Power. Yeah, please -- oh, please do.

Mr. Green. You know, I just had a meeting with the ambassador from Jamaica and her -- and we were talking about my nearshoring bill because in it I asked that they open a -- allow Taiwan to open a business office, and she began to describe to me the challenge in competing with the Belt and Road Initiative, which was great conversation.

They come in and build hard infrastructure. The local politician can go see that bridge and get reelected, and so this loyalty, to use their word, to China becomes real. How do we compete with that?

Ms. Power. Well, first, I think there is a fair amount of buyer's remorse, notwithstanding that initial gloss. So --

Mr. Green. Understood. Yes. I think that's --

Ms. Power. -- but I don't think we can rest on that alone.

But it is noteworthy to see, you know, countries like Zambia
where, you know, the PRC got in with, you know, so much investment and now you're seeing, again, the future of young people in Zambia kind of mortgaged to the -- just the interest on the debt that is carried and how -- and this is where USAID is trying to make additional investments because we have a government that wants to escape that kind of dependence.

So I do think our competitive advantage is wanting to work ourselves out of jobs rather than to increase dependence. It's the absence of corruption and, indeed, pushing a governance and rule of law message, which some governments don't like, which is another source of PRC's appeal is to be -- if you're a government and want to stay in power for life, you know, the PRC pathway is one that asks no questions about that, whereas we are more critical.

But if I may, just one example --

Chairman Meeks. Go ahead.

Ms. Power. -- and I know, Mr. Chairman, just -- I think what Vice President Harris has led with the Partnership for Central America, which isn't nearshoring, per se, and that's where the DFC, I think, which USAID supports on the ground, can come in.

But the Partnership for Central America also shows that with a dedicated effort we can draw hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars from private sector companies that want to
be involved in that broader societal effort and not just governmental effort to offer that alternative.

Mr. Green. One of the things -- and I'll be very brief, Mr. Chairman, if you'll humor me --

Chairman Meeks. Mr. Green, you're out of time.

Mr. Green. Oh --

Chairman Meeks. A minute. I have to move.

Mr. Green. I'm so sorry.

Chairman Meeks. I'll now recognize Representative Dina Titus of Nevada for five minutes.

Ms. Titus. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Administrator Power.

You just mentioned corruption. I'd like to ask you about that. Your budget includes 100 percent funding increase for anti-corruption efforts. Some things that we describe as corruption other people just think of, oh, that's the price of doing business in some countries.

So I wonder if you could explain to us how your anti-corruption initiative is utilizing a top to bottom approach to getting at corruption, how you're defining corruption, what you're doing on the ground in countries to try to address the problem.

Ms. Power. Thank you. Briefly, I would love to -- it's such a good question. I would love to encourage, if we could,
follow up where we -- USAID, now, for the first time has an anti-corruption coordinator at USAID, Shannon Green, who's part of this interagency task force that President Biden is -- who's the first president to declare combating corruption a national security priority -- the task force that he's assembled. That's one.

Two, maybe just to offer a few examples from Ukraine of what we have in mind. We have done everything there from strengthening the National Corruption Commission to strengthening the prosecutor's office to ensure that the people who are involved in prosecution, and then the judges in the judiciary separately themselves have been screened and are not corrupt actors but are there in order to enforce the laws that the RADA has increasingly -- has, over the years, at least, been increasingly been putting on the books, but so too are we supporting those outside actors -- the civil society groups and the journalists -- who uncover the corruption, who expose it, and I think that is sort of the template that we have in places like northern Central America, where in El Salvador and Guatemala the attorney general's office, in the case of Guatemala, and the -- in El Salvador, the supreme court and other institutions themselves were overtaken by corrupt actors.

We had to pull the plug on the assistance that we provided and channel it to journalists and to civil society rather than,
again, continuing to invest in institutions that were pursuing
aims that were antithetical to ours.

I will say, Congresswoman, I think corruption is the
Achilles' heel, not only of the oligarch, which we know, but also
of the autocrat, and what we're finding is that these investments
are allowing journalists to tap at that vulnerability, that those
leaders who are trying to rollback accountability, rollback
checks and balances -- it is the one vulnerability, they feel, to their people.

There's no leader, no matter how little they claim to care
about public opinion, that wants to have their financial holdings
and their squirreling away of public resources exposed.

So with the President's Democracy Summit, you're right, we
have asked for an increase in our funding, which was very marginal
before we came into office relative to other investments we have
made, and if we are serious about this battle between democracy
and authoritarianism and winning that battle, funding those
actors that are, again, getting at this Achilles' heel of those
who have backslid is a really sound investment.

Ms. Titus. Well, thank you, and I also serve on the House
Democracy Partnership and in some of our visits with
parliamentarians as well as NGOs revealed that working with NDI
and some agencies like that they've actually even been engaged
in helping to draft anti-corruption statutes.
Usually, this effort is taken on by new members and often those members are women who can kind of make it their charge to go after this corruption, and I wonder how you all interact with those kind of groups.

Ms. Power. Well, I'm not 100 percent sure, but I'm going to take a bet that the work that you're describing was funded by USAID because --

Ms. Titus. Sure. It is, I'm sure.

Ms. Power. -- particularly, and so, you know, the National Endowment for Democracy and NDI and IRI are key partners of ours as is IFIS, which is doing, you know, more, again, on these key components of the autocrats' playbook. So I think that the progress that was made in Ukraine prior to the war, which, as you'll note from President Putin's speech on the eve of the war, is precisely the anti-corruption progress that he wants it to halt with this invasion.

It's progress that the Ukrainians were making with an eye to integrating with Europe that was making him crazy and the exposure that they were doing in Ukraine also of Russian oligarchs and their assets, and their co-option of various politicians was extremely unnerving to him and those around him.

And so, again, the ways in which autocrats and authoritarians are vulnerable to these investments and the importance on the other side of the investments in the rule of law and finding
political will among governmental partners like we had among many
in Ukraine, but not all, that's going to be key also as we think
through the reconstruction, the humanitarian assistance. That
anti-corruption prism needs to be in everything we do in Ukraine,
not just the post-war period.

Ms. Titus. I appreciate that and I look forward to working
with you.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady's time has --


Chairman Meeks. Time has expired. I now recognize

Representative Claudia Tenney for five minutes.

Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and fellow New Yorker.

Chairman Meeks. From the great state of New York.

Ms. Tenney. The great state, the greatest state of New York.

Chairman Meeks. Of all time.

Ms. Tenney. Of all time in history. It's much better than

Tennessee.

Thank you, Administrator Power. I really appreciate you
being here and I just want to -- a couple quick things I want
to just -- first of all, I was happy to support the additional
assistance for our military that included aid to Ukraine, and
like all Americans and taxpayers, you know, I want to know how
that money is going to be monitored and make sure that every dollar
is tracked -- obviously, the American people are concerned about
that -- to ensure that it goes to the best benefit of the Ukrainian people and I can report back to my district knowing -- seeing these horrific images and making sure that that transparent accountability is going to be something that you're going to be providing on a regular basis so that we can track this new investment that we have put in that was part of our new military supplement.

Ms. Power. I think the question is will those --

Ms. Tenney. Yeah. How can -- what are the metrics you're going to be using and how could -- where will we see these on an ongoing basis? Will you be coming here? Is it going to be something on a website? Are we going to be reporting that to Congress?

We just want to make sure every dollar is really going to the Ukrainian people, and people are concerned about the mismanagement, potentially, of that, not because of USAID program but because of some of the past history we're seeing with --

Ms. Power. Absolutely. No, I think it's -- well, let me just say that I really appreciated that the House supplemental bill wrote in provisions, at least as it related to the direct budget support.

I believe it's every 90 days Secretary Blinken and myself, perhaps other interagency colleagues, have to report back as to how that very substantial infusion of assistance would be spent.
Direct budget support is not something that USAID generally does.

We have just made -- $500 billion has already been obligated -- an additional $500 million going because of the Ukrainian government's burn rate. So I think it's -- we're building --

Ms. Tenney. I think the question is how do we track that so --

Ms. Power. No, no, I understand. I mean, we are channeling it through the World Bank that has policies and procedures in place from doing this kind of thing around the world. So that is our partner of choice in this instance.

I think then there's a question about the humanitarian assistance, which is, you know, being largely channeled through the large international humanitarian partners that are used to our tracking requirements where we're constantly -- you know, you've seen it operating in other theaters in the world -- and then the investments that we are making in Ukraine's own institutions to do that tracking.

Now, that may sound counterintuitive but it's --

Ms. Tenney. Is that a USAID function?

Ms. Power. Yes, that is a huge part of our governance of programming.


Now, another -- I just want to quickly -- since you were just
at the ASEAN conference, how are you -- how is USAID navigating development assistance in the portfolio with relation to the coup and the junta government in Burma -- Myanmar -- since this is a huge issue for me and the almost 5,000 -- a little over 5,000, actually -- Burmese refugees in my community?

