MARKUP OF VARIOUS MEASURES

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

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

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:20 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. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any point. Pursuant to Committee Rule 4, the chair may postpone further proceedings on approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment.

Without objection, all members will have five days to submit statements or extraneous materials on today's business. To insert statements into the record, please have your staff email the previously circulated address or contact full committee staff. As a reminder to members joining remotely, please keep your video function on at all times, even when not recognized by the chair.

Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves. And consistent with House rules, staff will only mute members as appropriate when they are not under recognition to eliminate background noise. As members were notified yesterday, we intend to consider five measures and their amendments en bloc. We will then move to consider five measures and their amendments separately.

Any roll call votes will be postponed until the end of the markup. Pursuant to notice for purposes of markup, I now call up the measures and their amendments that were previously circulated to members' offices which without objection will be considered en bloc and each measure is
considered as read and the amendments to each are considered
as read and are agreed to.

[The measures and amendments offered en bloc of Chairman
Meeks follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. And without objection, after remarks, the committee will vote to order the measures favorably reported en bloc as amended, if amended, and any amendment or amendments that each measure shall be reported as a single amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The measures in the en bloc package are H.R. 8446, Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2022 with a Meeks amendment in the nature of a substitute designated No. 71 with a Meeks amendment designed No. 72., H.Res. 1342, Reaffirming the importance of diplomacy and development in the United States -- African Union relations, promoting strategic partnerships and shared objectives between the United States and the African Union, and expressing strong support for the successful implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, H.R. 8681, the John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship Act with a Titus amendment in the nature of a substitute designated No. 37., H.R. 8813, AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act, and H.R. 6846, CORRUPT Act with a Malinowski amendment in the nature of a substitute designated No. 130.

I will now recognize myself to speak on the en bloc package. I strongly support all five of the measures included within this en bloc package. It is no secret that the historic challenges the world grapples with today are as
varied as they are complicated.

The range from global food insecurity to Putin's continued senseless large scale invasion of Ukraine and the corrupt oligarchs who sustain him to ongoing human rights and humanitarian challenges in various parts of the world. And as the world looks to the United States for its leadership that Congress looks to this committee, this body to rise through the test and meet these challenges. This en bloc embodies the strength of this committee.

They are bipartisan, robust responses to some of the most vexing foreign policy matters. And I encourage all of the members to join me in support. First, I am proud that this committee is advancing the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act to extend the U.S. government's flagship initiative to combat global hunger for another five years.

This comes at a critical time of profound food insecurity around the world. And I want to thank Representative McCollum, Representative Smith, and ranking member McCaul for their partnership to move it forward.

Chairwoman Bass' resolution highlights the African Union's significant efforts to our strengthening institutions across Africa by promoting good governance, economic reforms, and human rights.

It underscores the significance of the African
Continental Free Trade Area as a potentially transformative initiative that could lift millions in Africa out of poverty. The next measure is quite meaningful to me and many others also. It has been a little more than two years that we lost a cherished colleague, one that I call Mr. Legend, a civil rights giant, one who is intertwined with American history and that is the late, great Representative John H. Lewis. John was the conscious of Congress, a champion of human rights, not just here in the United States but globally. And H.R. 8681, a fellowship created in John's name which honors his legacy by supporting young scholars and studying the history of nonviolent civil rights movements around the world and improving the understanding of nonviolence as a critical tool for change. I want to thank Representative Williams for offering this important legislation. And if it wasn't for Congressman Lewis, I might not be sitting here today.

I also want to thank my good friend and colleague from the state next door to me in New York, Mr. Albio Sires for the next measure. The people of Venezuela have been confronting a historic crisis since 2014 that includes failures in governance, economic access security, and worsening human rights resolution. The independent international fact-finding mission on Venezuela initiated by the U.N. Human Rights Council three years ago has played a
key role in keeping the international community informed.

Renewing this mandate shows support for U.N. mechanisms and the multilateral corporation needed to respond to many challenges we face in the region and around the world. And I am pleased with the work as a chair of the western hemisphere of Mr. Sires who many of you may know chose not to run for reelection this go around. And he will be missed on this committee. But we have him for a few more months, and we will enjoy continuing to work with him and all that he does on a regular basis.

Mr. Sires. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. And finally, I want to thank Representative Malinowski for this last measure in the en bloc which shines a light and combats Putin's corruption. One of the Kremlin's key assets for prosecuting is horrific war of choice against Ukraine and for spreading its corrupt influence throughout Europe and the world. It is a network of kleptocratic actors that poison our financial systems and enrich themselves at the expense of the Russian people.

If we aim to truly cripple Russian's war efforts, U.S. sanctions policies must more effectively target these individuals and their ill begotten finances. That is why I am pleased to move this bill forward.

So I strongly support all the measures that we are
considering today in the en block. And I urge all members to join me to do the same. And before we continue, of course, I now would like to recognize my friend and our ranking member, Mr. McCaul of Texas, for his remarks.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this markup. I am glad we could work together on this. And I am in support of all the measures we will be considering here today, including my resolution of inquiry related to Afghanistan and Ranking Member Foxx's resolution of inquiry related to Iran. But I will talk about those in a minute.

As someone from an agriculture state myself, I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of the Global Food Security Act along with you, Mr. Chairman and Representatives McCollum and Chris Smith. COVID-19 and unprecedented droughts have already strained global food supply chains. And now Putin's unprovoked and full scale invasion of Ukraine is yet another nail in the coffin.

Globally, 50 million people across 45 countries are on the brink of famine. In Somalia, we are days away from the official famine declaration. Today over 300,000 children are facing emergency starvation.

And amidst this global crisis, we cannot lose focus on longer term investments and food security and agriculture-led economic growth. Ultimately, this bill builds the capacities
of families and communities to provide for themselves. Combating the global food crisis must be a priority for Congress and this administration.

I hope the House will quickly advance this legislation and also want to thank Senators Risch and Casey for their leadership on this issue in the Senate. I am also pleased to support my friend, Mr. Sires' bill, and we are going to miss you. Sir, it has been a real honor to serve in Congress with you and on this committee.

Your bill directs the State Department to support a two-year extension of the international fact-finding mission in Venezuela which is very important to me as well as I have several constituents still in prison in Venezuela. Since it was established in 2019, this mission has uncovered systematic crimes against humanity being committed by the Maduro regime. The mission was also the first independent organization that found the Venezuelan regime was wrongfully detained. I mentioned four nationals to extract concessions including Americans.

Right now, at least 11 Americans were being wrongfully detained by the criminal Maduro regime, again, some of whom are my constituents. Last week, Matt Heath, an American and Marine, marked two years as a hostage of Nicolás Maduro. I take my obligation to these Americans seriously and implore
the State Department to work with Congress to please get them home. And I want to thank you, sir, for introducing that bill.

And lastly, I am a cosponsor of Mr. Sherman's Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act. Before I yield back, I also want to congratulate the brave Ukraine fighters as they take back more of their land in this most impressive counteroffensive. To me, it is a game changer, what we are seeing take place. And we need to continue to get these weapons in and particularly the long-range artillery that is helping them win this fight.

I am getting firsthand accounts of Russians literally running and fleeing from the Ukrainians, some taking their uniforms off as they run into the woods. It has been quite a change since you and I were down in Poland on the Ukraine board and for the better. And as someone who values freedom and democracy, I know you do, Mr. Chairman, we need to do everything we can to help them win this war. And so with that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. McCaul. I now recognize members by committee seniority alternated between Democrats and Republicans for the purpose of speaking on the en bloc package. And if someone by chance missed their turn, please let our staff know and we will come back to you. I now
recognize Mr. Albio Sires for five minutes.

Mr. Sires. Thank you, Chairman Meeks. Thank you for working with me on this act. Ranking Member McCaul, thank you for your contribution to this. This is as important to me as it is to you and I know the chairman's also and my colleague, Chairman Castro.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak about the AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act which I am leading alongside with my good colleagues. A report came out last week that indicated that the total number of migrants and refugees having fled Venezuela will eclipse seven million by the end of this year. Seven million people have left their home country which transform from a beacon of prosperity and democracy to a failed state within my lifetime and on our watch.

Nicolás Maduro and his cronies have stripped the citizens of fundamental rights, imprison them for protesting his assault on democracy, and deprive them of basic necessities. Maduro has turned Venezuela sovereign wealth into a slush fund for his accomplices and he has turned the military on civilian protestors. Freedom House has classified Venezuela as not free. That is not free, placing it in the company of Iran and Afghanistan.

And the Wilson Center reports that merely 80 percent of
Venezuelans are living in extreme poverty. The U.N. Human Rights Council which the United States rejoined as a member earlier this year initiated an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Venezuela since 2014. This was not an easy task and it was complicated further by the resistance from Maduro's regime and restriction from COVID-19, meaning that they weren't able to work on the grounds in Venezuela.

Despite the challenges, the fact-finding mission has carried out its investigation to the fully extent possible. Their reports contain overwhelming evidence that the international human rights have been blatantly violated with witnesses' statements describing extrajudicial killings, torture, wireless surveillance, arbitrary detention, and civilian trials taking place before a military tribunal. This is in addition to nearly 1,000 political prisoners and wrongfully detained foreign nationals, including 11 Americans.

And surprisingly, Venezuela's authorities have failed to implement a fact-finding missions' recommendation to improving human rights in the country. Meanwhile, our attempts to encourage dialogue towards a peaceful democratic transfer of power in Venezuela was stalled. And the humanitarian situation on the ground continues to worsen.
The fact-finding mission mandate is set to expire this month. We cannot allow this to happen. That is why I work with my colleagues, Joaquin Castro, in consultation with Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul to introduce the AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act.

I am proud to have secured endorsements and cosponsors from both parties and all across the political spectrum. This bill reflects the consensus of Congress and the American people that we must use our voice and vote at the U.N. to preserve the fact-finding mission and provide them with assistance in completing the investigation. It directs the President, Secretary of State, U.N. ambassador to take concrete action to support accountability for human rights violation in Venezuela and seek closure, justice, and restitution for their victims.

Additionally, it empowers the administration to work with international partners who deliver aid directly to the Venezuelan people, including migrants and refugees residing in other countries rather than channeling money through the Maduro regime. Finally, the bill authorizes action to secure the release of political prisoner and roughly detained foreign nationals in Venezuela, including American citizens.

As we continue to strive to a transitional power in Venezuela, the fact-finding mission reporting will continue
to serve as a source for victims who will have the opportunity to pursue long awaited justice and restitution.

This mission has laid out steps that will be necessary to resolve Venezuela's structural issues once constitutional rights and separation of powers are restored. As our partner, countries in the Western hemisphere come together, casing aside ideology to take up, of course, at the U.N., it is essential to show that we have their back. This bill will make clear to the world that the United States will not shrink from the responsibility of protecting human rights and democracy around the world.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act and to report it favorably to the floor. Thank you, Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey who is the ranking member of the subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights.

[Simultaneous speaking.]

Mr. Smith. Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Albio Sires, for that very good bill. I would add it as a cosponsor, and I appreciate all the work you have done, not just on that country and also Cuba and some of the other human rights abusers in the hemisphere, including
Nicaragua. Thank you, Albio Sires, Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

I would like to speak in support of the bipartisan Global Food Security Act of 2022. It was first introduced or it was introduced by my friend, Betty McCollum, of which I am the lead Republican cosponsor. It is nearly eight years to the day when I first introduced the Global Food Security Act in the House back in 2014.

But Betty is the lead Democrat. So we have worked very, very closely together throughout the year as well. It didn't pass that year. It did in the next Congress, and it has been in the estimation of many a very successful piece of legislation that has promoted food security, resilience, and nutrition in developing countries in keeping with U.S. national security interests.

It has been my pleasure to work with Betty over the years on this legislation and our staff working together on this one. And we have made some really good progress. One of the objectives of the Global Food Security Act was to take a whole of government approach led by USAID in promoting food security in conducting oversight hearings with regards to its implementation, and I chaired many of those hearings.

We found that there were several places where the whole of agency approach, let alone whole of government approach,
was lacking. One area that needed attention was to make sure that our nutrition efforts were firing on all cylinders. While the original Global Food Security Act and subsequent reauthorization placed great emphasis on reducing stunting, especially places like Nigeria, and then addressing the critical importance of the first 1,000 days of life, from conception to the second birthday, it did not address the deleterious impact of intestinal worms which could have on the nutrition needs of children in particular.

And we have all seen pictures of children with distended bellies caused by worms that rob them of needed nutrients. Children are the future, and we need to do everything we can to obliterate those worms in their systems. The USAID, however, our deworming efforts were siloed in the global health late with other neglected tropical diseases.

Nutrition efforts were split between global health and the Bureau of Food Security. Thus we had a left hand/right hand issue. And too often our deworming efforts were a one-off not coordinated with our nutrition programs.

With this reauthorization however, we are seeing the full integration of deworming with nutrition, and just as importantly, with water sanitation, hygiene or wash programming within our government. In other words, our integrated programming will kill the parasites that harm the
nutritional needs of our children and make them more prone to other sicknesses as well and illness. Feed the children and teach methods with changing behavior and prevent re-infestation by worms.

