The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:11 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gregory Meeks [chairman of the committee] presiding.
Chairman Meeks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order. And without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any point. And all members will have five days to submit statements, extraneous material, and questions for the record, subject to the limit limitations in the rules. To insert something into the record, please have your staff email the previously mentioned address or contact full committee staff.

As a reminder to members, please keep your video function on at all times, even when you are not recognized by the chair. Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves. Consistent with House rules, staff will mute members, as appropriate, when they are not under recognition, to eliminate background noise.

I see that we have a quorum.

And I now recognize myself for opening remarks.

Pursuant to notice, we meet today to hear from our distinguished witnesses about the challenges facing global food security.

You know, as chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have had the privilege and opportunity to travel to many parts of the world -- from South America to Asia, Europe to Africa. And no matter where I go, one thing has become increasingly clear: Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine has had deep
consequences, not just for the Ukrainian people, but for people all over the world. Putin's war in Ukraine has served as a manmade assault on food security, compounding the damage done to global food supply chains by COVID-19 and severe weather events related to climate change.

And here to address the issues are two representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, Ms. Sarah Charles, an Assistant to the Administrator at the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, and Ms. Maura Barry, Acting Assistant to the Administrator at the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security. And I thank you for being here this morning.

To put a finer point on the impact of Russia's invasion on food security globally, I would like to share some statistics. Russia and Ukraine are two of the world's largest producers of food. They account for roughly one-third of the world wheat exports. Putin's invasion has resulted in slightly over 30 percent of the world's wheat supply no longer being available at pre-war levels.

Ukraine alone accounts for 15 percent of global maize exports, 13 percent of global exports, 50 percent of global sunflower oil exports. Much of this is no longer available to be exported at the same level.

One might think that other countries can simply fill the gap by growing additional crops to help ease the supply crunch,
but the war in Ukraine has so disrupted the global supply of fertilizers, which countries need to increase or even maintain agricultural yields. With the supply of fertilizer going down, of course, the costs have gone up.

It is also the nutrient-rich, black soil in Ukraine which has historically made Ukraine both a bread basket and a target. Covering over half of Ukraine's land mass, nearly a quarterly of its rare soil is located in Ukraine, contributing to its agricultural capacity.

Russia's blockade of key ports in Ukraine has exacerbated food insecurity in countries around the world. The World Food Programme, for example, acquires half of its grains from Ukraine. This source of food aid is now nearly completely inaccessible, resulting in the deepened food insecurity for millions in need around the world.

Additionally, the price of food has skyrocketed globally, negatively impacting economic and political stability in countries with high import rates, and most notably, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Egypt.

Though COVID and Russia have exacerbated an already fragile global food supply system, the role of climate change in furthering the food insecurity prices cannot be misunderstood, and it cannot be understated at all.

These effects will only be more pronounced and encapsulated
without a globally coordinated effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, shift to clean energy, and address private change and resilience with the urgency that is required.

So, let me thank Ms. Charles and Ms. Barry once again, and thank you for appearing before this committee today. We applaud your work and look forward to hearing more about the implications of Russia's unprovoked war on food insecurity globally and what the United States can do to help address this.

I will now recognize the ranking member, Mr. McCaul, for his opening statement.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important hearing. We have been focused on this issue quite a bit lately.

And I thank our witnesses for being here today. COVID-19 and unprecedented droughts have already strained the global food supply. Now, Putin's unprovoked and full-scale invasion of Ukraine is really the nail in the coffin. Starvation has already likely begun with an average of one person dying every 48 seconds across Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia. In Somalia alone, 380,000 children are at risk of dying. Globally, 50 million people across 45 countries are on the brink of famine.

And meanwhile, Putin's invading forces in Ukraine have mined fields, bombed grain silos, stolen Ukraine grain. Within 24 hours of it being signed, an agreement to secure grain exports
was violated by Russian forces firing four missiles at the Port of Odessa. We had David Beasley with the World Food Programme testify just last week. I met with him privately as well. And within 24 hours -- I don't trust them.

And like Stalin, Vladimir Putin is purposely starving the Ukraine people, blocking them from their access to the Black Sea, not unlike Stalin did many years ago. He is also trying to weaponize starvation. He should think about his legacy. Does he want to cause a global famine? That is what David Beasley tried to persuade, through Mr. Lavrov, that this is not your legacy.

And now, we are going to see a rise in forced migration, destabilization, and destabilization in the Sahel, which will result in more ISIS and Al Qaeda terrorism. We have provided $8 billion in supplemental funding to address global humanitarian needs and food security crises. So, I look forward to hearing what USAID is doing to get these funds out the door and into where it needs to go as soon as possible.

I would also urge the administration to waive the cargo preference requirements for the purposes of this emergency. Our priority should be paying for food, not unnecessary shipping costs. Spending unnecessary resources on shipping means less food for starving people. And it is not really an exaggeration to say that action now will save lives. I hope greater
flexibility on cargo preference will be a bipartisan issue that we can address together in committee through legislation. The United States cannot and should not respond alone. Other countries must step up to the plate and do more. The United States has provided the World Food Programme with $3.9 billion this year, while China has only provided $3 million. That is unacceptable.

And amidst this global crisis, we cannot lose focus on longer-term investments on food security and agricultural growth. As someone from an agricultural state myself, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Global Food Security Act, along with Chairman Meeks, Representative McCollum, and Representative Smith. Congress must reauthorize these critical programs and do everything we can to advance smart investments in food security, nutrition, and ultimately, the ability for families and communities to provide for themselves.

I am pleased the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate unanimously advanced my bill, the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act, out of their committee and urge the Senate to pass this important bill.

And I was also glad to see Administrator Power announce to buy additional nutrition supplies for global use. Global starvation must be a priority for Congress and this administration. It should be a priority for this Nation, for
if we do nothing, it will certainly come to our doorsteps.

And with that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Mr. McCaul yields back.

And seeing that Chairman Castro and Ranking Member Malliotakis both are not present, I will now introduce our witnesses.

Sarah Charles is the Assistant to the Administrator of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and the lead federal coordinator for international disaster response. BHA implements several food assistance programs, including Food for Peace, Title II emergency and non-emergency, and the Emergency Food Security Program, and administers the Community Development Fund.

Maura Barry is the Acting Assistant to the Administrator in USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security. RFS works to advance inclusive agricultural-led growth, resilience, nutrition, water security, sanitation, and hygiene. It leads the coordination of the Feed the Future Initiative, the U.S. Government Global Water Strategy, and USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy.

Witnesses, I want to thank you for being here today. You will have five minutes to deliver your testimony, and without objection, your prepared written statements will be made as part of the record.

I will now recognize Ms. Charles for her statement.
Ms. Charles. Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for convening this timely hearing to discuss the challenges facing global food security and the U.S. Agency for International Development's efforts to respond.

For decades, food assistance has been a cornerstone of U.S. foreign aid. Thanks to your bipartisan leadership and the generosity of the American people, we are able to reach the world's most vulnerable with lifesaving assistance. Today, that support is more vital than ever.