We are tracking this and want to be -- obviously, we'd like great outcomes. But is there something that was -- I hope it was prime on the calendar and on the agenda in the ASEAN conference.

Ms. Power. Well, first, to say USAID, of course, provides humanitarian assistance through international nongovernmental partners and stays clear of the junta.

With the coup, we -- and you know this, I think, because we have maybe spoken about this before, but we reprogrammed assistance that we had -- where we have been working with various ministries to civil society actors and others, holding those ministries to account.

With regard to ASEAN, it's no secret that that is a divided grouping on the question of how hard to push. You know, I think some countries have gone further than they had in the past to stand up to the coup, to criticize the coup, but some -- and some, again, similarly want to assert independence from the PRC.

Others, and I probably don't have to name them, are in a very -- feel themselves in some respects in a dependent
relationship to the PRC and are more reluctant to raise their
voices in ways that we would like.

Ms. Tenney. Thank you. I just have a quick question. I don't have much time. Since you and I, I didn't realize, have
this -- Yugoslavia in common since I used to live in the former
Yugoslavia and work for the former Yugoslav consulate, and I know
you did some pretty incredible work there during the war.

I'm concerned now about what's happening in the Balkans and
the influence, and one of my colleagues had mentioned, you know, the -- what is USAID doing about the People's Republic of China's
engagement and what's happening with the Belt and Road Initiative
there where that influence is coming into the Balkans in a heavy
way?

Are we focusing on making sure that aid is getting to that
region to ensure that the Chinese and the PRC is not influencing
them to make them comfortable, as my colleague referred to
earlier? I think I'm out of time.

Thank you. I yield.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady is out of time.

Ms. Power. I'll submit a response.

Ms. Tenney. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Chairman Meeks. And let me say this to the administrator,
because I'm going to have to leave and Mr. Malinowski is going
to come to chair the remainder of the hearing. Some of us and
other members of the committee have a meeting with the prime minister of Greece -- those that are on that committee. So I'm going to have to leave now and probably will not get back in time before you conclude your testimony.

But I just wanted to take this time to -- again, to say thank you for taking your time and answering all of the committee's questions and be willing to stay here.

We have had to juggle back and forth. People don't know behind the scenes what was taking place. But you and your staff made every effort that you could be here, be here in a timely fashion, and stay to answer every member's question, and I really appreciate that and your effort and your diligence and how you -- you know, your values that you lead the world with from USAID's positioning.

You are the one, you know, who can show who America is. They see America on the ground, and that's why I'm proud to wear your cap, USAID, from America to the rest of the world. So I want to thank you and thank you for your being here and all that you do. I'm so proud when I travel and see the work of USAID around the world. Thank you.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And you're a great ambassador but we need to update your swag.

[Laughter.]
Mr. Malinowski. [Presiding.] All right. We will go now to Representative Susan Wild of Pennsylvania for five minutes.

Ms. Wild. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator Power. Susan Wild here. I represent one of the largest Ukrainian-American communities in the United States.

Over the course of this devastating invasion, I've been struck by the strength and the resilience of my constituents, even as they face the anguish of knowing that their family members' lives are under threat at every moment and, in many cases, not knowing where they are from time to time.

We know that -- from the U.N. that more than 6 million Ukrainians have sought refuge in neighboring countries and an additional more than 8 million Ukrainians have been displaced within Ukraine and those numbers are, I'm sure, constantly subject to change.

And as you know, we have worked very hard with the administration and, thankfully, on a bipartisan basis for the most part to provide historic levels of assistance to the Ukrainian people.

In terms of the humanitarian assistance overseen by USAID what have you found to be the greatest challenge in implementing and delivering the aid?

Ms. Power. Thank you for your generosity and your
leadership on behalf of your constituents and on behalf of all
the people of Ukraine.

The biggest challenge is Putin using starvation as a weapon
of war and denying the ability of wounded civilians -- you know,
wounded anybody to get out of besieged areas, and while, you know,
humanitarians want nothing more than to be in the most dangerous
places and to be accessing the people most in need, when, you
know, Russian forces say, no, you can't travel -- we won't
 guarantee your security -- you know, makes it really difficult
to overcome that. So I would put that atop the list by far.

Ms. Wild. So the failure to be able to have and rely upon
humanitarian corridors, I assume, is what would really help
tremendously?

Ms. Power. I would just put it in its more active -- in
its more active form, which is just the Russian Federation's
denial of food, medicine, and water and the denial of evacuation
to civilians in besieged areas.

Ms. Wild. So, you know, the Russians have also shown that
the age of the Ukrainian doesn't matter when it comes to their
viciousness.

Have you been able to develop any kind of strategy to help
ensure that children, in particular, receive continuity of health
and education services, including those who have been displaced
to neighboring countries? Can you address that at all, the
Ms. Power. Well, first, just to offer a fact that I shared in my opening statement, which is just that two-thirds of Ukraine's children have been displaced -- two-thirds, which is, obviously, a higher displacement rate than of any other grouping and, presumably, because, you know, parents looking to move their kids before the conflict comes to them or as the conflict comes to them.

So I would say, of course, children are -- along with the elderly and those with medical needs are atop the list of vulnerable groups and groups that our broader humanitarian assistance inside Ukraine and that provided by our partners in neighboring countries target.

Then there's the whole set of protection questions around unaccompanied children where they're -- you know, in some cases you'll have kids, you know, under the age of 15 who are sent across the border to safety, you know, while the parents may still have to -- feel they have to stay behind to take care of aging parents of their own.

And so, you know, that programming has been gradually ramped up over time, again, particularly, in neighboring countries. But there, we look to UNICEF as our key implementing partner inside Ukraine as well as the Ukrainian ministries of health, of social service protection -- social protection, rather, and of education
to ensure that continuity of service that you mentioned.

Ms. Wild. Thanks. I want to switch gears, just in the interest of time. I want to talk about USAID's global labor program, which I think is a program that's very much under discussed, and, specifically, I wanted to advance an idea that I had posed with Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman when she recently testified before our committee, asking her to take back to the administration the idea of hosting a global summit supporting the rights and safety of union organizers in the labor movement with representatives from the countries where the labor movement was identified by the ITUC as coming the most under attack in 2021, which would include Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Myanmar, the Philippines, Turkey, and Zimbabwe.

And I hope that you will take this idea back to the administration. I don't know whether Assistant Deputy Secretary Sherman has done so. But I really would urge the administration to consider this proposal and the powerful message that hosting this type of event would send.

And thank you. With that, unfortunately, my time is up and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Malinowski. Thank you. Next, I'll call on Representative Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Meuser. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you very much,
Ambassador. Nice to see you again. So I'd like to discuss a little bit the root causes strategy that we have spoken about once before. But, first, just to bring up, outline, summarize the crisis that exists at the southern border. I know it must weigh on you as it weighs on a lot of us the fact that we really have a -- quite a crisis taking place. I mean, just last year alone 1.66 million unlawful crossings, you know, and in the previous administration there was 488,000 average over a year. I mean, it's almost four times more in the first year of the Biden administration.

You know, sadly, so many of these folks are coming across -- false pretense. Cartels -- you know, we all hear the stories. Ambassadors from Nicaragua and elsewhere speak about that they're very unhappy about it, to say the least, having a brain drain, losing a lot of young people, the type of debts, the abuses that take place along the trek, again, the -- you know, the level of drugs coming into our country.

So your whole root cause initiative, I think, is very important. But may I just ask you this? Is that something that -- and I've asked Secretary Mayorkas this -- is this something that is discussed with the President and is weighed in on and saying, you know, we really need some new plans, a new policy here to correct this situation?

Ms. Power. Well, needless to say, there are a lot of factors
that would cause any individual to migrate but I -- and I know implicit in your question is that you think there is one factor bigger than the others.

But I would also note that Latin America and the Caribbean have 29 percent of the COVID infections globally. The pandemic has been really, really hard on that part of the world. I'm really struck, Congressman, that just my colleague, Marcela Escobari, our assistant administrator, was just at the Darien Gap and just -- I wrote down these numbers. One hundred and forty thousand individuals transited the Darien Gap in 2021, 102,000 in the entire seven-year period before, and this gets to just the changing complexion of who is coming to the border.

So my root causes strategy is in these three countries where there's also an uptick, of course, again, I think, related to some of the very difficult economic circumstances and some of the downturns in governance and the rule of law in a couple of countries. But this is a broader phenomenon. I mean, this is where you are seeing people voting their desperation with their feet.

Mr. Meuser. I appreciate that. Thank you for your response. I'm not sure if Representative Green brought up earlier the initiative -- a foreign aid idea to accomplish the goals through the -- through a program providing financial support and tax breaks and some other financial subsidies for companies
to move from China, for instance, or from Asia to Central America.