This coordination will help maximize the use of our U.S. tax dollars and above all will help those children to be healthier so they can thrive. I also want to strongly support legislation introduced by my good friend and colleague from California, Karen Bass. Chairwoman Bass affirming the importance of diplomacy and development in the United States, African Union relations, promoting strategic partnerships, and shared objectives between the EU and AU and expressing strong support for a successful implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

So glad to be the cosponsor on Karen's bill, her resolution. I thank her for her tireless efforts on behalf of the people of Africa and for this resolution as well. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time. And again, I thank you for this markup.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia who is the president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to you and the ranking member for bringing a bipartisan en
bloc package of five bills. And I enthusiastically support every one of them. I would add to my friend, Chris Smith, when he talked about the need for coordination of global food security and global health.

I have also been pleased to introduce with my friend, Mr. Chabot, the Global Health Security Act for the last several years which would reestablish a coordinated role in hopefully the National Security Council to monitor pandemics and big international health threats before they become crises. And this committee should absolutely be the locus for monitoring global food security and global health security. And I agree with Mr. Smith on that argument.

Mr. Chairman, I do want to just pay tribute to two of our departing colleagues who are here today, my friend, Albio Sires, who has been a mentor, brings passion, especially to south of the border issues, including in the Caribbean. He reminds that the authoritarian and Communist threat remains, that people suffer and they can't be forgotten, and that American policy needs to reflect that. I salute Mr. Sires for his years of service, both in New Jersey and here in the United States Congress, and we will miss him terribly.

Mr. Deutch has been a leader as the chairman of our Middle East subcommittee and has brought an astute perspective that helps this committee try to approach the
region with some reason and balance. And I really have
appreciated that approach and his leadership. And we will
miss him as well and wish him God speed on his new endeavor.
I yield back. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back, and I join
him in regards to Mr. Deutch who I will talk about a little
bit later. We have got to finish this markup. But I do want
to mention him also because he will be missed, and I know he
is departing very soon. I now recognize Representative Joe
Wilson of South Carolina who is the ranking member of the
subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global
Counterterrorism for five minutes.

Mr. Wilson. Thank you, Chairman Greg Meeks and Ranking
Member Mike McCaul for bringing these important measures
before us today. I am grateful to support House Resolution
8446, the bipartisan Global Food Security Reauthorization
Act. War criminal Putin's war against a sovereign Ukraine
with subsequent food blockage has caused a sharp increase in
the number of food insecure persons around the world.

Victory for Ukraine is important for the world. The
United States has long been a leader in humanitarian aid, and
it is critical that his bipartisan commitment to reduce
poverty instability is continued. Also congratulations comes
to Albio Sires for the Human Rights in Venezuela Act.
Your service has made such a positive difference for democracy, and we wish you the best in the future. You will be missed. And I will always cherish your delegation leadership as we visited with democratic leaders of Argentina and Chile.

Finally, on February 24 today after war criminal Putin's invasion of sovereign Ukraine, I was grateful to co-lead the bipartisan Corruption Act which is House Resolution 6846. This bill requires a determination within 30 days as to whether certain specified oligarchs meet criteria to be subject to sanctions related to corruption and human rights violations. As the people of Ukraine continue their heroic efforts to repel Putin's criminal forces for victory in Ukraine, we must confront the corrupt network of kleptocrats and human rights abusers who have enabled Putin's delusional revisionist fantasy, sacrificing young Russians for Putin's personal taking of oil, money, and power.

Additionally, I was grateful to co-lead House Resolution 1266 requesting that the President transmit certain documents relating to any initiative or negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program. The Biden administration is desperate to advance a bad deal, an insane agreement. Reportedly, more than 170 sanctions would be lifted before Congress even has an ability to review the deal.
These effects are devastating and expansive. Iran's economic sector would be free to continue working with mass murderers. Arms embargos will be lifted. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard coordinate, embolden, and funded to proliferate more tourism, more rockets for Hamas and Hezbollah to attack Israeli civilians all for the sake of saying a deal has been reached.

It is also vehemently clear that part of the negotiations, the Biden administration has implicitly green-lit normalization with the criminal Assad regime who continues to butcher his own people and is facilitating the Iranian regime's production of missiles in Syria. Dangerous negotiations have also been continued even as Iran continues to develop ballistic missiles to fulfill their stated goal, deal to Israel, death to America. It is not possible to negotiate with those acting in bad faith.

It is critical that Congress not be kept in the dark concerning the disastrous consequences of the concessions to the Iranian regime. I am grateful that it is actually bipartisan for similar concerns. In the tradition of former Chairman Eliot Engel and former U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman. And I urge all of us to work on this resolution of inquiry.

In addition, it is really bittersweet today and that is we would be congratulating Chairman Ted Deutch who is
completing his service. And it is just been my honor to serve with him on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Terrorism subcommittee. And I just wish him well for the continued service that I know he will have not in the House of Representatives. And with that, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. And now I would like to recognize the gentleman that individuals have been talking about who will miss on this committee very much. And I will miss him personally for all of the consulting with him and talking to him and getting his thoughts and advice on the Middle East and the region and abroad.

He has been more than just a member as Mr. Sires has on this committee. He has been a friend. And so he is going to be drastically missed. But I still have his cell phone number as I have Mr. Sires. So just still expect to get phone calls from me even though you won't be here.

There is a saying, you can run but you can't hide. And so I will find you and still consult with you. So I now recognize the chair of the subcommittee in the Middle East and North Africa and Global Counterterrorism, Chairman Ted Deutch.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The phone service works both ways. So be careful what you ask for. I hadn't realized until these nice words that in fact
And so I just wanted to take a moment to do a couple things. I want to acknowledge the measures in this en bloc, first of all, global food security, reaffirming the importance of diplomacy and development in U.S.-African Union relations, the John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship, and fighting for human rights in Venezuela, fighting against Russian corruption. There is in this en bloc I think a fine representation of the way this committee works at its best.

I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for the way that they have conducted themselves through their leadership of this committee. I want to thank all of my colleagues for understanding that at a time of really significant challenges around the world the United States is -- our leadership is most effective when our messaging is clear and strong and bipartisan. And I am grateful to my colleagues on this committee who time and time again find ways to come together to assert that leadership on behalf of our constituents and our country.

I am especially grateful to Mr. Connolly, for your kind words and to the chairman for his very kind words. Mr. Wilson, we have one more hearing together. So I have got something planed for you.
But it is been an honor to serve with you, and I appreciate your leadership on the subcommittee. And I would like to acknowledge Congressman Sires especially on this day with this bill before us. I too have traveled with Mr. Sires to the region.

And those of us on this committee, most of us have opportunities to travel all over the world. There are few moments in all of the travels that I have done that stand our quite the way this one particular moment does when Congressman Sires led a trip to Colombia. And we stood across the bridge from Venezuela.

And we had just finished taking a tour of the warehouse that was overflowing with humanitarian supplies. So many of those supplies with the flag of the United States of America stamped on the side because we want to be of assistance. That is what we do in our country.

And we want to reach out to those in need and those who are challenged when their freedom is challenged and is oppressed and is crushed. We left the warehouse. We stood on the bridge and we looked across the way where Maduro had put tractor trailers across the bridge telling us that he did not want our help.

And I will finish with this. Albio, thank you for that moment. And as we think about the role again of his
committee but more importantly just of the job that we do of representing our constituents.

First and foremost for all us is making sure that we are looking out for them and their interest and the interest of the United States. And on this committee that often means standing up for them and our values against other leaders who do not share those values and making sure that in this case the citizens of Venezuela, though they did not receive our aid here, loud and clear, our commitment to them and their freedom just as we do in some many places around the world. It has been an incredible honor to do that important work standing up for the values that we all share on both sides of this dais as members Congress and most importantly as citizens of the United States of America. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Bill Keating of Massachusetts who is the chair of the subcommittee on Europe, Energy, and the Environment in Cyber for five minutes.

Mr. Keating. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to thank Representative Deutch for his leadership and the privilege of being on the committee he chaired since I have been here in Middle East. And his leadership will be missed.

We will have time in the future to talking about our
friendship. I think some of the committee members that have traveled with us realize his fine appreciation for the fine music that he has. And the edification of the members here, his favorite song, Love Potion No. 9.

And he will be missed. His friendship will continue, though, I know in his new role. And AJC will be blessed with his leadership. Today's markup is an important one. I support the bills on it.

I just want to draw your attention to two, the CORRUPT Act, which I am an original cosponsor, requires the State Department to review and determine if sanctions are applicable, key individuals in Russia who have been accused of corrupt acts. Russian's horrific illegal actions in Ukraine are reprehensible. And any individual found to have contributed to the Kremlin's ability to wage war in Ukraine should and must be sanctioned.

While we must hold Kremlin leaders to account, we must also address how Russia's illegal war on Ukraine impacts food security around the world. To help address this issue, I wholeheartedly support H.R. 8446, the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2022 with Russia attempting to use starvation in food insecurities as a means to influence and a weapon of war. I believe it is vital for the U.S. to continue to use its resources to build food resilience and
increased capacity.

I supported the original Global Food Security Act in 2016 and its initial reauthorization in 2018. I support the reauthorization today and encourage its reporting through the committee. Also, for the notice of committee members, we will be holding a hearing next Wednesday on the accountability for atrocity crimes committed by Russia and Ukraine.

It is Wednesday the 21st at 2:00 p.m. and a classified briefing for members on the latest update in Ukraine which will be Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. All of the committee members are welcome to attend. And with that I yield back as the chairman.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative David Cicilline for five minutes.

Mr. Cicilline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for bringing these measures before the committee en bloc. And thank you in particular for your leadership addressing hunger that has really taken the world by storm over the past year. Recent events around the world including Vladimir Putin's unlawful invasion of Ukraine has spotlighted global food insecurity kleptocracy and has struggled for human rights around the world.

I am grateful that we can advance key legislation that
grapples with each of these important issues. In already fragile states like Lebanon, the prospect of starvation hangs over not only Lebanese people with a large refugee population currently housed in that country. After years of fleeing unspeakable violence in the horrors of war, refugees now face the stark reality of not having enough to eat to sustain themselves and their children.

With that and other flashpoints around the world in mind, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8846, the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act. The Lebanese people have been badly let down by the corrupt political elite and has left the general population angry and eager for change. Bad actors eager to sow chaos will undoubtedly use food insecurity to further destabilize the country, and we must not allow this to happen.

As we work to stand up for human rights and American foreign policy, we must do all that we can in this Congress to ensure the most vulnerable are fed. Next, democracy around the world is under attack, including of course in Venezuela. I want to thank my friends, Chairman Sires and Chairman Castro, for your leadership on human rights in Venezuela and for inducing H.R. 8813.

For too long, the people of Venezuela have been subjected to human rights abuses by the immoral and thuggish
government of Nicolás Maduro. We know that those fighting for democracy and the rule of law have been subjected to unspeakable crimes by the Venezuelan government. We know that it is Venezuela has protested their government because of food shortages and extraordinary economic mismanagement.

The Venezuelan government did all it could to crush this resistance. We must insist the independent international fact-finding mission on Venezuela established by the United Nations Human Rights Council continue its work to expose the crimes of the Maduro regime. For that reason, I enthusiastically support Mr. Sires' AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The people of Venezuela deserve democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. They deserve to live in prosperity and not under the thumb of kleptocrats and corrupt officials that line their pockets while young and old alike suffer from hunger and poverty. Next I turn to the illegal, unjustified war against people of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin.

And I thank Mr. Malinowski for his strong leadership on the issue of corruption and kleptocracy and Russia and urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6846, the CORRUPT Act. Vladimir Putin is the world's worst criminal. He has foolishly leveraged the Russian state into an insane war of conquest and a peaceful and democratic neighbor.
He has plundered the Russian state for his own material wealth and for the personal enrichment of his cronies. And he has murdered and imprisoned his political opponents and brave journalists that dare report on his corrupt and immoral regime. And he sought to foster instability in democratic nations around the world, including here in the United States, by interfering in elections and sowing social divisions and discord. Because of his demented and grotesque policies, Vladimir Putin risks the ruin of his own nation.

But he has not done it alone. For years, Vladimir Putin has presided over a system of governance that enabled a small country of corrupt elites eager to grow fat and rich while the Russian people suffer under the brutal Putin regime. I am working to make sure that for his crimes Vladimir Putin and his inner circle face justice if they dare enter the jurisdiction of the United States and the Judiciary Committee. Until then, let's do all we can to punish those who have stood by, enabled, or supported the 21st century's most despicable tyrant.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to also add my voice to the praise of our colleague, Congressman Chairman Deutch who has served on this committee and I have had the privilege of serving on both the Judiciary and Foreign Affairs Committee with Chairman Deutch. And in every way, he
has used his service not only to make really enduring and important contributions to our country and to countries around the world, always speaking to the deep values of democracy, human rights, and peace, always presenting some of the most thoughtful testimony and most incisive questioning we have had in this committee and someone who will bring all of those skills to his new position. But we often say, I am sorry to see you go, my friend, and he will always be friend.

In this case, it really is my friend, someone who has been a great mentor to me, a source of guidance and wisdom. And very often when I am thinking glumly about the future of our great democracy, I think of people like Ted Deutch who have provided an extraordinary service to America. And I wish him well and say thank you and God bless. And I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Joaquin Castro 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 Meeks. I support the measures being considered en bloc. The Global Food Security Reauthorization Act, the John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship Act, the resolution regarding the African Union, and the CORRUPT Act. And I thank the sponsors for their diligent and
I also want to thank Chairman Sires for his work with me on the AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act which is included in the en bloc package. As this committee knows, we are currently facing the greatest number of displaced people in the world since World War II. One of the biggest causes is a refugee and migrant crisis in our own hemisphere.