Just last night, I returned from the Horn of Africa, where I witnessed the extreme hunger gripping the region. Nearly 19 million people across Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia require humanitarian assistance after a historic fourth failed rainy season and spiking food prices.

At a health facility in northern Kenya, I was met by mothers holding tight to their severely malnourished children. I saw
miles and miles of drought-stricken land and families that have lost their entire herds, their entire livelihoods. I met families that are now fully reliant on assistance to avert death. A fifth failed rainy season is forecasted for later this year, which will only increase needs. The region is on the brink of catastrophe.

But this crisis goes beyond the Horn of Africa. Around the world, millions of families are fleeing the pang of hunger to protracted conflict, the lingering effects of COVID-19-related lockdowns, and the increasing frequency and severity of weather events due to climate change.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been an accelerant on an already dire situation. An additional 40 million poor people -- more than the total population of New York City and Texas combined -- could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity this year because of Putin's needless war in Ukraine.

Thanks to Congress and the generosity of the American people, USAID is leading the global effort to stave off the worst impacts of this unprecedented global hunger crisis. Our teams have been responding to dramatically increased global needs for well over a year, and as the scope and severity came into focus, we made bold programmatic decisions.

For example, this past April, USAID took the extraordinary step of drawing down the full balance of the Bill Emerson
Humanitarian Trust, allowing us to fund a significant infusion of American-grown food commodities to countries that are at highest risk of famine.

USAID is also working at record speed and scale to move an historic $7 billion in supplemental international disaster assistance funding to the people that need it most. To date, we have programmed over $4 billion, nearly 60 percent of those supplemental funds.

Through all the BHA funding categories -- Title II, International Disaster Assistance, and multiple supplemental bills -- USAID is on track to obligate over $11 billion in fiscal year 2022. This is more than 40 percent than the prior fiscal year, which in itself was a record year.

Not only are we moving funds quickly, we are moving them responsibly and strategically to meet urgent needs. Just last week, as Ranking Member McCaul mentioned, USAID announced an unprecedented $200 million investment in UNICEF to expand the production and distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food, or RUTF. With this funding, USAID will reach an additional 2.4 million children suffering from severe malnutrition.

Better still, we have worked with foundations like the Eleanor Crook Foundation and Sift to mobilize an additional $50 million in private financing to come behind that U.S. investment, and are challenging other private sources and other donors to
find another $250 million to come behind that investment.

U.S. leadership during this crisis could not be more evident. The United States is the world's leading donor, providing over 40 percent of global humanitarian funding this year. At this point, we are covering 86 percent of the World Food Programme's current funding appeal for the Horn of Africa.

I heard firsthand this weekend that critical nutrition, food, and cash assistance from the second Ukraine supplemental is already reaching the hands of hungry people in Somalia and Kenya.

However, the United States cannot do this alone. In addition to moving record levels of funding, we are marshaling our partners and allies to meet the moment. In May, the United States released a Roadmap for Global Food Security at the United Nations, calling on member states to take action. Already, over 100 countries have joined -- with notable exceptions. For example, the People's Republic of China has not signed onto the roadmap, is maintaining fertilizer export restrictions, and is refusing to release grain reserves. These actions demonstrate a stunning failure to support the world's least developed economies.

Given the sale of global need, it is critical that we look ahead for opportunities to work together and maximize the impact of our programs overseas. USAID staff have moved mountains over
the past several months to move funding quickly and responsibly. However, staffing has not kept pace with the growth in humanitarian budgets. As an agency, USAID is surging contracting staff to ensure that programs are funded quickly, but more permanent solutions are required.

And as Russia's invasion of Ukraine drives fuel prices up, the cost of delivering humanitarian assistance is also rising. USAID welcomes congressional interest in waiving cargo preference for a time-limited, case-by-case basis. Used judiciously, more flexibility could save millions of dollars which could be directly applied to emergency food assistance programming.

The upcoming reauthorization of the farm bill is another key opportunity to optimize the reach and efficiency of U.S. food assistance programs. In previous reauthorization efforts, USAID has worked closely with this committee, as well as the agricultural committees, to make technical changes to Title II under the Food for Peace Act. These changes resulted in greater flexibility and improved programming for emergency and non-emergency food assistance programs. The 2023 reauthorization offers similar opportunities.

Once again, I want to reiterate my gratitude for this committee's leadership and partnership. Together, we are ensuring communities have access to lifesaving assistance during
this crisis.

While in Somalia and Kenya earlier this week, although I was met by a dire situation, I also saw the impact of U.S. assistance and U.S. leadership.

I look forward to our continued partnership, as we respond to this emergency, and looking ahead, I welcome the opportunity to work with you to make our food security programs flexible and fit for purpose in an increasingly hungry world. I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Charles follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Ms. Charles.

I now recognize Ms. Barry for five minutes.
Ms. Barry. Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished members of this committee, I am really grateful and thankful to be here today and to be able to speak to this committee about such an important and such a pressing issue.

And I want to start off really by thanking you all for your leadership and really appreciate, as was already mentioned, to see that the reauthorization of the Global Food Security Act was introduced, and we really appreciated the opportunity, my colleagues and I, to work with all of you and your staff on that.

And also, you know, really appreciate that the Global Malnutrition Treatment and Prevention Act was passed in the House earlier this year, because it really brings much-needed attention to a critical issue of food security. And, you know, it is because of your commitment that America continues this legacy that it has of its leadership in the fight against hunger.

I have worked in international development for over 30 years. I started my career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, and I have lived and worked in many countries. And several of those are the countries that are being hit the hardest right now by this crisis, including Somalia and Afghanistan, Sri Lanka.

While we are living in what I would say are unprecedented times, the seeds of the current food security crisis have been
growing for the last half-decade. But now, as we have all been saying, the situation is much worse because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And Russia's war on Ukraine has contributed to dramatic increases in extreme humanitarian needs, as Sarah was highlighting, and also has contributed to increases in global food, fuel, and fertilizer prices.

The impact of rising prices, as we see here in the United States and all across the globe, it immediately changes household budgets. And so, parents are struggling to feed their children at the table, and we know that rising fuel and fertilizer prices are having an impact on agricultural production and really limit dietary diversity.

At the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, we are very much concerned about the high prices for fertilizer and fuel. And a recent analysis by the International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI, suggests that 74 percent of the expected increase in poverty and 63 percent of expected increase in hunger this year will be due to the high fuel and fertilizer costs.

And even if prices do go down over the year, farmers are already suffering from a lack of access to fertilizer. We know that farmers are buying less, and in many cases they are not buying fertilizer at all because they can't afford it. So, we expect that there will be greatly reduced agricultural production which could continue throughout 2023 and perhaps beyond.
But I would say that, despite this very bleak outlook, I am optimistic. You know, I am optimistic because I think we know what we need to do. And Feed the Future as an initiative is a really effective tool for lifting families out of poverty and helping communities bounce back from disaster. And I have seen the results myself numerous times on the ground, and I wanted to share one recent story.