Are you familiar with that bill -- an insourcing bill?

Ms. Power. He brought up his nearshoring bill but didn't get into the details.

Mr. Meuser. Okay. I'd like to send you the details and get your thoughts on it to see if that's something that you would work into your root cause initiative. And as I stated last time that you testified, if there's anything that I could try to help with -- trade missions, trips to Central America, working on bills that the administration or you feel are essential even from a regulatory standpoint, I think that's very, very crucial to have such a plan in place over the long term. So I do applaud you for that.

Let me -- I have limited time, but just quickly on China and the Belt and Road -- the Belt and Road, my understanding, issues about $4.8 billion a year for different types of aid and financial investment.

U.S. foreign aid is $51 billion a year. So a big difference. We have been at it longer and, you know, we're just the U.S. and, you know, they aren't. Are we using our funding in a manner that is reflective or at least competing where the Belt and Road competes?

Mr. Malinowski. All right. Time has expired so if you could --
Mr. Meuser. Thanks. I yield. Thank you, Chairman.

Ms. Power. If you'd respond in writing.

The chair now recognizes Representative Brad Sherman of California.

Mr. Sherman. Thank you. The whole world is transfixed by the humanitarian disaster in Ukraine. But 500,000 people have died in northern Ethiopia.

As you note in your testimony, the majority of those facing famine like conditions in northern Ethiopia and 90 percent of Tigray's population needs humanitarian assistance. Right now, maybe 3 to 5 percent of the amount of food that's needed is being allowed in and this is not because humanitarian organizations don't have the food and the capacity. It's because the Ethiopian government lets only a few percent in and the Eritrean government lets nothing in.

Back in December, the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Molly Phee, testified before our committee that the State Department had decided to refrain at the current moment from making a public determination on atrocities, human rights, but most significantly, whether this is a genocide or an attempt at genocide.

Just last month, Secretary Blinken was sitting where you are now and he testified that a legal determination will, in fact, be made on those issues by the State Department. It may not be
your exact portfolio but there's very few people in America who
have your background.

In your testimony you say that addressing these atrocities
in Ethiopia is a major top priority. If you have a government
or, in this case, two governments deliberately starving hundreds
of thousands of civilians to death, does that constitute a
genocide or attempted genocide?

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congressman. Obviously, my past
life -- this is a question -- questions of what constitutes a
genocide or how courts have adjudicated that over time is
something I've studied a lot.

But, as you noted, it is not something as USAID administrator
that I'm involved in in terms of making that determination, and
you have raised it with Secretary Blinken. I believe he's given
you the assurance that that determination will come.

I don't think the question of, again, whether one is using
that -- whether that legal determination is made is influencing
in any way the U.S. government's posture toward the Ethiopian
government. In other words, we are acting in just the same way
we would be irrespective of --

Mr. Sherman. I would point out that in this room I've
suggested ways to pressure the Ethiopian and, especially,
particularly, the Eritrean government, which has, of course, the
ports that could be used, particularly by interrupting sea traffic
going, you know, even hundreds of miles away from Eritrea.

And so there -- I think a determination of genocide would spur our administration to do more than simply send harsh letters to Addis Ababa and Asmara.

You visited the refugee camp in Sudan where Tigrayan refugees are also hungry. Are we going to increase our aid to those refugees?

Ms. Power. Well, we are -- as part of the broader package of assistance that we hope is going to be voted on by the Senate, we are able now to have additional humanitarian assistance to meet global needs that are profound.

And just to come back to where you started, you do have a million people facing famine in Ethiopia by the end of June. I mean, we're past mid-May. This is upon us and that includes 700,000 people in Tigray.

So, you know, I think the pressure by the United States has been a belated but important factor in why the number of trucks that have gotten into Tigray in recent days has increased. We got 320 trucks in this past week.

But, Congressman, as you know better than anybody, we need 500 trucks a week if we are going to meet those food needs.

Mr. Sherman. And I would say that Congress should provide the money but only the administration can provide the pressure and only the administration can use the U.S. Navy to put additional
pressure on the two countries involved, and without that pressure
-- you got a certain number of trucks in with oil pressure. We
can do more.

I yield back.

Ms. Power. Thank you.

Mr. Malinowski. The chair will now recognize

Representative August Pfluger of Texas.

Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Chair.

Administrator, I've got a series of questions so I'm going
to try to get through all of them. Let me focus in on the restoring
U.S. climate leadership part of the testimony.

Who are we trying to catch on the Climate Leadership Board
to restore?

Ms. Power. Well, what I'm trying to do as USAID
administrator is meet the colossal needs, as support those on
the ground who are meeting the colossal needs caused by increased
flooding, drought, humanitarian event emergency.

Mr. Pfluger. Who's the worst actor on climate issues in
the world right now? Your opinion?

Ms. Power. Well, if you are talking about the world's
largest emitter, that would be the PRC.

Mr. Pfluger. Okay. So how important is energy to USAID's
mission? Food, energy, shelter -- how important is energy
delivery to the areas that need it?
Ms. Power. Well, energy poverty is something particularly in sub-Saharan Africa that is setting back everything from health care provision to education. So it's really --

Mr. Pfluger. The estimates -- and I agree with that. The estimates I've seen are that over the past 10 years 1 billion people have been lifted out of poverty with energy that they previously didn't have. One billion people. So do you think that renewables will provide baseload -- are capable of providing baseload power generation right now?

Ms. Power. Well, I think if you look at Power Africa and the work that it is doing, it is finding a way to generate the kind of electrification that developing countries are craving.

Mr. Pfluger. But what -- do you think that renewable power --

Ms. Power. With a combination of --

Mr. Pfluger. Is renewable power by itself capable of baseload capacity?

Ms. Power. Yeah. I think the markets are speaking on this. I think the technologies are evolving. You know, where things will be in a couple of years or in five years, I don't know. But right now, it's a combination of energy sources that are being deployed.

Mr. Pfluger. Mr. Kerry sat here and he said, no, he does
not think baseload power or that renewables can provide baseload power. So what percentage decrease in temperatures do you think will be generated with your -- just worldwide global temperatures will be generated with the USAID's several billion dollars into -- I think it's, you know, the words I'm looking for here are the climate financing gap and mitigation and adaptation. What's the temperature decrease that we're going to see?

Ms. Power. Well, with respect, Congressman, every increment that any one of us can contribute to the broader effort to keep emissions to 1.5 percent or 1.5 degrees or, you know, any increment as close to that as we can get, even if it's a tiny contribution, is a relevant contribution. Otherwise, we'd have a collective action plan.

Mr. Pfluger. On the flip side of that, what will a kilowatt hour cost when these initiatives are input in sub-Saharan Africa, because you brought that up?

Ms. Power. Yeah.

Mr. Pfluger. What will the kilowatt hour cost with --

Ms. Power. You know what, Congressman? I feel, to some extent, that this exchange -- you know, I could see maybe five years ago having an exchange of this nature. But the thing is the countries in which we work want to make these shifts.

Mr. Pfluger. Okay.

Ms. Power. This is not our ideology or our doctrine.
Mr. Pfluger. But what are --

Ms. Power. No, I mean, what I'm saying is what makes sense is to listen to the communities in which we are working, the partner governments, in some cases, or the energy ministers. They are interested in saving money. To save money over time they're interested in using solar and wind. They think that is a really sound financial investment. Turns out the entire private sector is actually voting with its feet in that manner as well.

Mr. Pfluger. Well, I think that's -- I think that's debatable.

Ms. Power. So we can have a debate about, you know, the cost benefit here or there. I think it's an important debate to have but what I'm saying is that --

Mr. Pfluger. I'm going to reclaim -- I'm going to reclaim my time, Administrator. Thank you.

Ms. Power. Sorry.

Mr. Pfluger. I felt like that was slightly condescending on the -- on your part for the exchange that we could have had five years ago. The point is that you said something that's very interesting, that the markets are speaking and I think that that's where it should be, that the market should speak, and when we're talking about energy it's not just the price.

It's not just the availability in certain areas like
sub-Saharan Africa or the Indian subcontinent. But it's also the
dependability. It's also the ability to get it there, and I'm very
certain about some of the rhetoric here and I ask you detailed
questions because there's some big goals in here and I'm just
not sure that USAID is the right venue for some of these
goals if we're not able to actually deliver affordable and
reliable energy.

Mr. Malinowski. Time has expired.

Mr. Pfluger. I yield back.

Mr. Malinowski. The chair recognizes Representative Omar of
Minnesota for five minutes.

Ms. Omar. Thank you, Chairman.

Ambassador Power, if we can just -- if I can just piggyback on
some of the exchange that was just taking place. I do agree
with you that this is really what many African leaders are asking
for.

Africa has 17 of the 20 most climate vulnerable countries and,
in general, most countries lack the infrastructure and
resources needed to adopt and adapt to green energy technology
initiatives. Some African governments urge that transitional
framework will be required to help capitalize and eventually wind
down their reliance on gas and other fossil fuels.