The number of Venezuelans displaced now ties with Ukraine as the world's largest. The United States must do more to address the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and support countries like Colombia and Ecuador who have been at the forefront of responding to this exodus. I am proud to co-lead this bill which marks a meaningful step towards restoring democracy, stability, and prosperity for the Venezuelan people.

The AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela bill will address an urgent and worsening crisis that demands more attention for the United States and from the world. This bill solidifies the United States support for the U.N. independent international fact-finding mission on Venezuela and affirms the U.S. commitment to addressing the humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan people. The fact-finding mission is crucial in documenting human rights abuses, pervasive impunity, and stifling repression committed by the Maduro regime.
This independent mission is also key in informing the political negotiations and ensuring a coordinated and effective global response to the humanitarian crisis. The United States must also continue to support United Nations efforts like the world food program to alleviate the humanitarian situation and engage with key Venezuelan actors in a constructive way. Additionally, we must reevaluate the United States policy towards Venezuela to determine how we can support a negotiated political transition while simultaneously condemning continued oppression.

In particular, as I have said for years, the United States must assess the effectiveness of our sanctions and the unintended consequences in furthering poverty and suffering of the Venezuelan people. Supporting this bill and in turn the U.N. fact-finding mission, multilateral humanitarian efforts, and inclusive negotiations is just one step in what I hope will be a larger effort from the Congress and from the administration. I encourage my colleagues on the committee to support this bipartisan legislation and the other measures as well. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady from Nevada, Representative Titus, for five minutes. No? I understand Representative Titus is not there. So I recognize the gentleman from New Jersey,
Representative Malinowski, for five minutes who I caught by surprise.

Mr. Malinowski. Yes, actually, if there is somebody ahead of me because we have a couple of -- there is not? All right. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, members.

In discussing the bill that I have before the committee, I want to first thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support, Representatives Curtis, Kinzinger, Salazar, Fitzpatrick, and Joe Wilson. You led this bill with me when Putin's invasion kicked off. And despite what the news often says, behind the curtains, I have seen -- we have all seen tremendous bipartisan unity over the last six months to ensure that Ukraine's brave fighters have all of the military hardware that they need and the support that they need more broadly from the United States.

We have this bipartisan unity because of scenes like this. This is a familiar image I hoped all of us now have seen following the massacre in the Ukrainian village of Bucha. And of course, we know it is only one of many atrocities committed by the Russian military against the Ukrainian people.

I have in my hand here a piece of shrapnel from the fighting in Kharkiv which to me is it is something very striking because it gives tangible meaning to the death, the
violence that has been unleashed on innocent people in Ukraine by the Putin regime. And I will just pass it around. But the point I want to make today is that this would not be possible without this.

This is a picture of a friend of many people on this committee, a Russian dissident named Vladimir Kara-Murza. I believe he has testified before this committee. He is one of the bravest people I have ever met.

Putin tried to poison him twice and he survived. In his most recent trip to Russia, he was arrested and is now in pre-trial detention. And the point here is that it is Putin's fear of brave Russians like this, Russians who have fought for democracy and human rights within their own country that leads to his fear of the people of Ukraine who have modeled democracy and respect for human rights in their own country.

The war in Ukraine begins with repression inside Russia and hence the bill that we are considering today. We have before us a list of nearly 200 key cronies of Putin, individuals who have been identified by these brave Russian [inaudible] Alexei Navalny as the lynchpins of this regime as the reasons why Putin is able to stay in power and fuel the war in Ukraine while enabling him to steal money from the Russian people to empower his regime. That is why we
continue to call for sanctions against enablers of the Putin
regime.

That is why we are separately moving legislation through
the NDAA to make the United States -- to secure our financial
system in the United States against the proceeds of the
corruptions. And that is why I hope everyone will join me
today in supporting this legislation that will under the
Magnitsky Act initiate the process of sanctioning this group
of individuals who have been identified by Russian democracy
activities as lynchpins of the Putin regime. I will end by
quoting something that Vladimir once said.

He said that the Magnitsky Act is the most pro-Russian
law ever to have been passed by a foreign parliament. Pro-
Russian because it stands with those Russians who honestly
speak the truth about the nature of the regime and who have
the courage to try to change their country for the better.
We stand with them just as much as we stand with the people
of Ukraine today. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Hearing no
further request for recognition, the committee will proceed
to consider the notice items en bloc. Pursuant to the
previous order, the question occurs on the measures en bloc
as amended if amended. We are going to take a vote by voice.
Well, all members please unmute your microphones.
All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it.

The committee will now stand in recess pending the end of votes on the floor. The committee is now in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman Meeks. The committee will come to order.

And before we begin, I'd like to add that the measures considered en bloc are agreed to.

And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

Pursuant to the previous order of the committee, each measure is ordered favorably reported, as amended, if amended, and each amendment or amendments to each bill shall be reported as a single amendment in the nature of a substitute.

And without objection, staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

Now, let's move into the five measures being considered separately.

H.R. 2374, Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act; H.R. 4213, the YSEALI Act with a Castro amendment in the nature of a substitute designated 108; H.R. 8153, the Indo-Pacific Engagement Act; H.Res. 1240, Requesting the
President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents in their possession referring or relating to certain aspects of the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan, and H.Res. 1266, Requesting the President to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to any initiative or negotiations regarding the Iran nuclear program.

We will, first, consider H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act.

Pursuant to notice, for purposes of the markup, I now call up H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act.

The clerk will report the bill.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 2374, to require the Secretary of State to submit annual --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with and the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

[The bill H.R. 2374 follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. And at this time, I recognize myself to speak briefly on this measure.

I support passage of H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act, introduced by Mr. Sherman of California. An identical bill was reported last Congress with the full support of this committee. The State Department helped to finalize the text of this legislation and has no concerns about its passage in Congress.

This bill requires the Department of State to report on the curriculum used in schools in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority or located in Gaza. Among the topics it includes, the report must address: one, whether the materials used encourage violence or intolerance toward other nations or ethnic groups; two, the steps the Palestinian Authority has taken to reform such materials, and three, whether the United States Foreign Assistance is used to fund the dissemination of the offending materials.

The State Department must make such reports publicly available. Both the State Department, the United Nations, and the Palestinian Authority have taken measures to improve the content of Palestinian textbooks in recent years, but there is still work to be done, particularly by the PA.

This legislation will help Congress better monitor progress in this area and assure we are spending American
taxpayer dollars to promote peace as opposed to intolerance. Please join me in supporting this bill.

I now recognize Representative Brian Mast of Florida for 5 minutes.

Mr. Mast. You're surprising me. I didn't know you were going to come over here first, but happy to talk about it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So, I'm proud to be one of the Republican leads on this piece of legislation. I want to thank Congressman Sherman for his work on this as well.

And just to underline a few of the examples, I guess, that we could give, I have a number of them here. But I want to give two of them.

So, here's one example: it's a fourth grade Palestinian math problem, and in this fourth grade Palestinian math problem, they ask this: the number of martyrs of the First Intifada is 2,026 martyrs and the number of martyrs of the Al-Aqsa Intifada is 5,050. The number of martyrs in the two Intifadas is X number of martyrs. That's an actual math problem out of a Palestinian textbook.

I could give another one here. Here's a geography question that says -- this is for sixth grade geography -- define the borders of Palestine, right? And they're to find the borders of Palestine. They completely erase Israel's
existence, right? So, there's one right there. The list goes on and on in these books.

So, basically, the hope for peace in that region is to -- what? -- ask the kids to not attend school? No, that can't be the answer. So, the answer has to be make sure that they are not being taught this type of curriculum, and above that, make sure that U.S. taxpayers certainly are not paying to make this the curriculum that they are being taught. And that's why this particular piece of legislation is so important.

So, I thank my colleague for his work on this, and I yield the balance of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields.

I now recognize Representative Brad Sherman of California for 5 minutes.

Mr. Sherman. Thank you.

At the outset, I'd like to commend the chairman for all the bills that are being brought forward. I support all of them. I realize there are resolutions of inquiry that I put in a different category than that.

I want to commend our very close friend, Ted Deutch, who has served as chair of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee. He has left an incredible legacy. I know he'll be leaving Congress in a few weeks. I believe this is
his last markup in this committee. And I just want to take a moment to commend him for his outstanding service to our country.

I also want to commend Congressman Albio Sires, not only for his bill AFFECT Human Rights, the Venezuela Act, but also for his service to the committee. And I know that he will be serving with us through the end of this year.

I want to thank the chairman for bringing up my bill, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act. I proposed this bill in the last Congress. It passed in this committee in December of 2019, without objection, by voice vote. And my hope is that we can do that here today, to be as expeditious as possible.

My hope, also, is that this time we'll not only just pass the bill through this committee, but that it will be brought forward on the Floor. Given its bipartisan support, I think it could easily pass on a suspension.

I want to thank so many members of this committee for cosponsoring the bill, including Representatives Mast, McCaul, Chabot, Fitzpatrick, Salazar, Chris Smith, Schneider, Manning, Malliotakis, Steube, Wagner, and Cicilline -- a diverse and bipartisan group of our members. And, of course, we have a host of cosponsors who aren't members of the committee.
For decades, the United States has been the top donor to the Palestinian people, including the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA. But American support must reflect American values. It doesn't always do that when it funds certain programs at certain UNRWA-funded schools.

On March 11th, 1978, the al-Mughrabi and 10 other PLO militants hijacked two civilian buses and killed 38 civilian passengers, including 13 children in what is known as the Coastal Road Massacre. Today, children educated at UNRWA and Palestinian Authority schools receive textbooks calling the perpetrator of this act of terrorism that killed 38 civilians a crown of the nation, with a full chapter discussing the massacre in detail and exalting the terrorism for her so-called -- and particularly one terrorist for her so-called heroism. This is but one example of many instances of the glorification of terrorism, the encouragement of violence, antisemitic in arts that, unfortunately, permeate much of the Palestinian curriculum.

I think all of us on this committee favor a peace between the Israelis and the Palestinian people; favor two states, and a solution to a crisis that has been intractable for over 75 years. That piece depends upon how people are educated and how they think. And the glorification of killing 38 civilians who just happened to be on a bus,
including 13 children, is a step away from peace.

The violent curriculum has violent consequences. Just this May, a report found that a 17-year-old Palestinian who attempted to kill Israelis in a stabbing attack was taught incendiary and violence against Israel and anti-Israel hate at an UNRWA-paid-for school.

My bills come at an important time. While UNRWA has made commitments to address this issue in its 2021 Framework for Cooperation, serious concerns with UNRWA incitement schools persist, including an incident in June where six UNRWA staffers, including teachers, were placed on administrative leave after having social posts that stated it is time to fight against the Jews and kill them. Slaughter the Zionists. This is not helpful.

This bill does not, by its own terms -- hopefully, it will lead to prevention of some of this most extreme speech -- but what it does is it simply demands a report be provided to Congress. So, even if you are the most free speech purist, this bill doesn't prevent speech; it requires speech by the State Department to tell us what the State Department already knows internally, and that is whether the textbooks used in UNRWA and Palestinian Authority schools are educating for peace or educating for terrorism.

I yield back and I urge a quick and expeditious vote on
the bill.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

I now recognize Representative Cathy Manning of North Carolina, who is the vice chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa and Global Counterterrorism, for 5 minutes.

Ms. Manning. Thank you, Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul, for your leadership and for working to pass this and several other important measures.

I am proud to support H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act, a bipartisan legislation I cosponsored, introduced by Representatives Brad Sherman and Lee Zeldin.

Mr. Chairman, this week marks the two-year anniversary of the signing of the Abraham Accords, which represents a huge shift in the region towards a bright future built on peaceful coexistence. Making that vision a reality requires the next generation of young people in the Middle East to believe in acceptance and tolerance.

Last year, members of this committee traveled, as part of a bipartisan congressional delegation, to the region, where we met with Palestinian youth who were deeply disillusioned about the possibility for peace with their Israeli neighbors.
Sadly, we have seen the continued use of textbooks and other educational materials in schools run by the PA and UNRWA containing anti-Israel content, which perpetuates antisemitism, Palestinian victimhood and martyrdom, erases Israel from the map, and even glorifies violence and terrorism.

Mr. Chairman, children of the West Bank and Gaza deserve the chance to learn without using textbooks that are biased, promote intolerance, and demonize or mischaracterize Israel. That is why this bill would require the State Department to investigate, report to Congress, and make publicly available important information about the content of the curriculum used in these schools.

This bipartisan bill helps build on and reinforce the commitments made under the U.S.-UNRWA Framework for Cooperation, which calls for monitoring and addressing problematic content in textbooks that violates the U.N.'s own principles of neutrality and tolerance.

Mr. Chairman, no child is born to hate; they have to be carefully taught. Educational materials that teach them hate by demonizing Israel only make it harder to resolve the conflict and achieve lasting peace. This bipartisan legislation will help ensure that the PA and UNRWA schools improve their curriculum and meet internationally-recognized
standards for peace and tolerance.

In closing, I urge all my colleagues to support this important bipartisan bill that I am proud to cosponsor. And I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Any other member who wishes to speak?

Hearing none—for what purpose does the Representative from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, seek recognition?