Actually, it was last year before the worst of the drought hit the Horn. But I took a trip to northeastern Kenya and I met with a woman who was a herder, like many people in that region. And she was sharing with me how U.S. assistance through the Feed the Future Initiative really transformed her life. She was able to shift and start producing food. She was able to use irrigation and tap into a local stream. She started, also, poultry rearing. And I could see with my own eyes her sort of greenfield in what was otherwise a very stark landscape. And, you know, she was able to put healthy food on the table for her children. She was able to sell vegetables and eggs in the market and send her kids to school. And so, I think that she also was a great model in her community.

And I think it is examples like those and so many others that really demonstrate how Feed the Future is able to provide a boon to farmers in the face of outstanding odds. And so, I look forward to this opportunity today to focus on this important
issue and look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Barry follows:]

********** COMMITTEE INSERT **********
Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Ms. Barry.

I will now recognize members of five minutes each.

And pursuant to House rules, all time yielded is for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

I will recognize members by committee seniority, alternating between Democrats and Republicans.

Please note that I will be strict in enforcing the 5-minute rule on time limitation for questioning because of the limited amount of time, and I know we have votes coming up sometime soon.

I will start by recognizing myself for five minutes.

Mr. Putin's most recent attack on the Port of Odessa, in violation of an agreement to unblock the port and release grain shipments, underscores both his depraved indifference towards millions of people, including in Africa and beyond, who rely on Ukrainian grain, and his willingness to use food insecurity as a weapon of war. While the World Food Programme has announced reductions in food rations across the board, Russia appears poised to sell stolen grain to some countries in greatest need.

So, I ask, Ms. Charles, I guess first, what is your assessment of Putin's reported attempts to use food as a bargaining chip and in some cases a weapon?

Ms. Charles. Thank you, Chairman Meeks, for that question.

I, first, want to say there is no question, and I think this committee has been united, that Putin is conducting not just a
war on Ukraine, but a war on the world's poor and the world's most food insecure. As you said, Ukraine is the bread basket of the world and a major supplier of wheat, vegetable oil, and corn to, among others, the World Food Programme for their use in places of extreme food insecurity around the world.

We strongly condemn the Russian missile attack on the Ukrainian port. Clearly, it is necessary to get grain out of Ukraine, and whether or not this deal is successful will depend on Russia's compliance with the terms of the deal.

Maura, do you want to add anything to that?

Ms. Barry. I would just say that I think we know whether or not grain starts to move, I mean, the damage already inflicted upon Ukrainian farmers and the agricultural production, not just in Ukraine, but globally, is already there.

And so, I know USAID is providing support to Ukrainian farmers to help them have access to finance, to better have access to inputs like fertilizer, and helping them repair some of their farm equipment that has been damaged. So, we have quite an effort going on to support Ukrainian farmers, and then, also, addressing the impact of this crisis globally.

Chairman Meeks. So, are there other locations or sources of grain that could be used to fill the gap caused by Putin's bombing at the Odessa port? Either one of you.

Ms. Barry. Are you asking if the Ukrainian wheat could be
replaced? I think already we know that the production is going
to be significantly less this year for Ukrainian farmers of wheat.

So, even if they are able to move wheat now out of Ukraine, we
know that there will be probably a 50 percent reduction in what
they are able to move this year.

Chairman Meeks. I realize that, but I am more asking, is
there other places or other locations or other sources where we
also could find some grain that can be used to help fill the gap
because of what Putin is doing?

Can you hear me?

Ms. Charles. Sorry. We have seen some countries increase
their production, but there is no substitute for what was coming
out of Ukraine, and that is, in part, why we are seeing spiking
prices continue around the world. And that is exacerbating the
already dire situation caused by the shortage of the wheat, corn,
and vegetable oil.

Chairman Meeks. So, we see, for example, because I have
real concerns about a looming possible starvation. In Yemen,
according to the WFP, nearly 21 million people are in need of
humanitarian assistance; 19 million are food insecure, and nearly
4 million children under five require urgent treatment for acute
malnutrition due to the ongoing conflict.

So, how is the USAID working with other multilateral
organizations and other donors to address the humanitarian
catastrophe that is further worsened? And we had it even before
the Russian invasion, but it is worsened by the Russian invasion
of Ukraine.

Ms. Charles. I think Yemen is one of the most tragic cases
of where we are seeing Putin's senseless war on Ukraine play out.
Because, even in light of a historic ceasefire in Yemen that
should bring relief to the Yemeni people, they are at the same
time faced with skyrocketing costs of fuel, of grain, and of food
prices, more generally.

So, we have been able to scale up our assistance
significantly due to the supplemental, both supplementals, in
Yemen, but, clearly, more is needed and we are putting a tremendous
amount of effort into getting, in particular, the Gulf to step
up in a way that they really haven't in the last year or two,
in response to increasing needs in Yemen.

Chairman Meeks. All right. And just real quickly, I want
to get this in because I think there was a communication gap that
we had.

But is the USAID looking or building inclusive resilience
and strengthening local institutions to protect against similar
food insecure situations for the future, so we don't get back
into this type of bind that we are in now?

Ms. Barry. Yes, certainly, through the Feed the Future
Initiative, USAID is making a lot of investments to work with
partner institutions in many countries to strengthen the capacity and the resilience. I think we have a lot of good examples of investments in resilience, working in partnership with our colleagues in the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, where we are making investments, so that communities can bounce back faster and be more resilient in the face of recurrent humanitarian crises.

Chairman Meeks. All right. Thank you. My time has expired.

I now will recognize Ranking Member McCaul. The floor is yours for five minutes.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to follow up on the chairman's question. Again, as I said in my statement, I was very disappointed, but not surprised, because I was very skeptical we can trust Putin with any sort of agreement. And I know this is a little bit out of your bailiwick, but the U.N. and Turkey had negotiated this agreement to get a third of the global wheat supply and the fertilizer out of the port. And within 24 hours, the Russians meet that with a bombing campaign on Odessa, which that shows a complete lack of trust and lack of good faith, as they bomb grain silos in Ukraine.

If we can't get it out of the port -- and we tried other ways, too. Like when I was in Romania, we talked about a railcar
bridge, and the Russians blew it up, but we were there. I know there has been talk of taking it west out to some of maybe the Baltic states.

And I know logistics is not your deal in this area, but what is going to be the impact if Ukraine can't get any of this wheat out? Because I do think Putin's strategy is to eventually go to Odessa, cut the Black Sea off, and then starve the Ukraine people. I mean, what impact will that have on Africa and, you know, the world?

Ms. Charles. So, maybe first, we are working closely, not just our two bureaus, but across the U.S. Government, with European Union partners and others, to maximize storage options inside of Ukraine and, also, as you mentioned, rail and other methods of getting Ukrainian wheat out through Europe. But there is no substitute. It is going to take years to grow kind of rail capacity to move wheat out through Ukraine. There is no substitute for what is stuck in the Odessa ports right now, for what can continue to be moved through those ports, if there is compliance with this deal.

So, I know a number of our partners, UNOCHA and WFP, in particular, are very involved in building the communication and technical dialog to move wheat aggressively out, but, of course, that depends on Russian compliance with the deal and cooperation with the deal.
I understand there is going to be a classified Member briefing later today where I think our State Department colleagues can go into a few more details about assessments of that compliance.