What exactly is USAID doing to help prepare African
governments that have identified deficit in infrastructure,
capital, and other resources to make a much needed green energy transition and what challenges have you identified and how we, in Congress, can help you overcome that?

Ms. Power. Thank you so much.

I think, Congresswoman, your question was focused, as was the prior exchange, mainly on mitigation and I guess what I would say is, in that regard, a lot of the work that we do is not, you know, again, grand infrastructure projects, per se, but on mitigation, working with countries where their regulatory frameworks are adjusted to reduce emissions, where their own -- you know, everything from, you know, sort of greenhouse gas rules, their power plant rules, their transportation infrastructure rules, guidelines, design features, where the emissions question or their nationally determined contributions is the filter through which they are making judgments about how the regulatory cost benefit analysis is done. So that's a kind of technical role.

Then, of course, as you know well, in Power Africa -- and this allows me to respond to the last point that was made by the prior speaker -- I mean, often it is, you know, USAID with grant financing that might be, you know, at the foundation of a pyramid then allowing a private sector actor to come in and feel more comfortable bearing less risk where USAID bears the first layer of risk.
You asked about the challenge, though, and there I might just pivot because, strangely, it hasn't come up that much today, which is adaptation is the challenge. You know, I mean, climate change is touching every single area of human development on planet Earth, and in countries that are -- where the poverty rates are high to begin with and people are living on less than $2 a day, you know, that extra week of drought or that flooding, you know, that washes away the gains of this year's harvest, that's an existential set of questions -- that bridge that disappears in a hurricane that is the sixth hurricane, you know, over a two-year period.

I mean, so, again, that's where the technical advice in part about, again, how to how to build, just as FEMA is doing here, with building codes and other features but how to build in a resilience to the infrastructure that is being built, let's say, with support from the multilateral development banks and others.

Ms. Omar. And I'm curious, Ambassador, if I can also just interject and maybe have you expand on some of that sustainability and adaptation that is needed.

We know that food insecurity is also a huge threat and we know that a third of the world's wheat supply used to come from Russia and Ukraine, and the Russian illegal invasion of Ukraine has now exasperated an already dire food insecurity and food crises that are taking place.
So part of the supplemental budget that the House passed includes resources in helping address the food insecurity. How can that be used to create some infrastructure in countries in Africa and other parts of the world like Yemen and others that are experiencing food insecurity?

Ms. Power. Well, first, it's extremely important that the supplemental written by you all here and pending passage, we hope, in the Senate was written to allow that humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of people in Ukraine who are suffering but also to meet the needs of people who are suffering from the fallout from the war in Ukraine.

And that's really, really important because humanitarian assistance, unfortunately, is going to be a big part of the response that we are going to need to mobilize globally.

And why do I say unfortunately? Because that's not the same as development. You have a dollar, you'd much prefer to be investing that dollar in a manner that was going to produce a more sustainable gain and we're looking at how to do humanitarian assistance in a way that advances that objective.

But, additionally, there is the food security resources along with the humanitarian assistance, and I think that's where we want to look at more strategic policies and programs because this is the first infusion of resources to meet a crisis that predated the war in Ukraine and so how to do so in a manner where
agriculture ministries and others are making the sort of systemic investments that we need them to make. Thank you.

Ms. Omar. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. Malinowski. We want to try to get everybody a chance.

So we'll turn now to Representative Young Kim of California.

Mrs. Kim of California. Thank you, Chairman, and I want to thank you, Administrator Power, for joining us today. We're almost coming to an end of this hearing, but I do want to go back to an issue that you had conversed with Brad Sherman earlier.

After more than a year of fighting between the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the Ethiopian government, the humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia remains exceptionally dire with 7 million people still suffering acute food insecurity.

In late March, we saw some hopeful signs when the government and the TPLF announced a humanitarian truce to allow aid to flow into those affected regions. Since July 2021 the U.N. has said that a hundred trucks must enter Tigray per day to meet the humanitarian needs.

But I heard you saying that we need about 500 trucks a day. Well, in the month and half since the Ethiopian government announced a humanitarian truce on March 24, less than 300 total trucks have entered Tigray. That is way below what is needed
to meet the humanitarian needs there.

So with that backdrop, my question is how is the administration working with the U.N. and other international partners to address the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia in the Tigray region and what points or pressure or leverage can we use to ensure that international aid is able to reach the vulnerable civilians who need it the most?

Ms. Power. Thank you, Representative and I think we have had an exchange on this in the past so I really appreciate you staying on top of it because I think there was a temptation in certain circles to say, oh, humanitarian truce -- you know, maybe somehow the problem has been addressed.

Just to be clear, I might have misspoken earlier, but it is 500 trucks a week that are needed, not a day, but we're still -- your point is still valid and the point I made earlier is still valid, which is that we are nowhere near those numbers and we have, again, 700,000 people in Tigray facing grave, grave peril.

We did just this past week see 320 trucks go. That is more than had gone in the entire prior period since the March 24th truce. So my team on the ground, Congresswoman, is seeing some signs of an opening, and I met with the minister of finance -- the Ethiopian minister of finance when he was here a few weeks ago. He indicated much more personal engagement. You know, I
think, again, there's small signs of a shift.

But the easy way to show whether or not you're using food
as a weapon of war is to let food in and not only food, because
I think we focus a lot on the trucks. There is a need for cash,
for telecommunications equipment, for fuel. I mean, Tigray
cannot be on -- it needs to be on international life support at
the moment, given the acute needs, but it cannot be on
international life support forever. Actually opening up the area
so that real life can resume and goods can flow and markets can
open, that is the only way to deal with the food crisis of this
nature.

You asked what we can do. I think more diplomatic pressure,
including by our Special Envoy and by Secretary Blinken and
others. I think the phone call that President Biden and Prime
Minister Abiy had, at least it correlates with a period in which
more progress was made.

So our high level engagement is, clearly, important.

They're looking at the international financial institutions and
looking for relief there in light of the food crisis that Ethiopia
as a whole is facing and there, again, to make clear that everybody
deserves food. Everybody deserves access to seeds.

Mrs. Kim of California. Well, let me -- let me just continue
on that conversation. But let me further ask you about what is
the biggest impediments, if any, to scaling up that humanitarian
assistance in Tigray and what role is the government of Ethiopia, the regional authorities, and TPLF playing in response -- in response efforts and, similarly, blocking access into the region?

What are the greatest areas of need on the ground? You mentioned -- you know, when we were talking about bringing some -- this humanitarian needs, from December 2021 to late March of this year, there has been zero humanitarian convoys entered into Tigray. So what are the biggest impediments?

Ms. Power. I think the -- it has been the throughout this whole period the government of Ethiopia's either obstruction or unwillingness to do the work to ensure that local and regional actors allow those trucks to pass.

I think the local and regional actors in Afar and Amhara also have of late been difficult to work with and, you know, there are reports about the TPLF, you know, commandeering some of the supplies that are meant for civilians. So every single actor, you know, must act responsibly and with far more urgency than we have seen on the ground up to this point.

Mrs. Kim of California. Let me put in one more question regarding --

Mr. Malinowski. Your time has expired.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Mr. Malinowski. All right. Now, the chair recognizes Representative Andy Levin of Michigan for five minutes.

Mr. Levin. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thanks so much for being here, Ambassador Power. It's great to see you.

So under the Biden administration, more than 20,000 people have been removed or deported to Haiti in the last several months.

I've called on the administration to halt these flights as I believe these deportations exacerbate an already dire security situation and places these migrants at severe risk.

Now, those deportations are not your policy matter. But my question to you is whether USAID has developed any procedures for tracking or supporting those removed to Haiti and is the agency providing assistance and support to ensure their well-being.

Ms. Power. Thank you. I will have to get back to you on the specifics and the latest on the numbers of the amount of support. But at the outset, we worked with the International Organization of Migration to support their efforts to integrate some of those who had been returned. But I'd have to get back to you with the specifics.

Mr. Levin. Okay. No problem.

Ms. Power. Our emphasis is on conditions in Haiti for the general population, as you know.
Mr. Levin. Yes. No problem. I would really appreciate that. So Haiti was, rightly, chosen as one of four priority countries that will receive dedicated resources through the Global Fragility Act, a bipartisan bill that aims to elevate peace building and conflict prevention.

Both through the regular budget and under the Global Fragility Act framework, you're tasked with helping to provide U.S. assistance to a government that lacks credibility and has rampant corruption and ties with gangs that are perpetuating violence in Haiti.

Do you expect you'll be able to spend newly appropriated dollars effectively and GFA-specific funds effectively while the political situation remains extra constitutional? And which groups and parties are being consulted within Haiti to ensure that GFA implementation is starting off on the right foot, given the difficult political situation in the country?