Mr. Pfluger. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Mr. Chairman, which number amendment is the gentleman offering?

Mr. Pfluger. I thank the chairman. It's 180, I believe.

Chairman Meeks. 180.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Pfluger Amendment No. 180 to H.R. 2374.

Add at the end of Section 3 the following:

It is the further sense of Congress --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of
the amendment will be dispensed with.

[The Amendment No. 180 offered by Mr. Pfluger follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. And the Representative from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes in support of the amendment.

Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. And thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on this amendment.

And thanks to Congressman Sherman for your leadership on this bill.

My straightforward amendment doesn't change the nature of the bill. It just goes a small, but important step further -- adding the sense of Congress clause that states that antisemitism, Xenophobia, and claims that Israel is an apartheid state should have absolutely no place in any curriculum used by the Palestinian Authority.

For far too long, Palestinian students have been subjected to the curriculums that contain materials promoting violence and extremist ideology -- all while being subsidized by United States taxpayer money.

And specifically, these textbooks, as it's been previously discussed here in this hearing, produced by United Nations Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA, contain material that de-legitimizes Israel as a nation, denigrates Jews, and supports martyrdom.

More troubling is the fact that UNRWA has allowed Hamas to use their facilities to store weapons to wage their war
with Israel. These issues are compounded by the fact that the President of Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, has peddled conspiracy theories, trivializing the Holocaust, and claims that Israel is an apartheid state. It's alarming that our constituents could potentially be helping promote this type of hateful propaganda from President Abbas, the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas through our taxpayer dollars.

In addition to these alarming revelations, I find it incredibly concerning and disgusting that members of this committee have also participated in peddling these hateful talking points with little to no recourse, either from leadership or within our institution. Echoing this rhetoric not only spreads these hateful messages to a broader audience, but undercuts the values this Nation was founded on and our interests across the globe. And in order to ensure that we are holding the PA responsible for their hateful propaganda, we must also consider the words that we have and the effect that they have -- the words that we use and the effect that they have.

My amendment intends to make it crystal-clear that our Nation will not fund hateful propaganda that works to undermine a pathway to peace in any region of the world or indoctrinate the next generation of jihadists.
And furthermore, this amendment will finally put Members on the record as to where they stand in denouncing antisemitism, Xenophobia, and the idea that Israel is an apartheid state.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record a statement by President Abbas in which he refers to Israel as an apartheid state.

And I'd also like to submit for the record a series of tweets by a member of this committee, Congressman Omar, where she accuses Israel of being an apartheid state, and a tweet stating that Israel has hypnotized the world, a phrase routinely used by extremist groups that spread hateful rhetoric about Jewish people and the State of Israel.

I think it's important that we recognize what this bill does and where Members stand on this very important issue.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the request by the gentleman is accepted.

[The information follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. Let me, first, recognize myself. I'll just do this quickly.

I want to say that I support the amendment expanding the sense of Congress introduced by Representative Pfluger, and I very much support its passage.

And now, we'll recognize Representative Claudia Tenney of New York for 5 minutes.

Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member McCaul, and thank you to Mr. Sherman for introducing the bill in chief.

I would like to speak in support of Representative Pfluger's amendment to H.R. 2374. Despite widespread calls for reform, the Palestinian Authority's curriculum continues to incite hatred of the Jewish people -- with school textbooks and other learning materials filled with antisemitism, calls for jihad, rejection of reconciliation, and the de-legitimatization of the State of Israel.

Palestinian students have long been subjected to these materials that promote violence and antisemitism -- all at the expense of the American taxpayer. This must end. As detailed by Mr. Mast earlier, we saw some examples of what the curriculum actually holds.

Mr. Pfluger's common-sense amendment rightly makes it known that the United States will not fund extremist ideology
and hateful propaganda, while also putting Members on the record to denounce the antisemitism and the absurd notion that Israel is an apartheid state. Time and again, Members of Congress, and even some on this very committee, take action that weakens Israel's security. These actions often embolden countries that wish to see Israel wiped off the face of the map, including Iran, which is back in the news again. When Iran sees Members of Congress in our own body, elected here in the United States, attack Israel, one of our allies, Israel's right to self-defense, or advance the propaganda that somehow Israel is an apartheid state, this perpetuates the cycle of violence that we continue to see in the region today.

This is why I strongly support the amendment and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

And thank you again to the members for recognizing the importance of the State of Israel as a great ally in the Middle East for the United States.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

I now recognize Representative Brad Sherman for 5 minutes.

Mr. Sherman. I believe this amendment is accurate. I hope it will continue to provide for universe acceptance of
the underlying bill.

I think all of us would condemn antisemitism; all of us would condemn Xenophobia. There might be someone who would, or at least I've met a few people that would, claim that Israel is an apartheid state, and I want to rebut that I think extreme conclusion.

We want a two-state solution. That means that there will be one state for one people, apart from another state for another people. That is not apartheid. Apartheid was a vicious system in southern Africa that the entire world worked to destroy. And to call Israel an apartheid state is to call for a worldwide effort to destroy Israel.

The fact is that there is a border between Israel and Egypt. So, the Egyptian people are separated from Israel by a border. They live apart from Israel in Egypt. That is no different from what we see in Europe. Nobody has called the Netherlands an apartheid state because it has a border with Germany. And the Dutch live predominantly on one side of the border, and Germans tend to live on the other side of the border, and they both have different states for different people. And, of course, there are some Germans living in the Netherlands and some Dutch living in Germany, and their rights are respected.

So, to say that those who want a Jewish state living
side-by-side with a Palestinian state are embracing the evils of apartheid is to say that virtually every international border constitutes a separateness and apartheid because it divides people into different countries. And I think that's an extreme and ridiculous conclusion.

We do want a two-state solution, and that is the majority sentiment in Israel, and is the official position of the Israeli government. It's almost the position of the Palestinian Authority. So, to condemn Israel because it wants to be a Jewish state should be done right after we condemn the Netherlands for wanting to be a predominantly Dutch state.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Representative Steve Chabot of Ohio for 5 minutes.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will not use the full 5 minutes, nor even most of it, I don't think. But I do feel very strongly about this matter. And I want to begin by thanking Mr. Pfluger for his very constructive amendment. I'm glad he offered this, and I think, hopefully, all members will support it, because it makes total sense.

I also want to thank Mr. Sherman and Mr. Zeldin for the
underlying act itself, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act, which also is very constructive and common-sense, and should be supported by all members.

It's absolutely critical that the next generation of Palestinian children are taught that peace with Israel is possible, instead of indoctrinated into a narrative of hate and resentment and instability. And that's what, unfortunately, is in a lot of these books that they use as education material.

And as a former school teacher myself of the seventh and eighth grade, to think that there are children that rely upon that hatred in those books is just appalling. There can never be peace between the Palestinians and Israel when such a narrative remains widespread, that there can't possibly be peace, and worst, if it's widely taught.

Unfortunately, the textbooks developed by the Palestinian Authority far too frequently espouse such a narrative and all this propaganda and hatred for Israel, and being an apartheid state, allegedly, and all of the rest. It's ludicrous.

And as some of my colleagues have already said, the fact that there are people, or at least a person on this committee, who has adopted some of that propaganda and has espoused it, is very disturbing as well.
And it's beyond absurd that U.N. schools -- U.N. schools, the United Nations schools -- sometimes are using these various textbooks as well. That's got to stop. Today's legislation I believe is an important step towards stopping this egregious behavior and these egregious materials, so that we can actually at least have the children who are being brought up want to have tolerance for each other, rather than hatred and figure they have to be enemies for life, will never have peace, if that's the case.

So, again, all those involved in putting this forward, both the amendment and the underlying legislation, I commend them. I urge my colleagues to support it, and yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on the Pfluger Amendment No. 180, and we're going to take a vote by voice. All members please unmute their microphones.

Mr. Vargas. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Meeks. Mr. Pfluger? Oh, no.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

Mr. Vargas. Mr. Chairman? Could we have a recorded
vote on this one, please?
Chairman Meeks. A roll call vote is requested.
Pursuant to Committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.
Are there any other amendments?
Hearing no other amendments, we now move on to the next measure.
We'll now consider H.R. 4213, the YSEALI Act, with a Castro amendment in the nature of a substitute designated 108.
Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call up H.R. 4213, the YSEALI Act, and the clerk will report the bill.
Ms. Hallman. H.R. 4213, to establish the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and for other purposes.
Be it enacted --
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with and the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.
[The bill H.R. 4213 follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. And without objection, the Castro amendment in the nature of a substitute designated 108, circulated to members, shall be considered as read and will be treated as an original text for purposes of amendment.

[The Amendment No. 108 in the nature of a substitute offered by Mr. Castro follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. And at this time, I recognize myself to speak briefly on the measure.

I support this bipartisan measure from Representatives Castro and Tenney which provides statutory authority for the Department of State's Young Southeast Leaders Initiative, or YSEALI. This program, which began in 2013, allows young emerging leaders from Southeast Asia to gain exposure to the United States. It allows them to develop professional skills that will enable them to contribute to good governance, economic development, and regional cooperation on shared challenges, and strengthen bilateral ties with the United States.

This program reinforces American soft power and diplomacy in the best ways -- making it that much easier for our diplomats in the region and that much less likely that we'll need to call on the utilization of our military to deal with crises.

It also provides us an opportunity to connect with future leaders and entrepreneurs in the region who are going to be shaping the trajectories of the countries and the region.

Southeast Asia is absolutely critical for the United States strategically and economically. And this bill will bolster cooperation with these nations and facilitate
stronger people-to-people ties to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific organization authorizing and extending this program, and this is a very smart thing to do, as I witnessed with a recent trip that I made to Southeast Asia, and talking to them, where they want to know that we are utilizing our soft power and that we are engaged in that region.

So, I wholeheartedly support this bipartisan bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Do any other members wish to speak on this measure?

I recognize Representative Joaquin Castro of Texas for 5 minutes.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman.

The YSEALI Act is named for the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, or YSEALI, and would codify this important program. I'm glad to lead this bipartisan bill together with Representative Claudia Tenney.

Since YSEALI launched in 2013, thousands of young people from Southeast Asia have participated in these programs, learning best practices to support good governance, transparency, and accountability. Across the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, 58 percent of the population is younger than 35 years old. The ASEAN youth of today will shape the political and economic institutions of one of the fastest-growing regions of the
world at the strategically important crossroads of the Pacific, China, and India. Young leaders' programs like YSEALI are among the best way that the United States can reach out to this rising generation.

The committee has previously considered this bill as part of the COMPETES Act, but I asked for it to be marked up as a standalone measure because of the importance of YSEALI and the outcomes from the U.S.-ASEAN Special Summit in May. There, the United States made a commitment to double the size of the YSEALI program within three years -- a testament to the program's effectiveness and demand for its programming within the region.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute we are considering today includes an authorization of appropriations that is consistent with that commitment and is the product of bipartisan negotiations.

Reporting it favorably will reaffirm that Congress is invested in Southeast Asia's future and that the United States is a reliable partner ahead of a next round of summit diplomacy between the U.S. and ASEAN in November.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to reject any hostile amendments.

Chairman Meeks. Does the gentleman yield back?

Mr. Castro. I yield back.
Chairman Meeks. Any other members wish to speak?

Representative Tenney is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

I really also would like to speak in support of H.R. 4213, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Act, or YSEALI. And I thank Representative Castro for his work on this bipartisan bill and this initiative. And I echo all of the sentiments on why this is so important, which is why I'm honored to co-lead this.

I also just want to really mention my thanks and gratitude to Representative Castro for his continued long-time support of the Burmese people. It's just that we've been doing this for years, and I really appreciate your support and your compassion for these people in this really important part of the world.

Southeast Asia is a dynamic region of critical importance to the United States, situated at the crossroads between Pacific China and India, as my colleague stated. The 10 member states of the ASEAN are a major destination for U.S. exports and investment, with a combined Gross Domestic Product of $3.2 trillion.

The YSEALI program, originally founded in 2013, plays a critical role in building people-to-people ties between the United States and this rising generation in the ASEAN.
countries. The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy includes building connections within and beyond the region, underscoring the importance of YSEALI's work, supporting people-to-people ties.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support the passage of this important bill and look forward to working with my colleagues on this effort. And I urge everyone to support it. It's going to be a great bill.

And I thank again Mr. Castro for his support and for making this a standalone bill and taking it out of the COMPETES Act.

Again, I thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Any further requests to speak on the amendment?

Ms. Titus. Mr. Chairman, it's Dina Titus.

Chairman Meeks. Yes. Ms. Titus is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Titus. Thank you very much.

I'm just pleased to speak in support of this bill, too. It's a premier program to support networking and develop leadership skills in this area.

Sixty-five percent of the individuals in ASEAN countries, plus Timor-Leste, are under the age of 35. So, this will be a critical tool for attracting and training and
benefitting from these leadership programs for these young
people. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this.
And while we are talking about education programs, if
you would indulge me for just a minute, Mr. Chairman, I'd
like to go back and speak on behalf of the John Lewis Civil
Rights Fellowship Act.
I want to thank you for bringing this legislation and
for all you've done to look for new opportunities and
diversification for getting into the State Department. And I
think this would be one of those mechanisms.
I also thank Representatives Nikema Williams and Nancy
Mace for their leadership on this bill.
You know, John Lewis, who was such a hero for all of us,
would appreciate us continuing his legacy by supporting
efforts to study non-violent civil rights movements abroad.
His work on the civil rights movement is known far and wide
and respected by many people around the world. His long-time
commitment to non-violence and human dignity is something
that inspires countless people and something to aspire to.
This is a dream that makes the world a better place.
This new fellowship within the Fulbright Scholarship
Program would support young scholars studying a history of
non-violent civil rights movements around the world, so we
can have a better understanding of non-violence as a critical
tool for change.