Mr. McCaul. Yes, and what is the status -- I mean, this is the last harvest that is sitting there, and they have another one, but, I mean, as they get bombed. I mean, I just find it very tragic. And it is why the world should care about Ukraine.

We always get this back home, "Why is Ukraine so important?" Because this is going to cause migration problems; it is going to cause destabilization problems; it is going to cause terrorism that we are seeing on the rise in the Sahel. Afghanistan you talked about. We are seeing ISIS and Al Qaeda on the rise again. And we are going to see millions of children dying. It could be one of the worst I have seen in my lifetime.

So, I commend your job. It is certainly heroic, but a very, very difficult job.

If I could ask you about these cargo shipment containers? I know that you have to go with certain cargo ships, but isn't this such a big deal right now that we could waive that requirement in the name of emergency?

Ms. Charles. So, we definitely welcome efforts by Congress to work with us on the cargo preference. We are in compliance with the cargo preference requirements. The reality is there
is limited capacity among U.S. flag vessels to move the bulk of
the assistance that we are moving around the world. And so, we
try to use that U.S. flagged fleet when it is available, but there
are times when we have to go beyond that.

Mr. McCaul. And you do have metrics that you are using to
prioritize the countries? And what are the top countries?

Ms. Charles. That are receiving U.S.-sourced in-kind food?
The top countries right now are certainly Yemen and the Horn
of Africa. We have smaller programs in other places, but the
bulk of our U.S.-sourced in-kind commodities go to Ethiopia,
Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, a small amount to Kenya, but Somalia,
and Yemen.

Mr. McCaul. Okay. And the destabilization is going to be
a real impact on the world.

So, anyway, thank you two for what you do.

And, Mr. Chairman, I see my time has expired.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you.

The gentleman yields back.

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

Mr. Sherman. Thank you.

Thank you for, I believe, sharing with us that you have the
authority to use non-U.S.-flagged vessels when the U.S.-flagged
vessels are not available.
I know we were all shocked by the Russian attack on the Odessa port, but I should point out that that port has a lot of facilities -- some naval, some commercial -- unrelated to food and medicine, and some related to food. So, I don't regard that as the end of the deal.

You are in the business of providing food. In order to get the food there, you need fuel. Fuel and food are at a very high price these days. Do you need more money than you asked for when you didn't know that food and fuel would be as expensive as they are today?

Ms. Charles. We are certainly seeing spiking prices across the world of food and fuel that is making the delivery of assistance much, much more expensive. The same amount of funding reaches fewer people than it did two years ago, certainly, and I certainly look forward to working with the appropriators as we look forward to, in particular, the year 2023.

Mr. Sherman. The appropriators' bills in a good year would become law in December. People are hungry now. I don't know how much you have in the pipeline. Do you need an emergency supplemental or are you in a position to deal with your current budget -- you know, with a Continuing Resolution, so no increase -- through the end of the year?

Ms. Charles. We are trying to manage, particularly, the second Ukraine supplemental in such a way that we are still able
to make investments in the first quarter of next year, as we anticipate the worst of this food crisis hitting much of the world.

Mr. Sherman. Okay. Turning to Tigray, I think many of us here in Congress and in the administration were quite loud in our demands that Ethiopia allow food in. And now that is happening to a decent degree, except you have got to be able to move the food around. The Ethiopian government isn't allowing the fuel trucks in in the quantities necessary to provide the fuel. Do we have the documentation that shows that fuel that the Ethiopian government does allow in Tigray is being used for food distribution and not being diverted for military purposes?

Ms. Charles. Sir, I am not often in the position to deliver good news, but we have actually had a small breakthrough in northern Ethiopia just in the last few days. We have long been working to negotiate a fuel waiver with the government of Ethiopia that would allow WFP to directly import fuel from Djibouti into northern Ethiopia. And I understand, as of yesterday, 10 fuel tankers have crossed the border and are on their way to Tigray right now. We think this will be quite significant in allowing us to continuously move assistance through the --

Mr. Sherman. That is good news. And I will point out, the Ethiopian government was intent, and especially the Eritrean government was intent, on starving the people of Tigray as a weapon of war. The pressure that came from the United States I think
was decisive in them partially abandoning that tactic.

The Rohingya are running out of food, particularly in one camp. But, in general, the amount raised is less than the World Food Programme needs. We are providing 50 percent. What can we do to provide more? What can we do to provide others more? And are those wealthy Muslim countries contributing to feeding the hungriest Muslims in the world?

Ms. Charles. So, Bangladesh is certainly one of the 23 countries that we are prioritizing, particularly for the Rohingya right now, with supplemental funding in order to increase assistance, not just in Cox’s Bazar, but also particularly --

Mr. Sherman. Are the Saudis contributing?

Ms. Charles. None of our fellow donor partners have stepped up in the way that they need to. And in particular, we would like to see the Gulf do significantly more in Bangladesh, but also in the Horn of Africa, in Yemen, and elsewhere.

Mr. Sherman. Thank you. 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, for five minutes.

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

And thank you to our two very distinguished witnesses for your leadership and for your testimony today. Thank you so much.
Two questions. First, on the Global Food Security Act reauthorization. You know, just for the record, it was Dr. Shah, USAID Administrator, who came, testified, met with me, met with Betty McCollum, and a few of us, back in 2014. He helped us write a bill, with the NGOs providing a tremendous amount of input. It passed the House that year, and then, two years later, under the reauthorization of 2016 and 2018. And it has made, I think, a difference.

One of the provisions in it, as you know, was the First 1,000 Days. And I am always concerned that when we are dealing with such an acute crisis, that food supplementation which mitigates stunting, and it is very good for maternal health, as well as the health of the child from conception to the second birthday, somehow we don't lose focus on that. So, if you could speak to that?

And secondly, in your testimony, Ms. Barry, you pointed out, rightfully, the need to defend against a variety of challenges, including, quote, "pests." Well, last July, with the strong support of Chairman Meeks, Chairwoman Bass, and Michael McCaul, the House passed my bill, H.R. 1079, the Desert Locust Control Act, to create an interagency working group to devise a strategic plan to mitigate the threat to crops and food security that is posed by locusts.

As you recall, we were going through a horrible crisis then.
And as WFP and others will say now, because of the drought, that has been largely mitigated -- but droughts go away, hopefully, sooner rather than later -- we could be right back into a locust problem, as you know.

It passed a full year ago. Any help you can give us on trying to get the Senate to get that legislation passed -- it is a modest bill; it is a bipartisan bill, and I think it will make a difference. If you are forewarned, if you preplan, then you are more prepared -- we are all more prepared -- for a challenge such as the locusts reemerging in large numbers.

So, those two issues. Ms. Charles?

Ms. Charles. First of all, I want to thank you for your leadership on the locust issue. As I mentioned, I just came back from Kenya and Somalia. And while I don't want to do anything to minimize the crisis that the region is facing right now, one thing I heard from partner after partner was it could be worse, and really highlighting how strategic investments, not the least of which since 2019 in addressing the locust issue, and building the capacity to more aggressively and quickly respond when we do have locusts outbreaks, has been critical in helping mitigate the crisis there, which is not to say we are not facing a crisis.