Ms. Power. Well, the announcement of the Global Fragility Act countries, the process that gave rise to all of that, took some time. The announcement is in the scheme of the U.S. government relatively recent, so I don't think yet that we have a breakdown or anything close to it on the organizations that we would be partnering with.

But very much taking on board the premise of your question about the major legitimacy challenges around the current
political structures. You know, there are ways to support the cause of the Global Fragility Act that don't entail working with the government, indeed, working with some of the very partners that you have in mind.

And, certainly, you know, as we see rampant gang violence and a level of physical insecurity for the Haitian people, I mean, where whole parts of the capital city now are deemed off limits. You know, there's plenty of work to go around.

But on the specifics, I think we're still developing that. I hope the consultation has been as broad as you would wish to see, but that's something I can be more specific on when I check in with our mission.

Mr. Levin. Okay. Great. So let me switch to migration. I was glad to see last year's announcement that USAID would be supporting the implementation of the Biden administration's root causes strategy and the collaborative migration management strategy to tackle migration in the Northern Triangle.

I'd like to hear more about how this work is developing a year on and specifically about how these strategies are focused on the unique needs of marginalized and particularly vulnerable groups. For example, we know that women and children on the move are uniquely vulnerable to gender-based violence and we have heard stories about how racism impacts migrants like the differential treatment Haitians received at the border, but throughout the
region and at the southern border.

So how does USAID's implementation of the root causes strategy address these unique and specific needs and you have adequate resources to do so effectively? Do you need any more help from us or, you know, what's the situation there?

Ms. Power. Thank you. Well, I think there is a request in the '23 budget very specific to this region asking for a ramp up of resources in keeping with President Biden's four-year plan, which he announced at the outset of his administration.

I mean, I think, not by way of caveat because I don't like these kinds of caveats, but it is important context that the decision to suspend assistance by the previous administration did impact more than 80 percent of USAID's projects and many of them shut down entirely.

People were laid off. So we are still scaling up. Nonetheless, I think the vaccine distribution program has been heroic, which reflects the kind of partnership with the ministries of health, distributing more than 10 million vaccines, reaching people with humanitarian assistance and creating tens of thousands of jobs.

I can give you the breakdown per country. But I also draw your attention, finally, briefly -- sorry, Mr. Chair -- to the legal pathways. The H-2B announcement was made yesterday, I believe, by the Department of Homeland Security.
We are really beefing up our efforts to ensure that individuals from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala are part of that pipeline to pursue lawful migration to this country because -- and they can also bring those resources back home.

Mr. Levin. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Mr. Malinowski. Thank you. I will now turn to Representative Ronny Jackson of Texas for five minutes.

Mr. Jackson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator Power, thank you for being here today. I continue to be disappointed and unimpressed with the --

Mr. Malinowski. Is your mic on, Ronnie?

Mr. Jackson. Over here.

Mr. Malinowski. Yeah, maybe try another chair.

Mr. Jackson. How about that? Perfect. All right. Thank you for being here today. I'll just start over here. I continue to be a little bit disappointed and unimpressed with the Biden administration's foreign policy agenda.

China's utilizing soft power diplomacy through COVID vaccine distribution and through the Belt and Road Initiative. Russia continues to attack Ukraine civilians and destroys a country. Iran is reportedly increasing its demands of the U.S. and our partners in the JCPOA negotiations, which are actually still being proctored by Russia.
Closer to home, the southern border is facing a constant stream of record-breaking numbers of illegal immigrants and deadly drugs like fentanyl. Across all corners, global leadership is sorely needed and the United States under the Biden administration is missing the mark, in my opinion.

I hope that we see strong leadership and better policy coming from USAID and the State Department, going forward. But that said, I'd just -- I'd like to ask you a question. You said one of your biggest priorities is to break down the barriers to make it easier for different kinds of organizations to work with USAID.

Last year, just 10 groups received over half of all the contract funding. So there seems to be a limited opportunity for nontraditional partners to work with the agency.

It can take more than a year for USAID to vet a new partner. Long time lines and red tape does and will discourage organizations, especially smaller organizations, from working with USAID.

What specific steps are you taking to shorten this time to get new organizations vetted and improved and also what specific regulation changes could Congress make to speed this process up?

Ms. Power. Thank you so much for that question. So I think already Congress, through the New Partners Initiative and the Local Works program, have created dedicated pools of funding in
a sense where that funding can't be accessed unless and until it goes to local partners. I want to come back, actually, to your opening statement, if I could, if I have a second.

But the -- I think that the -- we are launching within USAID as a whole kind of desludging anti -- paperwork burdens -- anti -- administrative burdens -- effort that is going to touch very much on the contracting process so that these 150-page contracts, which disproportionately are going to exclude the ability to work with local organizations, that those are not, again, the run of the mill.

You know, some of the big contracts that you mentioned go to large humanitarian organizations that are operating in all the countries of the world. So there's some amount of that that, I think, is an important feature of American foreign policy, especially when it's branded as it is with the World Food Programme and others.

And then if I just may say on vaccinating the world, which was just a part of your opening statement, I do think that has been a major foreign policy success for this administration. You are seeing it in the soft power return that is evidenced in polls, but above all, you're seeing it in people who've been inoculated, thus reducing the risk of variants, not entirely.

So I'm hopeful that the House and Senate will give us
additional resources to continue vaccinating the world rather than saying on the one hand that the PRC, you know, is out there doing vaccine diplomacy and then depriving us of the resources to do a job that is actually working for us and for the American people. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. Jackson. Thank you. I have one more quick question.

I'm extremely concerned over the Biden administration's stance towards American energy as well. Our executive branch should be supporting and encouraging domestic energy production.

Instead, the administration is shunning American oil and gas while simultaneously soliciting Venezuelan oil, for example.

I was alarmed by reports of a directive sent to all embassies that no new money could support any project with fossil fuels overseas.

I'm especially concerned with the potential effects on Power Africa that this policy change will have. As the world is looking for alternatives other than Russian oil and gas, the United States needs to be the country that others rely on for energy.

Administrator Power, in parts of the developing world where energy access is not widespread do you believe our priority should be combating energy poverty, you know, in any way we can instead of imposing more restrictions on useful energy sources?

Ms. Power. I think Power Africa, you know, is proceeding to address energy poverty, recognizing, of course, that there
are a lot of legacy programs and recognizing the need for base energy and so forth.

I mean, you know, I don't -- I think that right now we are not seeing our efforts to address energy poverty offset by the countries that we're working with's interest in transitioning to renewables, which they believe are ultimately going to be cheaper for their people and particularly off-grid installations of solar, hydro, et cetera, that don't require as much financial investment in infrastructure.

Mr. Jackson. Thank you. I appreciate your answers. My time is up. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Power. Thank you. Nice to see you again.

Mr. Malinowski. The chair recognizes Representative Sara Jacobs of California and praises her for her patience.

Ms. Jacobs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator Power, for staying for all of us to be able to ask questions.

You know, many of my colleagues have discussed what we have seen, Russia using hunger as a weapon of war and its invasion's impact on global food security. It's why I introduced a bipartisan resolution recognizing the impact of conflict on global hunger and why I'm grateful for everything you and the administration are doing to address global food insecurity around the world.
I wanted to talk with you about the Global Fragility Act. Last week, I chaired a Foreign Affairs subcommittee hearing on the implementation of the act, where in addition to State and DOD, Assistant to the Administrator Rob Jenkins testified on USAID's behalf. We discussed lessons learned on Mozambique and coastal West Africa, the resources most needed for successful implementation and the importance of localization.

So I, first, wanted to ask you about resources. I understand there is a deadline to use that fiscal year '21 funds. How does the administration plan to utilize these funds and when can we be expected to be notified of this plan?

Ms. Power. You would think, given how long you'd waited, that I would be absolutely sure I could answer your question. But, unfortunately, I'd have to get back to you on that. I don't actually -- I know that, again, the country selection process -- there were lively debates that took a long time on that. What I don't know is where we are on country planning.

Ms. Jacobs. Okay. No problem. Then you may or may not know the answer to this, but the multi-donor Global Fragility Fund is right now included within the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, despite the intent of GFA for the Global Fragility Fund to be a separate and distinct fund.

I know State's not here, who has some of the management of these funds, but I was wondering if you could speak to the
justification for not seeking the creation of a distinct fund and how will you ensure implementation is not hindered and were able to properly solicit contributions to the Global Fragility Fund?

Ms. Power. I don't have the answer. I believe the answer, though -- as you know, USAID's budget process kind of runs -- its collaborative with the State Department runs through the State's F Bureau. I think the logic of that, from recall, is some idea of integration and concentrating resources and being able to double down so we actually show a return.

But, again, the specific logic and whether that's a -- yeah, I don't have that --

Ms. Jacobs. No problem. I'll give you one that you for sure can answer.