Many people see the United States as an opportunity and a place to take advantage of educational opportunities and cultural exchanges offered through the State Department. However, there are not a whole lot of opportunities in these programs and we haven't seen the diversification of the State Department itself to provide new entry points for people to join.

Yesterday, the State Department released a five-year Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility to address that problem. And I believe this legislation for the John Lewis Internship Program or Scholarship Program really fits with the goals that are spelled out by Secretary Blinken in this Strategic Plan.

Also, I'd point out that the John and Lillian Miles Lewis Foundation named this program as a priority and said that there was no better way to pay tribute to the legacy of our late, great colleague John Lewis.

So, I support the YSEALI Act as an opportunity for soft diplomacy and education from both sides. And I also support the John Lewis Scholarship Act because it does the same thing, just in a more specialized way. As opposed to economic leadership, it's knowledge of civil rights and how that movement can move forward diplomatic and democratic
provisions.

And I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Do any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Hearing no requests, let's move on to amendments.

For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk, No. 761.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment No. 761 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4213.

Page 8, after line --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with,

[The Amendment No. 761 offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. And the Representative from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes in support of the amendment.

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, this amendment simply prohibits the Secretary of State from including the People's Republic of China in this program. To me, it's pretty common-sense. If we're going to authorize this kind of program with all its purported benefits for the young Southeast Asian leaders, we shouldn't be providing that benefit to the PRC, which has destabilized the region to the detriment of scores of young people. Again, I hardly think promoting young leaders in the CCP is a prudential cause and use of taxpayer money or is in the best interest of our Nation or those nations, not including the CCP.

So, that's the extent of it. And with that, I urge -- I hope it's not controversial, but I certainly urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

And I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

But I do oppose -- I recognize myself now for 5 minutes -- and I oppose this amendment because, to me, it's just completely unnecessary. The Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, as it is titled, makes explicit it's open to countries from Southeast Asia. And last I checked, China is
not in Southeast Asia and there is no danger of it being included.

Moreover, our partners and allies in the region constantly tell us that they want us to engage them for their own sake and do not want to participate in initiatives that are explicitly anti-China. So, not only would this amendment have no benefit, but it could also make it politically difficult with some of our ASEAN countries to want to participate. Such an outcome could be -- and therefore, would be in my estimation -- a win for China strategically.

We need to be smart for our diplomacy to be effective against China. Therefore, I oppose this amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Is there any further debate on the amendment?

I recognize Mr. Castro from Texas for 5 minutes.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman.

I also oppose Mr. Perry's amendment to H.R. 4213, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well. I believe this amendment is unnecessary and would actually undermine U.S.-ASEAN relations.

While the YSEALI program has been focused on Southeast Asia, as it should be, the 10 ASEAN member states, plus Timor-Leste, which hopes to join ASEAN, the People's Republic of China has never, and would never, be a part of the YSEALI
program, which has strived under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

In my opening remarks, I spoke about why it was so important we consider this bill as a standalone now at a critical moment for U.S. diplomacy in Southeast Asia, and why programs like YSEALI that focus on meeting Southeast Asia's needs for youth engagement are so important.

Years of persistent diplomacy across multiple administrations, as well as initiatives like the YSEALI Caucus, which I co-chair, have tried to demonstrate that we care about Southeast Asia in its own right, not just because of strategic competition with others in the region. I think if we were to adopt this amendment, it would confuse that critical message and undermine U.S. influence in Southeast Asia.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues not to support this amendment.

Chairman Meeks. Any further requests to speak?

Ms. Tenney is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Tenney. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just I want to yield my time to the author of the amendment for a clarification, if I may.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the world that we live in where everything, like
literally everything, is being redefined, I just want to clarify that in the bill as it currently stands it's the Secretary of State, the Secretary, that person themself will determine who's in this organization.

So, look, I'm not opposed to the bill at all. I think it's probably a pretty good deal. But I think it's important that Congress make the rules, Congress decide, the representatives of the American people decide who's going to be involved in this organization, who's going to receive taxpayer funds and who does not.

The bill explicitly states that the Secretary will decide, which is why I think the amendment should explicitly state that China shouldn't be included. China calls the United States its enemy, the CCP. Why would we allow, potentially allow, a Secretary of State sympathetic to the needs of China, or under the influence of China, to at some point decide that the CCP should be -- they're already buying up land; they're stealing our property. I can go through the list of infractions and egregious activity that the Communist Party commits against the United States of America and, particularly, in the West in general.

Look, the road to Hades is paved with good intentions, and I think the intentions of this bill, and the makers of this bill, is good. But I don't know why the legislative
branch would cede its authority to the executive branch so
blatantly. I mean, it says right in the bill who's going to
decide.

And, you know, look, in a general purpose, I'm okay with
that, except for the Communist Party of China. And if they
decide that, all of a sudden, they've seen the light and they
want to let Hong Kong reestablish itself as a more democratic
enclave, if they want to abandon their totalitarian communist
activities, if they want to abandon their hegemonic activity
around the globe, and their desire to be the preeminent force
around the globe and impose their will on everybody, then I
think we should revisit it, but that's not where we are.

We are where we are at this moment, and if we fail to
recognize this -- look, I hear what you're saying; like they
don't -- these other agencies, these other countries don't
want to have to pick and choose. Mr. Chairman, we're going
to have to decide whether we're for ourselves as a country or
we're not, and I think this is a perfect opportunity.

Look, if you all want to vote in favor of China, God
bless you; I do not. I represent the American people, and
I'll be darn if my votes are going to go for taxpayer money
to go fund the Communist Party of China, who will use it to
continue their egregious activities against us. And at some
point, you know, look, it's no mystery that they want to
eclipse the United States as the preeminent and dominant force on the planet.

The communist party, and communism in general, is not a force for good. It is responsible for the countless unfavorable, unpleasant loss of lives and misery for centuries -- well, not for centuries -- for decades around the globe. I don't know how we in good faith -- again, with good intentions -- can stand for that.

I think this is an easy amendment, and I think we're making way too much of it. I didn't write the bill. I might not have put what's in the bill in the bill, but since it is in the bill, I think it's important that we clarify who's involved and who's not. Because if we don't clarify it, somebody else is going to, and we're going to have given them carte blanche to do it. And I'm not sure how you're going to explain to your constituents that you said it was okay to give their money to the people that would cut our throats and abandon our way of life in this country for theirs in that country.

So, I thank the gentlelady. I yield back the balance of the time to her, and I appreciate the sentiments.

Chairman Meeks. Does the gentlelady yield back the balance of the time?

Ms. Tenney. Yield back.
Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Are there any further requests to speak on the amendment?

Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on the amendment, Perry 761. We're going to take a vote by voice. All members, please unmute your microphone.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it.

Mr. Vargas. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairman Meeks. A roll call vote is requested.

Pursuant to committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.

Are there other amendments?

Hearing no other amendments, we now move on to the next measure.

We now consider H.R. 8153, the Indo-Pacific Engagement Act. Pursuant to notice, and for purpose of markup, I now call up H.R. 8153, and the clerk shall report the measure.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 8153, to support diplomatic and development resourcing to the Indo-Pacific, and for other reasons.

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with, and the measure shall be
considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

[The Bill H.R. 8153 follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. I now recognize myself to speak briefly on this measure.

I support this legislation because it will help align the United States efforts in the Indo-Pacific with resources and help demonstrate to the other countries of the Indo-Pacific that the United States remains engaged in the region, not for the short term, but for the long term, whether we are referencing the pivot or the rebalance to Asia, or the Indo-Pacific strategy.

So, the intent and the thrust of U.S. foreign policy is clear. We need to deepen our engagement with the presence in this vibrant and populous region which is home to half of the world's people, accounts for 60 percent of global GDP, and includes critical U.S. allies and partners.

While give credit to the last three Presidents for focusing on this critical region, our resourcing does not sufficiently reflect the region's strategic importance to the United States national security interests. This legislation will, ideally, serve as the bases for the administration to match up resources with policy priorities and further the objectives outlined in our Interim National Security Strategic Guidance. In other words, in the neighborhood I grew up in, we're going to put our money where our mouth is.

The 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy and the State-USAID Joint
Strategic Plan is putting our money where our mouth is. We need to empower the State Department bureaucracy to outline what resources are necessary in this critical region, so that Congress can play a more informed oversight role and ensure that our policies in the Indo-Pacific are properly resourced.

So, I want to thank Mr. Bera and Mr. Chabot for working on this timely piece of legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure.

And I now recognize -- any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Mr. Bera. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Meeks. I recognize Chairman Ami Bera for 5 minutes.

Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As the chairman stated, the Indo-Pacific is home to approximately 60 percent of the world's population. It's also home to three of the largest global economies and many of the most important transit points for global commerce. And yet, the region remains significantly under-resourced in U.S. development and diplomacy dollars. Let me just offer a few examples from this year's budget request.

In bilateral economic assistance, the Indo-Pacific made up just 13 percent of the total request. In security assistance, foreign military financing to the region is just
3 percent of the global total. In diplomatic presence, we lack sufficient diplomatic personnel and facilities in key parts of the region, like the Pacific Islands, while the People's Republic of China rapidly expands its presence in the various activities in those same places.

The under-resourcing of the Indo-Pacific has been a problem for years. It's not unique to one administration, but it must change. That's my friend and the ranking member of the Asian Subcommittee, Steve Chabot, and I introduced the Indo-Pacific Engagement Act.

The bill will help address this resource problem by creating more transparency around the diplomatic and development resources needed in the region. Our bill directs the senior leaders of U.S. Asia policy at the State Department and USAID to provide an independent cost assessment for fulfilling the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy. The bill directs those leaders -- the Assistant Secretaries of State for East Asia and the Pacific and for South and Central Asia, and the Assistant Administrator for Asia -- to make their assessment public. It also requires them to submit an update to the assessment every year.

Our legislation is modeled off the success that the Armed Service Committee has had a few years ago through a report they required of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. They
have drawn a lot of attention to the defense resources needed in the region with notable changes in the annual defense appropriations specific to the region each year.

That's why we need to do the same for diplomatic and development resources. It will make our presence in the region stronger. It will help us compete with the PRC, and it's the right thing to do to help strengthen the region.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I urge all members to support this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

Any further requests to speak on this bill?

Hearing no further requests, let's move on to amendments.

For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to decide whether I offer amendments or not, depending on what the timeframe is for votes. Are we going to vote on the bills and the amendments immediately following these proceedings --

Chairman Meeks. No.

Mr. Perry. -- or are we going to --

Chairman Meeks. I'm reserving votes until tomorrow morning.

Mr. Perry. Until tomorrow morning? All right. Then, I
do have an amendment at the desk, Mr. Chairman. It's No. 760.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment No. 760 to H.R. 8153.

Page --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

[The Amendment No. 760 offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. And the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I understand the bill sponsor's concern over under- or misallocation of resources; I really do. On a similar note, I agree that we must ensure our actions in the Indo-Pacific reflect reality, especially and most importantly, as it relates to countering the malign influence of the PRC.

All this being said, this amendment seeks to really get to the root of the resources necessary in a way that should be consistent with the bill sponsor's policy objectives by separating the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. It should be abundantly clear that the current administration will stop at nothing, while sacrificing our national security and energy independence to promote supposedly clean energy and, essentially, force other countries in a colonial style into joining us on our paternalistic quest to reach BlackRock-backed emission goals.

Agree or not with that sentiment -- and I know many won't -- but I know that, or I'd like to hope that, folks would agree that including unrelated climate change activities into the resource assessment required by this bill would obfuscate the true cost of this engagement. And so, this amendment seeks to just remove that portion of it, so
that we can see what the actual cost of the engagement is.

So, I would urge support, and I yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance.

I now recognize myself, and I oppose the amendment, as this amendment, clearly, would disrupt and undermine the independent assessment that this report calls for to adequately fund our Indo-Pacific policy.

You know, in a democracy -- and it cuts both ways -- elections are important. Elections matter. You know, when the prior administration was in, they did things that I might not have wanted, but elections matter and they won.

In this instance, President Biden won the presidential election, and he has the right under our Constitution to chart the foreign policy course he chooses. In his Indo-Pacific Strategy, he has, rightly in my mind, identified that climate change is -- and I think most folks will agree -- that climate change, with all that we've seen taking place around the world today, it is a critical challenge, particularly in this region.

So, just look at what's taking place in the Pacific Islands or Singapore or Bangladesh, or dozens of other partners that we have in the region. They are actively asking for help with climate change and calling for United States leadership. And guess what? If we choose not to
offer it, China will. So, trying to strip climate out of this report would only undermine what we're trying to do -- to get more resources to the Indo-Pacific.

So, I oppose this amendment, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Any further debate on the amendment?

Mr. Bera. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Meeks. Mr. Bera is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I also oppose this amendment proposed by my colleague, which, as the chairman said, would only serve to weaken the United States' ability to compete effectively with the People's Republic of China.