And I also want to highlight, you know, there is a lot of attention in a food crisis to the food, but we are doing a number of interventions, including that $200 million investment in the
RUTF pipeline, as well as wraparound nutrition and health services to ensure, again, that children are spared from the worst of this crisis.

Mr. Smith. Ms. Barry?

Ms. Barry. Representative Smith, really a great opportunity to thank you for your commitment to this issue and your bringing up that you were there when the first act came out, you know, and --

Mr. Smith. And it was Dr. Shah's idea, a great idea.

Ms. Barry. And it was Dr. Shah's idea. And I recall it well. I was working in Kenya at the time, yes.

I think in this, we recently, last October, came up with -- we revised the strategy for the Global Food Security Act, and we were able to take into consideration some of the most pressing challenges of the day -- you know, at that time, looking at COVID; at increased conflict around the world, as well as climate change.

One of the things we did in that strategy was really elevate and recognize the need to elevate nutrition. I think that has been really important. So, a lot of work that we are doing under the new strategy is strengthening our coordination on not just emergency response to nutrition, but taking into consideration the needs around food fortification, and right now, in terms of with the supp that we have, looking at food fortification, looking at how we can help countries with food loss and waste, as an
important issue.

And, of course, the issue around locusts, just like Sarah said, thank you for your work on that. And we have certainly worked together on the humanitarian development side with experts across our agency to address that issue. And we know that it remains a threat.

Mr. Smith. Again, a nice word from you guys to the Foreign Relations Committee could help get that bill out of the committee.

Let me just, finally say -- I have only got 26 seconds -- I have authored three major laws on combating autism. The most recent is called the Autism Cares Act. It came out of case work in my district back in 1997, when we realized we had a really huge, unmet need on autism.

One of the findings that the Autism IMEC has found through its research is that folic acid can help mitigate the incidence and the prevalence of autism. I just hope supplementation, in addition to food, continues to be as robust as humanly possible.

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

Mr. Deutch. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Charles and Ms. Barry, thanks for joining us today. This is a really important hearing and a really timely one.

And I thank Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul for
continuing to make global food and the security a bipartisan issue, and a significant part of the committee's agenda.

I want to talk about combating food insecurity as a national security issue. At a moment when we are talking about Ukraine -- and I think, Ms. Charles, you described Putin's war on the world's poor, which I think is powerful and appropriate -- but also COVID, climate change, economic constraints. It is a really, really challenging time, and the potential for mass disruptions has never been greater.

And so, I would like to try to make this more -- I want to do two things. One, I want to make this more personal. Beyond the numbers, which are staggering, from your travels, can you give us just some perspective on what it means when millions of people are food insecure?

Ms. Charles. I just came back from Somalia and northern Kenya. And being in northern Kenya, speaking with mothers who kind of one by one down the line were holding children that looked like they were nine months, 12 months, but were actually three-four years old, but had been ravaged by food insecurity, severely malnourished; and also, mothers that were with children that were recovering from severe malnutrition.

We have the tools. We really do have the tools to address what we are seeing. It is devastating. And, in particular, when you hear them say they have lost hundreds and hundreds of
livestock, so their prospects for recovery are also -- longer-term recovery -- are also impacted, and made all the more devastating by, in a place like northern Kenya, it actually had strived since the last drought, since the last food crisis in terms of the government's capacity to respond. But because they are faced with spiking fuel and food prices throughout the country, their fiscal space -- because they are so indebted, including indebted to China -- their fiscal space to use the tools that they have in place, to increase social safety nets, to do more drilling in the north, to help these individuals and these families ride out this climate shock, are limited because of what Putin has done in Ukraine.

Mr. Deutch. Ms. Barry, Ukraine feeds 400 million people around the world, I think a conservative estimate. What does it mean when Putin launches this war, which is so unjustified and illegal and horrific in so many other areas, but in this area, in particular, what does that mean?

Ms. Barry. I think your questions around what is means are important and talking about, you know, sort of the personal experience. We know what it means right now. We see the catastrophe that is happening in terms of food security.

I am reminded, I worked in Somalia back in the early 1990s when they had a famine. That was manmade. It was caused by war. And I think that country has suffered generations from that.
So, when a country's food systems are destroyed like that, the recovery period is not quick. And so, I think right now what it means is that many farmers and many food systems are being disrupted, and families are really suffering. And we see that this year alone we may have 40 million more people slipping into extreme poverty, which is really devastating.

Mr. Deutch. But tell me, tell us what that means.

Ms. Barry. To live in extreme poverty?

Mr. Deutch. Yes.

Ms. Barry. I think the numbers of -- I might look to a colleague of what it is --

Mr. Deutch. Don't worry about the number.

Ms. Barry. Okay.

Mr. Deutch. What does it mean for the families?

Ms. Barry. What it means for those families is they lose a livelihood. They become homeless. They usually end up in a displaced camp. They lose their livestock, their livelihood.

Mr. Deutch. And I appreciate that.

In the less than a minute I have left, we talked a lot about Yemen. The situation in Syria is still dire. You talked about other places in Africa. You said that getting our Gulf, getting the Gulf to step up in ways that they haven't. Can you just tell us what that means? And can we stop talking about this in terms of just meeting, doing enough or not doing enough, and talk about
what it means when some of the wealthiest countries in the world, who are our important partners in so many ways, are not doing what they need to to help?

Ms. Charles. And I would even say, it is not even in ways that they haven't. They have in the past. You know, in 2016 and 2017, we did see the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Emiratis put resources into humanitarian response in Syria and Yemen. But they haven't done that in significant numbers in the last couple of years. You know, a pledge from Saudi Arabia is something like $180 million for Yemen. Not all of that has arrived yet. It means cutting rations in a place like Yemen. It means families doing with 50 percent less than they would if Saudi Arabia put in what they did just two or three years ago.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

I now recognize Representative Steve Chabot of Ohio, who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, for five minutes.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would, first, note that both witnesses referred to skyrocketing energy costs as being an important aggravating factor in increased food costs, and the scarcity of available food for those across the globe who so desperately need that food, who are literally starving.

Well, it is the Biden Administration's own policies,
self-inflicted policies, that have directly led to cost really, those very high energy costs. Cancelling the Keystone XL Pipeline right out of the box, it was almost the very first day, if not the first day, of the administration taking office they cancelled that, killed thousands of jobs -- discouraging oil and gas exploration and drilling; crushing regulations, and on and on.

You don't have to respond to those questions. So, let me get to a couple of other questions. But I think that was something that really needed to be said.

As the chairman mentioned, I am the ranking member of the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee. And so, I would like to focus my first couple of questions on the Indo-Pacific.

Ms. Charles, the situation in Sri Lanka remains dire. Could you describe USAID's efforts, and the efforts of our partners also, to help alleviate the acute crisis there in Sri Lanka?

Ms. Charles. Sir, in the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, we have provided approximately $5 million to --

Mr. Chabot. Could you pull the microphone just a little closer?

Ms. Charles. Yes. Sorry.

Mr. Chabot. That is all right. Thank you.