Ms. Power. I'm not sure. I'm running -- I'm losing confidence.

Ms. Jacobs. No, all good. You know, I know that localization has been a big priority of yours and I really thank you for your leadership on that and for everything you're doing on locally-led development.

We have heard, in a bipartisan way, I think, today, somewhat surprisingly, how important that is to improve our development assistance. So I wanted to ask you, you know, how does USAID's reliance on a small number of large government contractors carry
out -- to carry out its program impact our ability to be able to address the challenges we're facing, and how can we reduce this reliance on large international government contractors as we look to increase the use of local experts and encourage local partners to really be in the lead of these programs?

Ms. Power. Well, this builds on Congressman Jackson's questions you said nicely. I mean, I think that, you know, one would have to do a side by -- you know, it's the counterfactual we never have, right, of what is the actual impact in a community of going through a local organization in the moment rather than something that might be multi-year and, you know, bigger sums at work as international organizations.

You know, that might be their -- their proposals might entail something that scales more easily. So, again, that counterfactual isn't available to us program by program, but what -- my biggest concern about the overweighting that both of you have referred to and the reason that we are making a hard push on this including by trying to increase the number of individuals we have at USAID at our missions who can sit down side by side with local organizations and help them jump through the hoops that they have to jump through in order to contract or get a grant with USAID, because no matter -- even if we desludge and reduce burdens that's still -- those requirements are still stringent for all the reasons that we also care about -- reducing fraud,
waste, and abuse.

But my biggest concern is not that side by side. It's the lasting question of whether we are doing sustainable development -- you know, whether these organizations -- you know, we can say, well, it's costly in the here and now to make an investment in their accounting capability or in their ability, you know, to meet these stringent requirements.

But then these organizations don't get the resources or maybe they're a subgrantee, which is -- which would be progress, but it's still not the same as being a grantee themselves, and all that overhead exists in other organizations and all that accountability but they then don't obtain that internal infrastructure to do work over time.

So when we close our missions, as we always hope to do, what have we left in our place? And when those international organizations go away, yes, there'll be human capital that will have been trained, presumably, as staff and as beneficiaries.

But it's not the same as really growing a country's ability to do that work by itself. Thank you.


Mr. Malinowski. The chair recognizes Representative Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Houlahan. Thank you so much for the opportunity to ask you questions. Can you hear me okay, before I get started?
Ms. Power. Yes.

Ms. Houlanah. Excellent. I'm going to follow up on some of the conversation that you were having with Mr. Pfluger while ago. He was asking questions about demand for sustainable energy, as an example.

But my question will be more broad than that on the role of capitalism and in growing our sustainable efforts worldwide. I've co-chaired the Stakeholder Capitalism Caucus with a colleague, Dean Phillips, and we're aiming to promote equitable, inclusive, and sustainable private sector practices and investments.

I'm also grateful to sit out here on this Foreign Affairs subcommittee, Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations and Global Corporate Social Impact. I was attracted to that particular committee because of the global corporate social impact aspect of it. So I'm very, very interested in and invested in exploring the intersection between smart private sector investments a

For fiscal year '23 USAID requested $250 million for President Biden's Build Back Better World Initiative that would support development of high-standard infrastructure in low and middle income countries while collaborating with the private sector to support inclusive economic growth, to raise labor and environmental standards, and to promote transparency,
governance, and anti-corruption measures.

The administration has stated that the infrastructure development carried out in a transparent and sustainable manner financially, environmentally, and socially will lead to a better outcome for recipient countries and communities.

You were mentioning in your conversation with Mr. Pfluger about how many of our international communities are walking or talking with their feet, you know, and asking for things that they need independent of us pushing them.

But I was wondering if you agree that the United States' views on ESG criteria as a priority consistent with our national interest in the foreign affairs and international development space -- I'm wondering if you agree that these views are important, that ESG is a priority for us not only domestically but also globally as well.

Ms. Power. I believe that those are part of the standard process and that USAID is, you know, attentive to those standards in the work that it does, running through potential projects through that prism but also engaging governments so that they're sensitive to those criterion standards as well.

So one of the things that I was wondering beyond that is -- beyond the Build Back Better World Initiative -- is your agency engaged in other collaborative partnerships that might help promote environmental, social, and governance standards that
would be in line with the U.S. interests internationally as well?

Ms. Power. I think the short answer is yes. But getting you a lay down of that would require me to get back to you.

Ms. Houlahan. I'd like that and I'd like to have, if it's possible, kind of a longer conversation about what we can be doing to harness the power of the for profit economy and the for profit sector, NGOs aside and governments aside and, you know, foreign assistance and aid aside.

The for profit sector is just so powerful and I think that it's catching on globally that this is something that we need to be thinking of in terms of our resources and dollars and partnering, and would love to have a longer conversation about how we can work on that.

With what's remaining of my time, I want to switch topics to talking about UNFPA. I'm really grateful that the Biden/Harris administration has requested $56 million for UNFPA, which is, I think, an historical high.

But I was wondering if you could comment a little bit on whether you believe meeting the protection and health needs of girls and women still remains a critical component to USAID'S mission.

Ms. Power. Well, I think you'll see from the President's budget request, which has in it a historic request to double gender finance and that includes, you know, everything from reproductive
health, maternal health, gender, and -- excuse me, women and girls empowerment, microfinance for women.

You know, it runs the gamut but, absolutely, women's health is at the core of that programming. It's also what our Public Health Bureau recognizes. We have seen just in countries all over the world that the investments we make in women's health, in women's reproductive health, just have cascading benefits in all the other development sectors. So these investments are not only the right thing to do but, of course, a very, very wise smart thing to do.

Ms. Houlahan. I appreciate that, and would look forward with the remaining seconds that I have to welcoming any conversation you'd like to have with me or my office on how I can be helpful to engage USAID and UNFPA's continued relationship. And with that, I yield back and appreciate the time.

Ms. Power. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Mr. Malinowski. The chair now recognizes Representative Ken Buck of Colorado.

Mr. Buck. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Administrator Power, I'm concerned and interested in your views on aid to the Palestinian Authority and particularly in light of the documented incitement of hatred and violence in the schools in the Palestinian territory. Just wondering what your thoughts are on that.
Ms. Power. Thank you, Congressman. Well, to state what I hope is obvious, any such incitement is abhorrent and USAID's deputy administrator was actually just in the region and had the chance to raise directly with Palestinian Authority officials our concerns as an agency but, of course, as an administration, as a country, with everything from the pay to slay program to, you know, broader concerns about incitement.

Our programming is in different domains. It's programming that is just restarting now after a hiatus brought about by the prior suspension. We're in very close touch with the government of Israel on everything from water and sanitation projects that we might be able to do together to kind of community-level peace building across the lines to core humanitarian assistance, given the global food crisis.

So most of the engagement on incitement by our administration comes through diplomatic pressure of that nature. The State Department, not my agency, but is the funder of UNRWA as well where this question of incitement also has arisen because of concerns about textbooks and I know that's something that they press on constantly.

Mr. Buck. What gains have we seen? What changes have we seen as a result of resuming the aid?

Ms. Power. Well, I think that, first, we see a lot of enthusiasm on the part of the government of Israel to resume this
assistance out of concern about the destabilizing effects of cutting off assistance, just the fundamental recognition that economic stability plays a critical role. It's not the only factor, but behind the kind of security that everyone in the region is craving for themselves.

With regard to the specific number of beneficiaries of people who've received, for example, our World Food Programme humanitarian assistance, I'd have to get back to with the numbers.

Mr. Buck. And I guess I'm more interested in the alignment of values than in specific numbers of individuals that have benefitted from the aid. Do we see -- and it may be too early to make that kind of judgment, but do we see any sort of movement in values?

Ms. Power. You know, it is very soon. I mean, we just -- there were some congressional holds on last year's funding that got lifted quite late and so some of that money is just getting obligated. MEPPA, which is something that -- named, of course, for Nita Lowey, was just created and we have projects that are going to involve peace building, you know, as I mentioned already at the community level.

You know, it's going to be very difficult to, you know, judge sort of a population as a whole on values. But what I can say is that there was, you know, great sadness among some of the,
for example, independent media that USAID had trained to see funding cut off when those journalists were actually exposing the very corruption that we, as an administration, were critical of.

So over time, we hope to be in a position to diversify the kinds of programs that we fund -- you know, young women's organizations, the kinds of education that has lasting effects and, you know, our programs all around the world -- it would be true in community programs here in this country, too -- they operate kind of individual by individual and I think that's where one would look to see, you know, a change in the view of the United States but also, above all, a change in the welfare of the people who we're engaging.

Mr. Buck. So what policies are in place or procedures that will guarantee adherence to the Taylor Force Act and the making sure that money doesn't get into the wrong hands, that it is strictly for humanitarian aid?