Representative Perry offered this amendment, but I also note he shares my view that one of the most significant challenges the United States faces in the 21st century is the strategic competition from China. I believe he and I also agree that, to compete effectively, the United States must put a significant portion of our resources towards countering Beijing's malign influence in the Indo-Pacific.

Yet, when it comes to leveraging a unique U.S. advantage in competition with Beijing, our ability to help the Indo-Pacific nations combat a threat that they themselves identify as existential, this amendment would give up that advantage.
So, I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to oppose this amendment. If this amendment were adopted, it would undercut the United States' ability to address a clear and present danger to the livelihoods of our friends in the Indo-Pacific. It would undercut our ability to address one of the challenges our friends in the region care about most.

In short, this amendment would hand the win to Beijing.

And with that, I'll yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

Any further requests to speak on the amendment?

Hearing no further requests to speak on the amendment, Perry 760, we're going to take a vote by voice. All members, please unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to.

Are there any further --

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I've got an amendment at the desk, No. 764.

Chairman Meeks. Will the clerk please distribute the amendment? Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 764 to H.R. 8153,
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with. The representative of Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for five minutes to support the amendment. Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amendment ensures the activities of the special climate envoy, John Kerry, including his travel, are not counted toward the resources needed for the administration's Indo-Pacific engagement.

The special envoy has made clear that the administration is willing to sacrifice America's principles and our prosperity to further its green Utopian dreams. For example, Secretary Kerry belittled the genocide of Uyghurs and other minorities in East Turkistan as differences on human rights that do not have to get in the way of something that is as critical as dealing with climate.

Let's think about that. That is nearly -- that is unbelievable. At the same time the special envoy, the administration, and the majority are promoting technologies made with slave labor in East Turkistan where roughly half of the world's supply of polysilicon, an essential ingredient in solar panels, is produced. Meanwhile, the special envoy's attempts to convince the Chinese to cooperate on climate change have failed by any conceivable metric.
As of July, China has proposed permitting or begun construction on 174 new coal mines or coal mine expansion projects capable of producing 596 million metric tons per year once completed. It doesn't sound like, you know, they are very committed. They might say it. It doesn't sound like they are too committed to me. Coal accounted for nearly 64 percent of China's power generation in 2021.

Since China signed the Paris Agreement, its coal fired capacity has increased, increased, by 185 gigawatts. For reference, the entire U.S. operational coal capacity was 209.6 gigawatts at the beginning of this year. And I will remind everybody, California is out there telling people, you know, plug in your electric vehicle they are going to force you to make. Meanwhile, they are telling you not to plug it in because we don't have the power.

We have the power. We just refuse to make it. We refuse to give it to you. This about control, ladies and gentlemen. It is about anything but that. And unfortunately, it is going to be about the control from the Communist Party.

While we should not be demonizing coal or the expansion of electrical access, this is a striking, striking example of the special envoy's failure to accomplish the cooperation with the Chinese. By sacrificing America's values and still
failing to effectuate the changes he sought, Special Envoy
Kerry's work has been to the detriment of the U.S. Indo-
Pacific engagement.

The administration should not get credit for his
stunning failure. Well, actually, I think they actually
should get credit for the failure. But they actually should
wake up to the reality that the Chinese are using the Western
elite's obsession, obsession, with climate to economically
neutralize the United States of America and the Western world.

I am not going to even get into his private travel on
his jet, you know, while he is out there telling us, I guess
we got to walk to work or ride a bike or something like that.

But anyhow, look, I urge support of the amendment,
obviously, and I yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance. I
now recognize myself for five minutes, and I'll take my two
minutes, of course. I just want to let everyone know that I
oppose this amendment.

Mr. Perry's amendment sounds to me basically it is
political in nature. And it is really designed to attack a
sitting U.S. official and an individual who I know is a
strong public servant, who has served this country very well
from the time that he was in the military on.

Moreover, you know, what we are really trying to do and
what we are trying to do here is resourcing our Indo-Pacific strategy. The report is about the Indo-Pacific, and it would not implicate or delve into the very specific matter that this amendment refers to.

It is thoroughly unnecessary, and it is a distraction. It's a distraction from the important effort that this bipartisan bill is trying to advance. Therefore, I strongly oppose this amendment. Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Mr. Chabot, I recognize you for five minutes.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want to voice my support for the Perry amendment. I think it is well written, well said. And even though I didn't hear it all, knowing it was coming from Mr. Perry, I knew it would be well said.

But he's absolutely right. Kerry has gone way overboard, and it is an obsession. It's a religion how far they want to go on this stuff. And unfortunately, we are paying a price right now. And I am afraid they would sell us down the river to get -- and unfortunately, PRC knows this.

So I think this is a good amendment, and I certainly support it although I am quite sure it won't pass this committee under its current makeup but probably would in about two months from now -- well, we don't take over until
January. That is right. We don't know that.

Chairman Meeks. Maybe you won't take over at all.

Mr. Chabot. We will see, Mr. Chairman. You are certainly the chairman of this committee right now. And you are doing a pretty fine job of that I got to say as well.

But I also want to voice my support of this important legislation, the underlying legislation, the Indo-Pacific Engagement Act, which my good friend, Chairman Bera and I introduced to get a better understanding of the needs from the State Department and USAID what they face in the Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Chairman, we are locked in a generational struggle, really it's a multi-generational struggle, with the Chinese Communist party, which will determine whether the world is safe for democracy, literally, or whether we will succumb to Communist tyranny and government control over our lives and over our economy and the lives and economies of people all across this globe.

We didn't ask for this challenge. And I dare say nobody here wants it, but we must win. And we aren't going to outcompete China on a shoestring budget. Unfortunately, while many people talk as if China is 10 feet tall, most of Washington acts like China is about 2 feet tall.

For instance, while the Indo-Pacific has over half of
the world's population, think of that half of the world's population in the Indo-Pacific, the region only accounts for 11 percent of our total international affairs budget. Think of that, half the world. And I think most people would agree because of our confrontation, our competition, on our adversary the PRC, some would call it an enemy, that this is our greatest challenge across the globe at least yet only 11 percent of the foreign affairs international budget goes there.

When it comes to Asia, we have simply failed to put our money where our mouth is. And this is a bipartisan problem as that number hasn't changed that much over the last three administrations. So we are talking both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Speak loudly and carry a small stick unfortunately seems to be this administration's policy for China right now. To help remedy this, Ami's bill and mine, the Indo-Pacific Engagement Act, would require the State Department to tell us what resources we need to be spending in the Indo-Pacific independent of the Presidential budget process. This will help us understand what it truly takes to counter China.

This bill gives Congress the tools we need to better evaluate where we should be spending increasingly scarce taxpayer dollars. Now I'm saying increasingly scarce, but I
also have to say this administration and their cohorts in the Congress also have been spending money like there is no tomorrow, like money grows on trees, and the debt has continued to rise as a result of that.

And that spending is also -- you know, we're seeing inflation. I know some of my colleagues on the other side were hoping it was going to come down. Well, unfortunately it went up. Despite their party yesterday, the inflation went up. And the spending is what is causing that inflation, that plus the fact that we used to be energy independent, and we are no longer energy independent because we have discouraged energy production in this country rather than encouraged it.

But that being aside, the bill itself is bipartisan. And I want to commend Ami Bera for his hard work on this and his ideas and his leadership because I think he has done a very good job also. So with that, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation as well as the Perry amendment, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Ami Bera of California. Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my good friend and colleague from Ohio for those kind words. His staff has been great to work with this in a bipartisan way, and we look
forward to continuing to work, as I say generally, in January of 2023.

Let me speak to the amendment by my other good friend from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry. I oppose this amendment and here is why. One of the most important elements of U.S. diplomacy is actually showing up in person. We see this very acutely in the Pacific Islands where the Chinese are present. We need to have a big presence there, and nothing can fully replace direct face-to-face, people-to-people engagement.

That is why having the special presidential envoy for climate travel to the region is incredibly important because it demonstrates the U.S. commitment and willingness to work with our allies and partners on this existential threat. And this threat is nowhere greater than in our Pacific Island allies. And, you know, having the envoy being able to travel is incredibly important.

So I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Any further debate on this amendment? Hearing no further request to speak, the question is on the amendment, Perry Number 764. And we are going to take a vote by voice. So I'm asking all members to unmute your microphones.

And all those that are in favor say aye.
All those opposed no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it.

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairman Meeks. A roll call vote is requested pursuant to Committee Rule 4(a)(2). Further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed. Are there any other amendments? Hearing no further amendments, we will now move on to the next measure.

We now consider H. Res. 1240, requesting the President and directing the Secretary of State to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents in their possession referring to or relating to certain aspects of the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan. Pursuant to notice for purpose of markup, I now call up H. Res. 1240.

[The H. Res. 1240 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. And the clerk will report the
resolution. Ms. Hallman. House Resolution 1240, requesting the President and directing the Secretary of State --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the resolution is dispensed with and the measure shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point. And at this time, I recognize myself to speak on the measure.

First, I want to say thank you to ranking member for this resolution. But this measure unfortunately, as I look at it, seems to be just a fishing expedition and has been since the withdrawal occurred last August.

I believe that oversight related towards U.S. policy on Afghanistan is important, and we have had this conversation. But I don't believe it can be done in a partisan manner. The withdrawal from Afghanistan cannot be, and I've said this consistently over and over again, cannot be effectively reviewed by simply looking at 20 days in August and not the 20 years in Afghanistan.

And it must also include, of course, the evaluation of former President Donald Trump's DOHA deal, which led to that withdrawal, a deal which excluded the Afghan government, a deal that required the U.S. to withdraw all troops, a deal which forced the Afghan government to release 5,000 Taliban
prisoners, fundamentally altering the power structures in the country.

So no evaluation of the withdrawal is credible unless it also includes a real evaluation of the deal that led to those days in August. This request for information is entirely political in nature, requesting documents solely based on who was in office despite the impact the previous administration's policies had on administrations that followed.

This document request, again, it's a fishing expedition that fails to account for the information the administration has regularly provided to this committee and continues to provide to this committee and to this Congress.

The administration has had more than 150 engagements with members of Congress since the August withdrawal, has answered numerous requests for information on many of the subjects in the resolution, and has been willing to do so, including in a briefing this committee held in June with five senior State Department officials in which many of the measure's co-sponsors failed to attend.

So I still know -- there is a report that we are waiting -- the administration will be releasing. I still think that there are ways that we can get that. I think that it is important for us to work in a bipartisan way so that we can
evaluate Afghanistan and the withdrawal in its entirety. That is what oversight is. That is what we have been doing and will continue to do. And thereby I strongly oppose this measure and urge that my colleagues join me in voting to report it adversely.

I now recognize my friend on this one, I know we disagree, but Ranking Member Michael McCaul. Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, you know, our relationship is always agree to disagree and work civilly together and that is what I fully intend to do here today.

But I do disagree. I think this committee has jurisdiction over this. And we have to exercise that jurisdiction of oversight. And I don't think we've had one document produced to this committee. And now the administration is not even working with the SIGAR, the Inspector General. And they certainly didn't work with me when we conducted this report on the strategy failures, strategic failure.

But over a year ago, we did really watch in horror as the 20 years of blood, sweat, and tears of the United States and NATO came crumbling down in Afghanistan almost overnight. And I think that was shared on both sides of the aisle.

I believe in spite of DOHA, which is a conditions based agreement, this decision to unconditionally withdraw led to
the failure. In May of 2021, Ambassador Crocker and I warned
them it is very likely the Taliban will try to take control
of the country. And we strongly urged President Biden to
urgently establish a plan to protect U.S. national security
and bring our Afghan partners and allies home or at least to
safety.

Unfortunately, we now know the State Department and SC
did very little to prepare. The IC warned us. The
Department of Defense warned us. But the State Department
and the White House seemed to be in a different time and
space.

At the time the country fell, only 15 consular officers
were in the country. One week into the evacuation, that
number only rose to 36. The administration waited until the
end of July to begin evacuating Afghan allies who fought
alongside our troops.

Because of this delay, only 1,962 SIV applicants and
their families were evacuated before the country fell. And
now we have almost 100,000 left behind. No one left behind
is what we talked about. We told them we would protect them,
and they trusted us. And we left them behind to the mercy of
the Taliban.

And the reporting I am getting is horrific, and only 25
percent of the women got out. And Americans were left
behind. The request for military assistance and planning for an evacuation really didn't even come until August 11, four days before the Taliban would encircle the City of Kabul.

The ambassador to Afghanistan, Ross Wilson, took a vacation at that time, the same time that General Miller, the U.S. commander on the ground in Afghanistan, was warning of the rapid loss of district centers.

They told us when they pulled the air power out, when we do, the country would fall. And then President Ghani left, like a coward, unlike President Zelensky in Ukraine. That was also when the United States military officially left Bagram Air Base, which we know conducted ISR capabilities in Russia, China, and Iran.

And as a result of this failure, the emergency evacuation that followed forced tens of thousands of people to flee to the one remaining place with U.S. troops, and that would be HKIA or the Kabul Airport. And then for 15 horrific days, we watched as Americans and Afghans alike desperately tried to get inside the gates and on the plane for freedom, some even grabbing onto the wheels of the airplane.