Ms. Charles. In the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, we provided approximately $5 million just in the last month or so
to reach the most vulnerable families impacted by the current crisis. We have also deployed a humanitarian advisor to work with partners in the ground to identify what further action might need to be required in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Chabot. All right. Thank you.

Ms. Charles. But today, Sri Lanka is one of those countries, like Kenya and like Lebanon, two-three years ago, we wouldn't have had Sri Lankans receiving humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Chabot. Right. Right, right. And we, too, also note that the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative, and the debt that so many countries have taken on that can't afford that, has had a very big impact on them. So, that is something that the rest of the world I think recognizes for the most part, but it is something that the PRC deserves a lot of criticism for.

Let me ask you another question, Ms. Charles. Could you speak to how Russia's invasion of Ukraine is impacting vulnerable populations in the Indo-Pacific; specifically, Bangladesh? I am co-chair of the Bangladesh Caucus. So, maybe you could start there, and also discuss any impacts that you are seeing on the Rohingya -- and I know Mr. Sherman referred to the Rohingya -- and the Burmese people, in general.

Ms. Charles. I think Bangladesh, and particularly, the Rohingya population, are one of those where we see the world's most vulnerable are paying the price for Putin's war in Ukraine
and facing again both skyrocketing prices, but also attention and resources from other donors, not from the United States -- we have managed to scale up our assistance, thanks to the generosity of Congress -- but other partners are cutting back. So, at a time when needs are increasing, we are seeing other partners step back, as resources have been diverted to respond to Putin's unprovoked war in Ukraine.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you.

And, Ms. Barry, moving beyond the Indo-Pacific generally, while support for Ukraine is pretty solid in at least the developed world, support is not so uniform in the so-called Global South.

As a matter of public diplomacy, could you describe how the United States is making Russia pay a reputational cost, at least, for driving up food and energy prices in countries that are lukewarm in their condemnations of Russia?

Ms. Barry. I think that is a good question that I will respond to. And Sarah might want to add to it.

But I think, through our investments in the Feed the Future Initiative, and with the supp, we are really doubling down on our support to countries that are being impacted the most by Russia's war in Ukraine. We are being very explicit in our messaging around that. We are working closely with our folks on the ground at the embassies and getting out that message, as the supp goes. And we are using every opportunity through local
media to ensure that we are getting that message across.

Mr. Chabot. All right. Thank you.

Ms. Barry. So, I think that gets to your question. I don't know if, Sarah, you want to add to it.

Ms. Charles. I was traveling over the last few days with Administrator Power to the Horn of Africa. She had just also come from Zambia and Malawi. And one of the top messages in those travels is not just what the United States is doing, but what Russia is doing as well to fuel this crisis, and what partners -- not partners -- but other countries like China aren't doing in the face of this global crisis.

Secretary Blinken, similarly, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, all across the administration, really trying to drive that message home, that this is Russia's war and the world's war.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you. My time is expired, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

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

Mr. Keating. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for our witnesses.

You know, we spend a lot of time -- rightfully so -- on the effects of Russia and Russia's war on the food supply and targeting
Ukrainian agriculture, seizing agricultural assets, blocking the
Black Sea. We all know that and they should be condemned in that,
among so many other reactions, that they do have.

But I want to look at, since that has been covered, other
areas where we should really look at our food supply issues in
the instant sense, but also down the road, and deal with those
issues. You know, there have been increases in metric tons of
wheat, for instance, even in 2021 and 2020. So, we have a lot
of grain out there. We have a lot of wheat out there.

And there are other reasons for this. I want to dwell on
three things. And I certainly want to dispel the idea that the
Keystone Pipeline has anything to do with the food supply, which
is, to me, frankly, a ridiculous statement, with all due respect
to my friend.

The three issues are the global stockpiling effect that
occurs. We have seen it in India, Egypt, other countries as well,
and the protectionist type of policy around grain hoarding that
is there.

Secondly, the shipping and supply chain issues. Are there
ways we can look at improving that situation, because it is just
not a crop problem; it is a supply problem.

And certainly, the effect of market, the market effect of
panicking, the panicking market effect which I think we have seen
as well.
And the need for better forecasting. The last administration, frankly, cut --

Chairman Meeks. Hold. Someone, please, someone mute your phones.

Mr. Keating. I would like to reclaim my time because of that interruption, if I could, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. Give the gentleman back 10 seconds.

Mr. Keating. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The third point was the panic market situation that happens, and the necessary forecasting science to be improved. So, we move away from the glut situation to lower production and can forecast that better, and the need to improve our agricultural statistics department that exists, where the cuts were made in the last administration, and the importance of that.

So, those three things, if you could comment? Then, I will just yield back my time after you through with that.

Ms. Barry. Maybe I will chime in on the third one first, just on better forecasting. You know, we have the opportunity to do some great work in the interagency working with NASA on forecasting, working on a program we call SERVIR, which has been a fantastic tool we have been able to use to help small farmers in many different countries have better information on the impact of incremental weather, and have better information for when they should plant; when they should harvest. So, that has been a
fantastic partnership.

And also, in partnership with NASA, we are helping Ukraine better understand what is going on in terms of their fields. Like we were able to see the occupied farmland that Russia has taken over. It is 22 percent of Ukraine right now.

So, I think those investments in being able to help farmers around the globe to have better forecasting are so important, as well as work that we do with organizations like IFPRI -- and I know BHA does with FEWS NET -- on forecasting are really important investments.

In terms of global stockpiling and hoarding, yes, an issue that we are all concerned with. We have been, through Feed the Future, making investments to work with government counterparts on their policymaking to ensure that the information is out there.

We can't stop the hoarding, but, certainly, giving the guidance and the tools to explain why that is not a good investment for their own economies --

Mr. Keating. It would be a sin to have people starving while grain is just sitting in silos. And that is why forecasting is so important. And that is why it relates to the growth production as well.

So, continue, please.

Ms. Charles. I will add on that, getting countries to lift their export bans has been a key priority of the entire
administration. In fact, traveling on from Somalia and Kenya, Administrator Power was going to India. One of the things on her list, in addition to highlighting the important Global Development Partnership there, is to really focus on trying to get them to lift some of their export bans, particularly those that are impacting the countries that are most hit by this.

We have seen some countries, like Indonesia, walk back from their export bans that they put in place on the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and we will continue to use all of the diplomatic tools across the government to try and get markets to function as they should.

Mr. Keating. Good. We did touch on supply chain, but if you could do that, perhaps, in writing afterwards, because my time has expired?

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Joe Wilson of South Carolina, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism, for five minutes.

Mr. Wilson. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I am glad to see onscreen a few minutes ago, to see the black belt karate champion, Lee Zeldin. And so New York is well represented today.

And with that in mind, I really do appreciate the witnesses
today.

And I have actually seen the success of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the generosity of the American people, the humanitarian aid. I've seen firsthand the earthquake recovery that occurred at Muzaffarabad, Pakistan; typhoon assistance to the Philippines; agricultural development in Guatemala, and famine relief at the refugee camps in Sudan, along with the schools for boys and girls in Afghanistan.