Ms. Power. Well, every obligation of funding we are, you know, in consultation, of course, with our mission on the ground and all of the vetting requirements that I alluded to earlier -- we have little time so I won't go back through them -- but also with, you know, our programs are now run out of our embassy.

So, you know, Israeli officials have been consulted on a
great number of them, including the COGAT, who my deputy administrator -- our deputy administrator met with on her recent travels.

But what I was starting to say is that in doing the congressional notification process as well you all retain an ability to look at these programs and, you know, when we have encountered concerns about programs, about whether they are somehow close to the line, we have worked those concerns through with staff or we have adjusted programming.

So I have great confidence that we are adhering to the Taylor Force Act and will continue to do so.

Mr. Buck. Thank you. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Malinowski. Thank you. The chair now recognizes Representative Kathy Manning of North Carolina.

Ms. Manning. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Administrator Power, for being with us for so long and for your service.

One of the uplifting things that I have seen in my district during Putin's terrible assault on Ukraine is the determination of Americans to find ways to help the Ukrainian people, those who stay in their country and those who have sought refuge in Poland and in Moldova, and there are a variety of individuals and nonprofit organizations in the Triad area of North Carolina, my district, who are working to help deliver supplies to Ukrainian
refugees, working with groups on the ground in Europe such as
the Jewish Community Center of Krakow.

Are there ways that American nonprofit groups can partner
with USAID to help deliver those supplies to those who need them
in an organized fashion? I'd appreciate working together on this
because I'm getting lots of calls from people and groups in my
district.

Ms. Power. Thank you. Well, I think, you know, in the
initial crush of the invasion as, you know, Kyiv was under siege,
including all the centralized, you know, government institutions,
you know, I think this was very, very challenging because, you
know, you had people out of such generosity, you know, sending
supplies to the border. They were backing up. Sometimes that
was making it challenging for some of those very large
humanitarian actors to get their commodities in.

I think now, as the Ukrainian government reconstitutes, you
know, in Kyiv en masse -- I mean, again, the core of the Ukrainian
government, of course, remained -- I think this is something that
our mission on the ground when we get back -- because right now
we're still in Poland, unfortunately, very, very eager to be part
of this vanguard of U.S. officials who go back -- I think this
question of how to facilitate is going to become easier to address.

Our message up to this point, though, has been cash is best,
which is a very -- it's not a nice message because people want to mobilize strollers and, you know, teddy bears or, you know, hygiene products. You know, they want to do things that feel a little more personalized.

But the cash really does help because it is the kind of thing that when it goes to a World Food Programme or a UNICEF it can actually go directly into the bank account of a vulnerable family that's been displaced. That's the kind of cash assistance programs that they run.

It's not people's impression of what these international organizations do. But it's, definitely, the preference of the families to be able to decide for themselves, you know, what to do with a small increment of cash that comes in.

Ms. Manning. So my state of North Carolina has a long-standing relationship -- partnership, rather -- with the country of Moldova, and my community in Greensboro has a long-standing partnership with the city of Beltsy. So we have a particular interest in making sure that we are helping Moldova, and, as you know, that country has welcomed the highest concentration of refugees per capita, which is a serious challenge for Moldova not only because it's a small country but it is a poor country.

Has USAID taken stock of Moldova's needs, including ways that we can help upgrade hospitals and other infrastructure as
they deal with the influx of so many people? And they've really
welcomed the refugees, but it is a burden on their country.

Ms. Power. Well, I've traveled, actually, to Moldova twice, and I'm so glad to know about your community's interest in Moldova.

We should talk more about that because I do think it's kind of an unsung story in all of this is that they have taken the highest number of per capita refugees.

You know, many of those may have moved on eventually but there's still, you know, just shy of 100,000 refugees living in the country. I visited just last month and just saw, you know, these bed and breakfasts that used to be charging and just letting people in to stay. Wineries, you know, near the Ukrainian border that used to be catering to tourists and others now just allowing displaced people. I mean, the generosity is off the charts.

I think the other part of the unsung or the untold story here is the leadership of that country. President Sandu, who, you know, is trying to implement an anti-corruption agenda that's as ambitious as anything happening anywhere in the world and doing so with Russian energy blackmail taking hold at the very same time.

So what's really important, I think, about the supplemental that you previously passed, which created flexibility, and the supplemental that's now pending before the Senate, is it actually puts us in a position, potentially, if it goes through to provide
some direct budget support to Moldova when fuel prices are skyrocketing, when there's, you know, a lot of political polarization where Russian media have really infiltrated the country through television primarily.

So there's a real chance to support Moldova at this critical inflection point, I think, in its trajectory, which wants to be an integrated trajectory west.

Ms. Manning. Well, I appreciate your talkability, and I yield back.

Mr. Malinowski. The chair now recognizes Representative Andy Barr of Kentucky for five minutes, and maybe five seconds.

Mr. Barr. Thanks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator Power, thanks so much for your service, and I've had the pleasure of meeting many of the staff that work USAID abroad and they do great work, and please pass along our gratitude for their service.

Square One Technologies is a company in my district that develops and manufactures a 14-stage advanced water treatment and purification system that can disinfect and sanitize dirty water much cheaper and better than widely adopted methods like chemical treatment or reverse osmosis.

I know you're very familiar with water challenges across the undeveloped world. This company is interested in partnering with USAID to distribute their systems across Africa, in
particular, to offer a solution to access clean water.

For American companies such as Square One that employ hardworking Americans, how does USAID partner with those companies here in the United States that may want to offer their technology or services abroad?

Ms. Power. Thank you. We actually just set up a website called WorkWithUSAID.org because so many have that question and weren't finding it, I gather, all that easy to answer. So as a first port of call, I think that's where I would steer anybody interested in working with USAID.

But, obviously, if your office wants to reach out, you know, just to have a better sense of what our water programs look like or -- and to pass that along on your side, you know, we're sensitive about procurement and wanting, you know, there to be rigorous procurement processes and transparent ones and all the like.

But I think what we need to do is just simplify the procedure of informing people about what it takes to work with USAID, making sure that they know the deadlines, the requirements, et cetera.

Mr. Barr. So my constituent at Square One has been waiting on for a reply from USAID's water office to set up a call. Can you commit that we can hear by USAID in short order?

Ms. Power. If your office will give us that information --
Mr. Barr. We'll work with you on that.

Ms. Power. -- yes, of course. Absolutely.

Mr. Barr. Thank you very much.

In 2021, USAID provided over $110 million to support development and humanitarian programs in the West Bank and Gaza -- kind of as a follow-up to Mr. Buck's line of questioning.

In prior years we have received reports from the Israeli government that U.S. tax dollars going to organizations purporting to be humanitarian in nature are actually being funneled to support the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against the state of Israel.

What partner vetting system does USAID use to make sure that U.S. tax dollars do not go to malign actors, particularly those who are participating in the BDS movement?

Ms. Power. Thank you. I have not heard allegations that any of the funding you're referencing has gotten to anything other than its intended beneficiaries. Again, if your staff can follow up and if there's anything specific there.

You know, our vetting procedures are as stringent there as in any part of the world. There layers of vetting ahead of time not only with the grantee but any subgrantee. We also do compliance reviews after the fact in terms of what our implementing partners have actually done to sort of go back over and make sure we're checking any issues or any diversion on the
back end.

So, again, if there's a specific, but it's a very, very elaborate -- in light of the sensitivities, in light of the risks there and in several other theaters, it's, again, the most stringent vetting --

Mr. Barr. And shifting away from BDS but back to Taylor Force and Taylor Force compliance, while there may not be direct assistance to the PA, there is concern that the spirit of Taylor Force is being circumvented by partnering with organizations and NGOs that may be making those martyr payments to in lieu of the PA directly.

And we don't -- we, obviously, don't want any U.S. tax dollars funneled through NGOs that operate to circumvent Taylor Force. Can you speak to that?

Ms. Power. Again, if you have any specifics where there's a concern that that is happening, I would definitely like to hear those. Just the nature of the projects that we are doing, the extent of the conversations we are having with members up here in the MEPPA context, the composition of the board that we have where the ranking and majority of all our oversight committees and others were able to put four board members, I really think we have the infrastructure in place to guard against diversion.

Mr. Barr. And a final question on China in the Pacific.

What work is USAID doing with other development arms like DFC
to accomplish American foreign policy goals, specifically
countering Belt and Road? I'm especially interested in Oceania,
Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Malinowski. And I have to -- yeah, it's an important
question, but maybe if you can follow up directly.

The chair now recognizes Representative Juan Vargas of
California for five minutes, and then we have just one more and
we'll be done.

Ms. Power. Until somebody else arrives.

[Laughter.]

Mr. Vargas. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr.
Chair.

Ambassador, thank you so much for being here. We appreciate
it. I apologize that I wasn't able to hear the entirety of your
comments. There was another hearing that I also was involved
in.