But the chaos both outside and inside the gate made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get inside. As a result, outside groups, composed of veterans, journalists, congressional offices, and even active military duty and
intelligence officers banded together to help people they had
worked alongside for years and then the unthinkable happened.
Because we had to put the Taliban in charge of security
around the perimeter of HKIA and in charge of the evacuation,
an ISIS-K terrorist was able to get close enough to the
airport to detonate a bomb that killed 13 U.S. service
members and more than 160 Afghans and injured another 45 U.S.
service members and countless other Afghans. It was the
deadliest day in Afghanistan since 2011.
He was able to get that close because, again, we were
relying upon the Taliban to provide security at the airport.
And we learned later that the administration was offered a
chance to secure the city ourselves. But the offer was sent
to the White House, and the State Department ignored that
request and declined it.
And one year the State Department has confirmed that
more than 800 Americans have been evacuated since the
departure and recently told us that another 200 still remain
there.
The American people, quite honestly Mr. Chairman, just
deserve answers as to how this catastrophic event happened.
But the State Department has ignored or denied every attempt
that I have made. Many of us on both sides of the aisle
fought together to urge the administration to evacuate our
partners, Afghan partners, because it was the right thing to do.

During evacuation, we worked together to help people get out of the country and into safety relying on outside veterans groups. It was almost like a Schindler's List. If you're on the list, you get out. If you're not, you don't. And we mourned the deaths of the service members.

And I think getting these answers is important. And as I close, Mr. Chairman, you know, I think this is a legitimate exercise. And, you know, when the President said there was going to be no circumstance where you see people lifted off the roof of an embassy like in Vietnam, that's exactly what we saw.

So I don't know what was going on in the White House, but I think the American people deserve to know the truth, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize Representative Tim Burchett of Tennessee for five minutes. Mr. Burchett. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I'd like to express my strong support for Mr. McCaul's resolution, calling for the President and the Secretary of State to provide Congress with all the documents related to this botched withdrawal from Afghanistan.

I think it's crazy that this administration has refused
to provide Congress with these documents for over a year.

You know, somebody that ran for office on transparency has failed to do so greatly.

It's also crazy to me that this committee is not exercising its proper oversight of the State Department given this abject failure. To me this means that these documents in question disprove Secretary Blinken and the administration's claim that they planned for every contingency. They obviously did not.

And folks need to know why this administration waited until August 14 to begin making decisions about evacuations, and why at the height of these evacuations only 36 consular officials were on the ground, and why the administration ignored an offer from Guam to serve as an interim processing location for the SIVs. Furthermore, why was the Taliban's offer to give the U.S. more control of Kabul's security during the evacuation turned down?

I could go on, but because of these policy failures, a young man whose family lives in my district, who I know very well, Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss, and 12 others perished needlessly, Americans, fighting men and women, in addition to the scores upon scores of dead Afghans.

The American people deserve to know how the administration bungled this so badly, and they should feel
the heat if they continue this cover-up. Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey for five minutes. Mr. Smith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I strongly support Ranking Member McCaul's resolution of inquiry, of which I am a co-sponsor, and for America's egregiously flawed retreat from Afghanistan.

We abandoned American citizens. We trained our allies who fought alongside and emboldened their enemies from China to Russia to Iran to North Korea. As a matter of fact, parenthetically, I read the Chinese media all the time, in English, of course, and they are constantly telling the people of Taiwan don't expect the Americans to have your back. They write editorial after editorial. Just look what the Americans did in Afghanistan. They left their own people behind, and they left their allies.

Parenthetically as well, I remember going to the joint base to meet a number of the incoming refugees. And I was kind of shocked when I learned that they had a huge gap when it came to translators at the base. They couldn't talk to the people in the way that they would like. Well, we left translators behind as well. They weren't on the planes to a large extent.
Mr. Chairman, there needs to be robust accountability. And this is the first step in the process. Last year at a hearing before this committee, I asked Secretary of State Blinken why President Biden made misleading statements about the strength of the Afghan Armed Forces and why in a July 2021 phone call to then President Ghani, President Biden encouraged Ghani to, whether it's true or not, project a different picture about the Taliban's battlefield successes.

To this day, we have received, and I was told, no answer because it was a leaked phone call by the media. The media are the ones that got this out. To this day, we have received no answers from the administration on this apparent attempt by our President to mislead the public. And why wouldn't the Americans themselves still in Afghanistan at that particular point not say, look, he's talking about how strong they are and made, again, a misleading perspective about the Taliban advancement.

As our House Foreign Affairs Republican Report, A Strategic Failure, finds the Biden administration failed to plan for an orderly withdrawal from Afghanistan, both consigning millions of Afghans and thousands of American citizens to unspeakable, cruelty, violence, terrorism, and egregious abuse of women at the hands of the Taliban and ISIS.
Again, we have this report. We need, the American people need, this information, and there has been no accountability.

From the start, I've also called attention to the failure to properly vet Afghan refugees, many of whom we have no idea how we can get them into the path because the database has not been available. But even when we had such information, we didn't do the job that they were touting that they were getting accomplished.

Indeed, in February of 2022, the DoD Inspector General noted U.S. agencies did not use all available data in vetting evacuees from Afghanistan. This failure now followed, 50 Afghan personnel into the U.S. with information in the DoD records that would indicate potentially significant security concerns, posing a direct threat to the United States homeland.

Mr. Chairman, this is unacceptable. The American people deserve answers. This resolution, I think, is a great start to getting a full accountability. And I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now recognize Representative Mark Green of Tennessee for five minutes. Mr. Green. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am glad to see this important oversight measure make it into today's
markup schedule. H. Resolution 1240 is essential for the work of this committee and this body to conduct oversight of the most important foreign affairs issue of our time, the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

And I appreciate Chairman, your comments about -- I think you said that you were against this because it didn't look at the entire 20 years. But I would point out to you that the initial 20 years of this operation was a war run by the Department of Defense, overseen by the House Armed Services Committee.

However, when the withdrawal decision was made under this administration to execute the withdrawal, it was turned into what is a non-combatant evacuation operation often in parlance a NEO.

NEOs are overseen by the State Department. They took over at that point to operate the withdrawal, the non-combatant evacuation operation, and they are overseen by this committee. The jurisdiction of this committee begins when the State Department took over the NEO.

And so absolutely, the idea that we can't look into what the State Department did in this withdrawal is absurd. I'm sorry. You know, I think the world of you, but it makes no sense.

Just a few quick questions, you know, have there been
any documents produced to this committee about the challenges with the State Department's paperwork process to get the SIVs done?

We know there were holdups. They gave us classified briefings on this. We won't talk into what those are now here in this unclassified setting. They admitted to it. But no, there were no documents produced.

Has there been a committee hearing on the billions of military equipment that were left? As I understand it, foreign military sales are a State Department issue. We left to a foreign government $87 billion or $85 billion, whatever it is. No. There has been no committee hearing on that.

Has there been a report on the decision to move the NEO from Bagram Air Base to Kandahar or to Kabul? No. No, we haven't sat and talked about that. There has been no oversight of that decision, which belongs to this committee as soon as the State Department took over.

I am glad to see this resolution. I think it makes -- to vote against this is a political decision, not to ask the State Department to save documents on this egregious failure. To say no to that, is a political decision.

For the future of our country and for future NEO operations executed by the State Department, we must have the documents so that real oversight can be done. It's that
simple. And to vote against that, well, that is a political
decision. I yield.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I just want
to say, because it is occurring, NEO is overseen by DoD,
not by this committee. This committee, we've all been here
for 20 years, has complete oversight. We've had it for the
past 20 years.

And, you know, and I know that real oversight is the
effort and what took place in Afghanistan was the Afghanistan
War Commission. And that is what they are set to do just as
soon as the GOP names a co-chair so that they can begin to
work. That is what they are waiting for. And I recognize
Representative Peter Meijer of Michigan for five minutes.

Mr. Meijer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, as my
colleagues have spoken, it has been over a year since we
completed the withdrawal in Afghanistan. And we have so many
unanswered questions to this date.

Now, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned that June classified
briefing that there were a lot of members who weren't in
attendance. I was there the entire time, and it was
frustrating. That became largely an exercise in blame
casting and trying to cast the buck. And I think we see that
in our committee hearings here where it becomes you are fully
targeting the Biden administration or fully defending the
I remember back when the announcement to withdraw was made in the spring of 2021, it wasn't Secretary Blinken and President Biden saying our hands are tied. There is nothing we can do. We don't want to do this. It was the fulfillment of a campaign promise.

And I will not spend my time trying to blame cast. I supported the withdrawal under President Trump. I supported the withdrawal under President Biden. But I have serious reservations and serious questions on how the withdrawal was executed over that phase.

And as somebody who had been involved in the SIV process going back close to a decade and was part of a private gathering that was trying to look for legislative solutions going in, it was incredibly frustrating to see the miscalculations, to see the assumptions that were being made by the administration, and how they didn't err on the side of caution. They thought they had more time. And they just continued punting things along.

And shortly after the withdrawal was completed, after that horrific August where I spent most of it living on Kabul time, waking up to, you know, WhatsApp messages and Signal messages from folks who were trying to get out, I had a couple of members of a NATO ally come into my office and ask
sincerely, you know, what they thought accountability for how this was executed would look like in the U.S. because in their country they had senior military and senior, you know, foreign diplomatic officials resign because they left behind several dozen interpreters. And in our case, I think, you know, Ambassador Khalilzad resigned, but that was mostly because his role was no longer necessary. But that was the only accountability that we had.

And we haven't had the transparency. We haven't had the document production. We haven't had the sincere questions being answered. I mean, I appreciate that we are on Foreign Affairs.

And as my colleague, Mr. Green mentioned, you know, we have more specific jurisdiction, but the amount of times where a question would be asked and because we had the involvement of the Department of Homeland Security, we had HHS and their Office of Refugee Resettlement. We obviously had the DoD. We had the CIA. Crossing across multiple committee jurisdictions, it just ended up in the interagency runaround.

This ROI is an opportunity for us to actually get some documents to actually get something produced. I think this is an opportunity we have to seize. We owe it to not only those we left behind in Afghanistan who had served us
loyally, the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marine, diplomatic personnel, intelligence personnel who were on the ground at HKIA doing an unimaginably hard task, given an impossible mission, and executing it to the best of their ability, having to undertake a moral injury level that, I think, is incredible to try to fathom.

I mean, the Ranking Member mentioned that comparison to Schindler's List. I had a lieutenant colonel on the ground at HKIA tell me, you know, some days he felt like Schindler, like saving people from a horrific fate. And other days he felt like Himmler, having to turn folks away who didn't have the proper documentation because there were not enough diplomatic personnel and consular officials at those gates.

So this should not be a partisan issue. I completely agree with the Chairman on that. I would humbly suggest and recommend that we can make it not a partisan issue. We can make this vote a bipartisan vote to have some accountability if we have both majority and minority coming to cast votes in approval of this.

So I think it is important that we understand what influences the decision going in. That we not get caught up in trying to blame cast after the fact, but actually owe it to those who were on the ground, owe it to those who sacrificed, who served, and who are still in harm's way to
make sure that we never again repeat the mistakes that were
made in the lead-up to August of 2021, that we learned every
lesson imaginable and move forward.

I mean, our job in Congress is to conduct this
oversight. This is an opportunity to conduct oversight of
the executive branch and is one that we should not miss.
With that, I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the
aisle to vote in support of this bill for its passage. And I
yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.
And I just want to say, Mr. Meijer, thank you. Thank you,
Mr. Green, Mr. Mast because you served this country in an
admirable way, putting your lives on the line defending for
it. And we are happy to disagree on methodology here. We
agree, though, that we do need to make sure that we have
complete oversight into looking into what and why the
circumstances in Afghanistan and the leaving, collectively.
But I just wanted to give a recognition, and you were
there. I want to acknowledge the fact because what I said
earlier about some, but you were there. And you were there
the whole time. And I respect that even when we disagree.
So I just want to say thank you on the record for that.

And I recognize Mr. Mast for five minutes.

Mr. Mast. Thank you, Chairman. I also want to urge
support. You know, sometimes in war, there is just bad luck. A sniper's bullet finds you, or you find a trip wire, or you walk across somebody that's hidden in the dark of night, things that are a part of war, but that you can't -- you couldn't have prevented. It was bad luck.

The reason that this is so important is because it is so transparent to everybody that what happened in Afghanistan, it wasn't bad luck. It was bad leadership. And bad leadership, bad planning, cost the lives of our service members. That's a very important distinction.

And for that reason alone, it's what is owed to those that put on the uniform that gave their blood, sweat, and tears for 20 years, that demand the closure of understanding how it was allowed to unravel at the very end. And for those families that are grieving to this moment, it is what is owed because it wasn't an episode of just bad luck. That's how I feel. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Any further requests to speak on the bill? Do any members wish to offer any amendment?

Hearing none, we will now take a vote by voice. The question is to report H. Res. 1240 adversely, in other words, if you share my opposition to the resolution, you will vote aye.
Again, I repeat, the question is to report H. Res. 1240 adversely, in other words, if you share my opposition to the resolution, you will vote aye.

And we are going to take a vote by voice so all members please unmute your microphone.

And all those in favor say aye.

All opposed say no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without objection, the motion to reconsider --

PARTICIPANT: Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairman Meeks. A recorded vote is on it. And pursuant to Committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings on the amendment shall be postponed.

And we will now move on to the next measure. So we will now move on to the final measure, and consider H. Res. 1266, requesting the President to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to any initiative or negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program.