With that in mind, as the war criminal Putin continues his genocidal invasion of sovereign Ukraine, the world continues to pay the price. Global hunger has risen at a staggering rate; threatening famine conditions affecting hundreds of millions of people. Putin alone is responsible for the grain and fertilizer shortage, as his thugs have set fire to fields, looted silos, attacked merchant ships in the Black Sea, and destroyed infrastructure to export agricultural goods.

For each of our witnesses today, Congress recently provided another $8 billion in emergency funding, over two Ukraine supplementals for humanitarian response to Putin's war and the global food aid. Since then, there have been concerns raised that the United States Government has not been expedient as possible in getting these funds out to help the vulnerable people who are suffering from hunger in many countries around the globe.

Can you tell us how the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance
and the Bureau of Resilience and Food Security are working to get this emergency funding out the door? Are there any roadblocks/impediments that have delayed implementation? What can we do in a bipartisan manner to assist you in your efforts?

Ms. Charles. First of all, Representative Wilson, I am so glad that you have been able to see the importance of U.S. foreign assistance in response to disasters around the world.

We are moving aggressively and urgently to program the supplemental funding, the nearly $6.95 billion that was appropriated in international disaster assistance. We have already programmed over $2 billion from the first Ukraine supplemental, over $2.2 billion from the second supplemental. So, that is nearly 60 percent of the combined supplemental funding has been programmed already, and we are moving aggressively to program the balance.

We have done this in a way that is responsible, that is targeted, that is strategic. We have really reprioritized within the agency. We have had a surge of Contracting Officers in order to move this assistance quickly and responsibly.

There are longer-term challenges with support for contracting throughout the agency and, in particular, for the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. And we look forward to working with this committee to address those longer-term needs, even as we have reprioritized to put a number of additional surge
resources on programming this funding.

Ms. Barry. And if I may just add, I am very thankful for this committee's support to address the more medium- and longer-term issues of this crisis. And so, in the supp, we received $763 million. The notifications for all of those resources to address the development needs are currently at Congress, and we have got plans to move them as soon as they are cleared through Congress.

Thank you.

Mr. Wilson. And for each of you, it is very legitimate to have a concern about the accountability of the funding that is going, and that we know that kleptocracy occurs around the world. But we also know that in the legislation there is provision for Inspector General reports and monitoring of the funds.

How can we assure the taxpayers of America that, indeed, the funding that they are providing is not being wasted; that it is going for the purposes that we all want it to go for? And it is just so critical to reassure the American people.

Ms. Charles. Thank you, Representative Wilson. You are absolutely right, and one of the reasons why we have put such an emphasis on not just responding quickly, but responding responsibly.

We are working with very experienced partners, partners that are experienced in working in some of the hardest environments
in the world. We work with them on risk mitigation plans. We have third-party monitoring contracts in place in almost all of these countries in order to have eyes and ears, separate eyes and ears, on where this programming is going. And we insist that all of our partners report immediately and investigate any instances of fraud, waste, and abuse.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

I now recognize Representative Ami Bera of California, the chair of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, for five minutes.

Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again, thank you to the chairman and ranking member for their diligent interest in food and water insecurity around the world and the impact that it is having.

Congressman Deutch touched a little bit on what the future might look like. You have global instability; food and water insecurity with climate change. You know, it is not going to last, but, unfortunately, it is going to increase. We have seen those disruptions, certainly, most prominently, in the African continent, but certainly in other parts of Asia, South America, Central America, as well. And we understand that that is going cause displacements.

One of the programs that I am most proud about in the Global Food Security Act is the university-led Feed the Future Innovation
Labs, and there is currently 21 Innovation Labs across 14 U.S. universities, including my home institution, UC Davis, where I really do think important work is being done to help us address some of these challenges. I will use, you know, some of the technology that is coming out with better seeds that will require less fertilizer and less water.

And maybe if the witnesses could talk a little bit about the importance of these Innovation Labs to help us address some of these challenges?

The other area that I have been working with UC Davis and others on is the area of alternative protein use, and so forth. The technology looks very promising. Obviously, it is not at a commercial scale. But if we can get some of these breakthrough innovations, that is also another tool that we might be able to deploy around the world to help address food/protein insecurity and water insecurity.

So, if either one of the witnesses want to talk about the Innovation Labs, and then how we best can support R&D to help tackle some of these 21st century challenges around food and water insecurity?

Ms. Barry. Nice to see you again, Representative, and thank you for those questions.

And, of course, the investments in research and development, particularly through the Innovation Labs, as you mentioned, we
partner with 21 U.S. universities, which, in turn, partner with an additional 70 U.S. universities and colleges working from 40 different states here in the United States.

And also noting that we partner with international research institutions; I think over 170. We know that investments in agricultural research have a huge impact, as we know that investments in agricultural economic-led growth have the strongest impact of lifting lower-income countries out of poverty. An important piece of that, of course, is investments in research.

And we saw a recent economic analysis that looked at our investments over the past 40 years in agricultural research and development. And they showed that, for every dollar invested, it provided a return of $8.52 in economic impact. And I think that tells a really strong story.

So, we are grateful that we have the support to continue those investments. And like you said, you know, some of the research that is coming out of that now that we are taking to scale to respond to this crisis include drought-resistant seeds, innovations around food loss and waste, which are just so critical and important for the work that we are doing.

In terms of alternative protein sources, that is also something really important. We talked earlier in this hearing about the importance of nutrition. And while perhaps in the
countries that we work, looking for alternative meat may not look like the same as it does here in the United States -- I don't think folks are looking for veggie burgers -- it is important to find ways to get protein into diets. So, a lot of the work that we do is promoting the growth of pulses and legumes, and integrating those into other crops, which provides a source of protein, not just for diets that is affordable, but it also helps improve the health of soil in many of the places that we work around the world.

Mr. Bera. And, yes, if I think about my lifetime, in my younger days in the 1970s we thought about Bangladesh as this place that had real famines due to flooding and that would kill their rice crops. Through innovation, we were able to come up with flood-resistant rice seeds, and so forth, and get Bangladesh to a place where it can feed itself. And so, I think technology is going to be a huge component of how we address this 21st century challenge.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, let me go ahead and yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

I know we have a limited time before votes. I will have Representative Wagner give her questions, and then we will recess until after votes. And so we will come back immediately after votes. So, other members can leave to go vote now. I understand there is two votes. But Representative Wagner will ask the last
Representative Wagner from Missouri, vice ranking member of the full committee, is now recognized for five minutes.

Mrs. Wagner. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

And I thank our witnesses for their incredible service.

I recently had the privilege of traveling with a bipartisan delegation, led by the chairman and ranking member, to Moldova, to Switzerland, Prague, and Vienna. Again and again, our counterparts raised serious concerns regarding food security in Eastern Europe and across the developing world.

In the two months since we returned from Europe, the global food crisis has only become more acute. Inflation is driving up food and energy prices everywhere, and Russia has sought to use hunger as a weapon of war, even attacking the Ukrainian Port of Odessa, a key conduit of the global grain trade, just a few days ago. And at the time of the strike, Russia had just committed not to attack Odessa because of its importance in alleviating food insecurity.