But there's so many questions: the invasion of Ukraine, you
know, Afghanistan, Yemen, northern Ethiopia. But I'd like to
focus in on something you said and that is everyone deserves food.
Everyone deserves food.

The insecurity that we see right now, especially because
of Ukraine, really concerns me. I think I've asked you before
about David Beasley. I know you know who he is. And he has talked
to us before -- and was going to talk but we had to cancel his
hearing -- but of the severe problem that we have and how it's
getting worse because of what's happening in Ukraine and Russia.

Could you comment a little bit of how you interact with the
World Food Programme that he runs and what we can do? Because
I think it's horrible that so many people are marching towards
starvation when, again, everyone deserves food.

Ms. Power. Well, exactly, and with world food prices up
as high as 34 percent from last year, you know, for all of the
incredible generosity of the American people, who have really
stepped up not only through the Congress but on their own, you
know, contributing to organizations who are trying to help meet
food needs, the needs are just outpacing the resources that are
being dedicated to this.

So we are grateful for the humanitarian assistance that is
provided for in the second Ukraine supplemental, which is not
confined to funding humanitarian needs inside Ukraine or for
Ukrainians. It also speaks to the need to meet the needs stemming
from the fallout from the war.

But this food crisis, as David Beasley has been the first
to say up here for almost a year, well predated the decision by
Putin to recklessly invade Ukraine, and I think what we are trying
to do is to combine this kind of stop gap humanitarian assistance
through WFP and other humanitarian actors -- WFP is our main --
as USAID is our main provider of humanitarian assistance globally -- but to combine that with engagement, you know, at the field level on the kinds of inputs and drought-resistant heat-resistant seeds, building on the Feed the Future program, but taking the additional food security money, which is apart from the humanitarian assistance, to try to make sure that farmers are using this precious fertilizer that they have in the most efficient way possible, that they're supplementing it with organic if they can just to try to be able to get more yield, that countries like Zambia that make wheat -- when there is a wheat need in the neighborhood are able to export more of their supplies, and we're also engaging on the export bans that have been put in place because those are really going to hurt the global food supply -- the global grain supply -- along with what Putin is preventing from being exported out of Ukraine.

Mr. Vargas. Thank you for working on that and, again, I hope that relationship is a good one because I think it's very important to work with the World Food Programme.

Ms. Power. You'd have to ask him, but on my side it's a very productive relationship. I'm a big fan and his energy is made for this moment, and his entrepreneurship.

Mr. Vargas. I've only heard good things about you with one exception and I'll say -- I'll tell you the exception. I was very happy to hear your comments the last time, and then I spoke
to my daughter, who's at the Harvard Law School, and she said, wait a minute, she's married to Cass Sunstein. I can't get in his class. I guess he's too busy.

But anyway, put that aside, that's the only negative thing I've ever heard and that isn't even here.

But what I do want to say is this. I'm very grateful that you said something about the vaccines because I've been one of those ones that have been pushing for us to spend more on that internationally, and the people who are against it and vote against it then say, look what Russia is doing, look what China is doing, and we look awful because we're not helping, when they vote against putting money in for these international vaccines.

So I'm glad you spoke up. I mean, I think that that's so important to comment. I don't have much time here. But I do want to thank you. I do think you're doing an excellent job -- the scope, the breadth of what you need to do -- the depth, and I think you're doing a great job.

Continue to work hard as you're doing. I think you're doing very well. Thank you. We're proud of you.

Ms. Power. Thank you. Thank you so much, Congressman, and I'll talk to Professor Sunstein about his poor selection process.

But on the vaccines, just to say, you know, it hasn't come up that much in this hearing and, yet, we could look back on this
period with such regret if we don't find the resources to continue
vaccinating the world, regret for the reasons that you say in
terms of who else will step in to fill the breach but also regret
because when immun.-compromised people get COVID, the risks of
new variants and mutations that, ultimately, imperil Americans,
you know, really increases and it would just be horrific to look
back and think there were things we could have done but we didn't
because of whatever -- whatever the logic is, you know, because
it didn't seem a good investment at the time. We have to plan
ahead and know that this is about prevention of something much
worse.

Mr. Vargas. Thank you.

Mr. Malinowski. From saving the world's to getting a kid
in class, congressional oversight works.

[Laughter.]

Mr. Malinowski. So, finally, last but certainly not least,
I will recognize Representative Brad Schneider of Illinois.

Mr. Schneider. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank
you, Chairman Meeks, for having this hearing, and Administrator
Power, thank you for spending time with us and staying so I have
a chance to ask a question.

As you touched on and you also said in your testimony, we
face mammoth problems in the world that -- problems that the U.S.
can't solve alone but that the world can't solve without U.S.
leadership and I'm grateful for the work you're doing, that you're in your position to do that and the leadership that the United States is showing.

You touched on with your comments about vaccines, and we know that if we don't get it right the consequences can be significant not just for the United States but globally. But it's true on so many issues.

And before I go on, I want to touch on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and I am grateful, again, for American leadership, for the administration and what Congress has done in ensuring that we're delivering critical security, economic and humanitarian assistance.

American leadership in this case has to be steadfast and we must continue to demonstrate not just to Vladimir Putin and Russia but to the world that we will remain united with our allies and not just stopping Russia's unprovoked illegal invasion but reversing and securing Ukraine's sovereign future and helping the Ukrainians rebuild their country.

I also know we have talked a lot about it over the course of this hearing, turning to the Middle East. Two years ago, Congress passed and authorized the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace, and we have touched on some of those programs and you've talked about making sure that we adhere to the Taylor Force Act and make sure none of that money goes to
people who are given incentives by the PA to commit grievous acts
of terror in Israel.

But the MEPPA program is critically important. It focuses
on people-to-people interactions, creating the prospects for
peace between two peoples, creating a situation that, hopefully,
will lead to a better future. I note we have talked about the
three USAID grants that have so far been issued and there are
second solicitations.

I'm proud as I supported MEPPA and I'm pleased to see these
grants being put out. But as we get to the end of this hearing,
can you talk a little bit more about some of the successes we
have seen but also where investments are going and, at the risk
of repeating what others have asked, how these are setting the
path?

You know, I'm the chair of -- one of the chairs of the Abraham
Accords Caucus hear in Congress, a part of -- introduced and we
passed the Israel Relations Normalization Act. We know that the
path and prospects to peace are creating opportunities on the
ground and how MEPPA and the work in USAID can help us do that.

Ms. Power. Well, I mean, I guess, because it is a little
bit early days, I would just speak to the relative enthusiasm
and I -- you know, I've talked a lot about the consultations we
have done on the Israeli side.

But I think at the community level in the Palestinian
territories the desire to see America back funding these programs, out and about, I think, you know, we're talking about support to battle a pandemic. I mean, this is meeting people at an hour of such need.

We're talking about water and sanitation projects that we're trying to pursue and those are challenging. And, again, given the Taylor Force Act, we are absolutely determined to stay within the confines of the law and so making sure that the projects that we do provide material benefit in communities without having any benefit to the PA is so important.

So, you know, I think it's going to be exciting to see those projects launched, the three that have been announced so far. I think the -- you know, getting the two communities together, you know, isn't easy, given the other challenges, you know, the absence of a visible peace process.

And so, you know, much as we would like, you know, again, the bottom-up programming to give rise to a different kind of climate, sometimes the current climate and the divisions there, you know, make it harder to do some of this work.

But I think that once these projects are out and about and people see the resources available, you know, for this kind of community interaction, I'm hopeful that we'll be able to really scale some of what we're doing so far.

Mr. Schneider. All right. Thank you. I'm convinced that
investment in people-to-people programs can make a difference. U.S. leads best when we lead with our values and demonstrate them by supporting people but also making clear that we will oppose terrorism and violence.

So again, I thank you. I'm extended past my time. So, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. Malinowski. Thank you so much.

Administrator, thank you for being willing to spend this much time with us, giving every member of this committee a chance to interact with you. That is greatly appreciated on both sides of the aisle and I think speaks well of your commitment to making the Congress a full partner in your efforts.

I will just refer back to, in closing, something that Congressman Vargas said to you. We are, all of us here on both sides of the aisle, eager to see the United States compete with China, deal with the threat posed by Russia, and yet many of us don't seem to feel the same sense of urgency when it comes to giving you the resources to do that.

We have the capacity. America has the capacity to feed the world. We have the capacity to save millions of lives around the world through a vaccination program, and a shot of Pfizer costs a lot less than a cruise missile.

And we could actually do those things if our foreign assistance budget was, say, as great as it was 40 or 50 years
ago, the last time we had a great power adversary in the world.

That's not a crazy goal to simply do what we did the last time we faced a situation like this. I know you're a champion of that. I know you're a good steward of these programs, and I hope all of us will continue to do everything we can to support you and give you the resources that you need, even if you don't help our kids get into a class at Harvard.

So with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:00 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]