Pursuant to notice for purposes of markup, I now call up H. Res. 1266.

[The H. Res. 1266 follows.]
Chairman Meeks. The clerk will report the measure.

Ms. Hallman. House Resolution 1266, requesting the President to transmit --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the resolution is dispensed with. And without objection, the resolution shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any time. At this time, I recognize myself to speak on this measure.

H. Res. 1266 is a privileged resolution, introduced by Representative Foxx of North Carolina that would require the President of the United States to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution, copies of any document, memorandum, or other communication in his possession, or any portion thereof, that refers or relates to any initiative or negotiation regarding Iran's nuclear program.

This I strongly recommend to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we oppose and here is why.

First, H. Res. 1266 would create a harmful precedent with respect to Presidential communications of an ongoing negotiation. There is no precedent for Congress mandating the executive turn over living documents related to an ongoing, multilateral national security-related negotiation.

Passage of H. Res. 1266 risks directly damaging the
administration's ability to successfully conduct negotiations, threatening to upset allies, and allow for the premature leaking and manipulation of sensitive materials.

Second, this resolution is merely a partisan exercise that threatens the United States' longstanding strategic posture of not negotiating in public.

During the Trump administration, Congress did not receive documents in real-time related to any negotiations conducted with parties such as the Taliban or North Korea. Furthermore, the broad grasp of documents H. Res. 1266 will require the President to transmit would likely be challenged under the doctrine of executive privilege.

Third, a robust process through which Congress will review any negotiated agreement already exists. Shortly before the conclusion of the original JCPOA negotiations in 2015, the United States Congress passed with a strong bipartisan vote the now statutory plan for the transmission of the documents requested by H. Res. 1266 to Congress.

This law, commonly known as the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, INARA, provides the official bipartisan process for reviewing the documents related to the JCPOA. The Biden administration has acknowledged to Congress, the American people, and our negotiating partners that they will abide by INARA.
The administration's commitment to adhere to the requirements under INARA renders H. Res. 1266 unnecessary. INARA mandates the administration to transmit all documents required in H. Res. 1266 in addition to an assessment of the agreement to Congress within five calendar days for review. Once those documents enter Congressional possession, Congress is provided 30 calendar days to review the materials, hold hearings, receive briefings, and hold up or down vote of approval or disapproval should Congress desire. The administration is not authorized to implement a nuclear agreement with Iran while this review period is taking place. So if Congress disapproves of the agreement over the veto of the President of the United States, the administration is prohibited from moving forward with implementation.

Both our allies and adversaries are aware this process is in place. The House Foreign Affairs Committee has primary jurisdiction over the Iranian nuclear file. And while administration engagement on this issue could be better in the House, members of this committee have been briefed on the negotiations and classified sessions as the negotiations have progressed.

In fact, they held a briefing this morning, and we heard from the White House, the State Department, and intelligence
community. Unfortunately, we had a number of members who decided, and some decided not to attend these briefings over the last one and a half years, members' options. Others have received unclassified updates of the talks upon request. This issue is regularly reported in the free press.

At present, members have the means at their disposal to understand what these P5+1 talks are attempting to achieve and the sacrifices in the United States we have to make to reach an agreement with our adversaries.

We are not operating in darkness. If a deal is concluded, as I have noted, we will receive the full extent of the relevant documents. We will hear from the administration. We will hear from partners and allies. And Congress will have a vote. Congress will then have a vote to vote up or down the agreement.

So to me we don't need to play games or go back and forth with this document request. And as a result of that, I think it's in the interest of all of us, Democrats and Republicans, for every current President, the same as in the past Presidents and future Presidents, that we reject this resolution. I now recognize Ranking Member McCaul.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just say to start the ROI could be complied with in the classified space, which would take your national security concerns, I
think, off the table. But I understand what you are saying about INARA. I have been given assurances by the Deputy Secretary of State that that will be complied with. And we look forward to that.

But, you know, put simply, Iran continues to pose a direct threat to the national security of the United States. And I think it's important this comes after the Afghanistan ROI, which led to a projection of weakness that then led to Putin invading Ukraine, and then President Chairman Xi threatening Taiwan in the South Pacific. And now Iran is emboldened, the Ayatollah and North Korea as well. You know, Reagan said of the Soviet Union, trust, verify. I think in this case we cannot even trust, much less verify.

You know, we were at the IAEA, you and I and the committee, with the director general who talked about three undisclosed sites that the Iranians failed to report, absolutely failed to report to the IAEA. And then after that, the cameras went down on the sites. And what happened after that, Iran hacks the servers of the IAEA and steals the documents pertaining to their investigations.

You know, if I don't -- you know, I don't know what shows more lack of trust than that. And that is a part of this deal. And, you know, I know the administration, without getting into details, are concerned about that being a part
of the Iran deal. And they should because we shouldn't
reward Iran for violating the current agreement with the E3
with undisclosed sites of uranium and then hacking into the
IAEA and stealing their investigation and shutting down the
cameras.

I just think this whole idea that we can negotiate this
is based on a false premise. The IAEA said we are not in a
position to provide assurance that Iran's nuclear program is
peaceful. I agree. I don't see how anybody can think this
is a peaceful nuclear program when they want this to be swept
under the rug.

Why in the world would they want as part of this deal to
stop the IAEA's investigation into these undisclosed sites
that were not reported by Iran if they didn't have a nuclear
program at stake? It's not a peaceful nuclear program. We
all know this.

And where you and I are in agreement, as we talked about
this morning, is that I believe it should be the policy of
the United States of America, and I urge the President to
make this case and others, that a nuclear Iran is
unacceptable. And I would urge our allies to join us in that
declaration against the Ayatollah because only that will make
sense to someone who doesn't understand weakness but rather
exploits and only understands strength. We need to project
strength in this case.

I believe that this is again another hot spot with Ukraine. Mr. Chairman, you returned from Taiwan. We all saw the threat that they posed to the speaker. And this is the third big threat in addition to South Korea.

You know, and then the fact that Russia has got, like, their nuclear, you know, program that operates that took a nuclear facility in Ukraine. And now they are working in Iran with their nuclear program. And not only that, Mr. Chairman, but they are buying drones from Iran. Iran is providing drones to Russia. They are going directly into Ukraine. How can we trust, much less verify, when that is what we are talking about?

So I just would urge -- I think we should have all documents. We have had classified briefings and that is good. But we need all the documents. And we need to know what exactly is happening, and the American people deserve no less. And with that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey for five minutes.

Mr. Smith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I concur with our ranking member that all Americans deserve real answers and transparency. So much is at stake here with
regards to our national security and the security of our good friends and allies in the region, including the special Israel. So I am in strong support of H. Res. 1266, the resolution introduced by our good friend, Virginia Foxx.

Since any Iranian deal will likely be achieved through executive agreement and not a treaty, Congress has an extremely limited role therefore, and really no meaningful role, in any provision, in any new deal. Here it is, take it or leave it. We have been there before. It happened last time. And I believe that deal was catastrophic.

Mr. Chairman, on February 11, 2016, when the IAEA had said yes, all the material is out of Iran, Ambassador Stephen Mull, the Obama administration's lead coordinator for Iran nuclear implementation, sat in this very room, and I asked him a very simple question. What was the location of the nuclear material that was shipped to Iran's allied Russia as part of the JCPOA deal?

Ambassador Mull said, well, he confirmed that it had been put on a Russian ship. He could not even answer the simple question as to its destination, even where it was as we spoke. I asked repeatedly in follow-up, you know, days and weeks afterwards, where did it go? And he admitted at the hearing that we had no onsite, oversight capability under the terms of the JCPOA.
So all of this material went to their ally, Russia. Do we trust Russia? I don't think so. One unanswered question in particular, what happened to the 25,000 pounds of enriched uranium? Again, shipped to Russia by Iran as part of the deal. Has it gone back? We don't know. Where is it? Is it, you know, waiting in a storage area, waiting to be returned to Iran?

Further, I do believe, Mr. Chairman, and I mean this, and I think both sides of the aisle should be pressing for this, what is the status of negotiations by the administration with Russia and Iran to create a new deal?

And as reported in March, should we be allowing Russia to buy Iran's excess enriched uranium? Again, so much is at stake. We need answers. This is a modest, and I think a very reasonable, request for information. The American people have a right to know not to all of a sudden wake up one morning and say we have a deal. We need to know now so we can try to influence in a positive way if there is going to be a deal what the particulars are of the nuclear deal with Iran.

Frankly, I don't think there should be one, but at least we should know what is in it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I urge support for the resolution.

Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. And I now
recognize Representative Brian Mast of Florida for five
minutes.

Mr. Mast. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The word was used
dark, kept people in the dark, keeping Americans in the dark.
And I think it is important to understand the gravity, or for
Americans to be able to understand the gravity, of this
situation with Iran. What is the potential of what could
happen here?

There could be American service members in Tehran or
jets or drones or ordnance. And were something like that to
take place, the American people absolutely deserve the
clarity and the justification on why that would take place or
would not. What are the risks that are posed?

It is as gravely serious as anything that we deal with
in the whole of Congress by a country and a despot leadership
that is as serious about threatening our government, our way
of life, and our people as they are that of Israel and so
many others throughout the region through their proxies.

In this moment in history, Americans find themselves in
the dark on a host of policies. Why is our border open? Why
do we have no red lines as it relates to our domestic border?
What are the red lines that we have with Russia as it relates
to Ukraine and what Russia does to Ukrainians or what type of
ordnance they use? There are no red lines that any American
could discern.

What red lines do we have for China as it relates to Taiwan? What red lines do we have for North Korea as it relates to any nuclear program or ballistic missile program that they might have? There are no discernible answers for Americans in this administration.

And to put a point on how the majority has felt about this previously, I am going to read a quote as it relates to how you felt -- the majority felt about President Trump. By choosing to report the resolution adversely, our colleagues in the majority, that was when we were in the majority, are keeping Congress and the American people in the dark. That is what our colleagues on the other side -- that is how our colleagues on the other side were arguing about executive privilege. Exactly what we are speaking about right here, not letting the American people be in the dark.

So in that, I think this, this issue, the gravity that it carries and the potential foreign policy, kinetic policy, nuclear policy, implications that this has, warrants every bit of transparency that we can muster out of this process for the good of the American people. And in that, I yield the remaining of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now recognize Representative Claudia Tenney of New York for five
Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member. And I just want to say thank you to Representative Virginia Foxx for bringing this initiative forward and demanding the transparency that the American people deserve.

I feel, and I think a lot of us are expressing, that Congress has been completely left behind by this administration as it accelerates these nuclear negotiations with Iran. Congress and the nation deserve to know what this administration is allowing to be negotiated away in Vienna without us at the table.

As we speak, the regime the Tehran is rapidly advancing its nuclear program while at the same time refusing to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors. We have heard this from Rafael Grossi and others that we couldn't get in.

And let's be specific. On the issue of the probe, the IAEA probe, this independent investigation into Iran's safeguard violations is fundamentally a technical question. It is really not a political one. It is a technical question so it shouldn't be politically charged.

Accordingly, this probe should be terminated only when all of the outstanding technical issues and concerns have
been addressed and resolved. They have not. And we have not
received that information.

Just last week, the IAEA determined that it still cannot
verify the peaceful, or maybe not so peaceful, nature of
Iran's nuclear program. Yet still, the Biden administration
remains intent on forging ahead with these negotiations.

Having a deal, any deal, no matter what, good or bad, we have
got to have a deal, maybe for a hollow political victory lap
or something. But it is critically important that we make
sure if we are ever going to have a deal that the deal is
good for the United States and the American people and keeps
our allies safe and secure.

And the American people have the right to know what our
diplomats are agreeing to in Vienna, what alternatives the
administration is considering, and how they intend to address
the wide range of threats from Iran, primarily its dangerous
nuclear missile program that we know that is going on that we
are removed from.

The resolution by Virginia Foxx, I think, is vital.

This information should be provided to Congress so that we
could effectively execute our critical oversight powers.

A technical issue really should not be a political
issue. This is a technical issue. Are they complying?

Aren't they complying? If they are not, we should not engage
and get in the middle of this deal. It is too dangerous and too much of a risk.

And the American people have a right to know exactly what the deal is, what we are engaging in, what risks the United States is being put at, and the American people are facing.

And so I say let's go back to the drawing board and make sure that we know what every technical aspect of this is, not for political purposes, but for the sake of our nation's security and the security of our allies around the world, particularly in the Middle East.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I encourage my colleagues to support this initiative, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back. Mr. McCaul?

Mr. McCaul. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I first ask unanimous consent to insert a statement into the record from Representative Virginia Foxx.

Chairman Meeks. Without objection. Mr. McCaul.

Thank you. And also pursuant to House Rules, I request that members have the opportunity to submit views for any committee report that may be produced on any of today's measures. Chairman Meeks. Without objection. Mr. McCaul.

Thank you. I yield back. Chairman Meeks. At this time,
the Committee will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, at which time we will take votes on all recorded vote requests.

Before we do that, we're going to take a vote by voice. All members please unmute you microphones.

And all those in favor say aye.

All those members opposed?

The ayes have it.

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairman Meeks. A recorded vote is requested. And pursuant to Committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings of this amendment shall be postponed until tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. This hearing is now in recess until that time.

[Whereupon, at 6:29 p.m., the committee recessed, to reconvene at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, September 15, 2022.]