The global food crisis is a tragedy, and in deliberately disrupting food supply chains, Russia has again displayed its utter disregard for human rights and human dignity. The United States must redouble its efforts to ensure food aid is delivered swiftly and efficiently, and push our partners to set up their own donation programs also.
Ms. Charles, do the United States and our global partners have access to conflict-affected areas in the east and the south of Ukraine? To what degree is Russia hindering humanitarian convoys and corridors? And I guess, what are the biggest operational constraints that you see?

Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question.

And I couldn't agree with you more about the impact of Putin's war, not just on Ukraine, but on the immediate region and beyond, as we have been talking about today.

We have seen a massive scale-up in humanitarian assistance as a result of increased need inside of Ukraine. The United States alone has provided over a billion dollars of assistance inside of Ukraine.

But there is no question that there are access constraints that Russia is absolutely responsible for. We see, even in areas of the east, where we had partners that had access after the first Russian invasion of Ukraine, de facto authorities in those areas have denied them registration and approval to operate in those areas, even as we hear from people in those areas of spiking need, growing food insecurity, increased communicable diseases. There is no question that Russia and the de facto authorities could be doing much, much more to facilitate access to people that are caught in the east, in particular.

Mrs. Wagner. Thank you.
Also, I think it is worth pointing out that the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan has created a humanitarian crisis and, in particular, skyrocketing levels of malnutrition in children.

Ms. Charles, how is USAID addressing needs in Afghanistan? Recent reports illuminate concerning trends regarding the Taliban's increasingly brazen actions to disrupt impartial humanitarian aid delivery. What is the United States doing to address this issue, ma'am?

Ms. Charles. The U.S.-supported partners reached a record 18 million Afghans this past year, 11 million of those reached with U.S.-supported food assistance. We have actually seen, even while the conditions in Afghanistan continue to deteriorate, we have actually seen the food security situation for Afghans, we have seen slight improvements over the last 9 to 12 months, directly attributable to the assistance provided by the United States through our partners there.

But that is being threatened by increasing obstruction and attempts by the Taliban, and other armed actors in Afghanistan, to meddle with the delivery of impartial humanitarian assistance. So, even as we have scaled up assistance, we have to engage, both directly and indirectly, to really push back on attempts of the Taliban to --

Mrs. Wagner. Ms. Charles, real quickly, and you may have
to submit this for the record, but to Ms. Barry and Ms. Charles, how have your Bureaus coordinated on implementing congressionally-directed emergency food aid, and what challenges or impediments have you faced during coordination?

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady's time has expired. And I don't know if you are in danger of missing votes or not.

Mrs. Wagner. I am actually in the cloakroom, Mr. Chairman. But I am pleased to either have them submit, the witnesses there, in writing, or whatever you prefer, sir.

Chairman Meeks. All right. In fairness to all, then let the witnesses respond in writing.

Mrs. Wagner. Right. Thank you. I thank you very much, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back. And the committee will stand in recess until we do the two votes.

But I see -- wait a minute -- let's see, who do I see? Oh, Representative Titus, have you voted already?

Ms. Titus. No, sir. I was thinking there is 183 people still haven't voted. I don't know if we have time to do questions now. But I can come back, if you would prefer.

Chairman Meeks. Well, it is your choice.

Ms. Titus. Well, I could go ahead right now, if that is all right.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady is recognized for five
Ms. Titus. Thank you, sir. I would like to go back to the question Mr. Chabot introduced about Sri Lanka. You talked generally about it, but I want to be more specific and get these figures on the record because they are pretty drastic.

Three in 10 households, or approximately 6.25 million Sri Lankans, are unsure where they are going to get their next meal. And if the situation, both politically and economically doesn't improve soon, some people have speculated that that number is going to increase to 22 million, or one-third of the population, in the next year or so.

Last month, USAID introduced $11.75 million for new assistance to Sri Lanka, and that included $5.75 million to address food insecurity and $6 million to support the agriculture industry. That is all great for down the road, that agriculture investment, but I wonder what we are doing right now to provide relief to those 60 percent of the people who don't know where the next meal is coming from.

Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question. And I think, as was mentioned previously, in Sri Lanka, we are seeing this perfect storm of spiking prices, but also how the debt crisis, in many ways fueled by debt from China, is driving hunger across the world, but also constraining the fiscal space for countries to deal with these longer-term food security challenges.
We have responded with approximately $5 million in emergency assistance for Sri Lanka, and we have also deployed a humanitarian advisor to Sri Lanka to work with the team on the ground to identify what further assistance might be needed for the most vulnerable families in Sri Lanka. But, clearly, a more systematic response is needed.

Ms. Titus. Well, how do you know who to work with, when the government is in such turmoil?

Ms. Charles. So, in this case, we are working with humanitarian partners, including the World Food Programme, to deliver that emergency assistance.

Ms. Titus. Okay. All right. Well, you didn't tell me much more than what I really knew, but okay.

One other thing I would ask quickly is, all of these programs are great and you do a lot with few resources, but they are all reactive. We seldom get ahead of the problem. And I just wonder how you are using data to kind of plan and do programmatic analysis, so we can anticipate some of these problems and try to get ahead of them, instead of just having to respond after the fact, which sometimes takes a long time, and in the meantime, people are starving.

Ms. Barry. If I could just chime in on that question? It is an excellent question. You know, the Feed the Future Initiative has been implemented for over a decade now, and that
is designed exactly for what you are talking about. So, we are able to make investments in medium- and longer-term needs.

And in terms of what we are doing right now, in terms of the supplemental, and maybe to talk a little bit about Sri Lanka, with your question, you know, we are looking to support smallholder farmers who are impacted by the crisis right now to help them from slipping further into poverty. But we are also providing some short-term assistance there on the nutrition side for children that have need.

But, in terms of the long-term investments, I think we are working in areas of recurring humanitarian crisis, in partnership with BHA, to help families be more resilient for the next shock.

We have seen, during COVID, we were able to look at some of the evidence out there in Uganda and Malawi, where we saw that investments we made in zones of influence, where the U.S. future investments were going, families were able to be more resilient to the impacts of the COVID crisis than in neighboring areas. It wasn't to say that they weren't impacted by the crisis, but they certainly were more resilient than other families.

Ms. Charles. And even within the humanitarian portfolio, where we talk a lot about our response investments, we also invest in early warning systems across the world, including working very closely with partners at NOAA and U.S. Geological Survey, NASA, and other science agencies across the government on, among other
things, the Famine Early Warning System that helps us use limited U.S. foreign assistance in order to target areas that are most in need, in order to act early, in order to avert the worst outcomes. They are not just doing assistance everywhere in a country, but really honing-in on places where needs are most acute and using that early warning to target assistance.

Ms. Titus. Thank you. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting me go ahead. And I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

The committee will stand in recess, and we will resume after the second vote. The committee is now in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman Meeks. The House will now reconvene, and I will start by recognizing Representative Perry of Pennsylvania for five minutes.

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

Ladies, I appreciate you being here and for your testimony. We have heard a lot about the various, what I would call, supposed causes of global food insecurity. I come from a farming community, and in the fall, in October, we have thing called the farmers' fair. We know how to farm. I can talk to you about, you know, million-dollar pieces of iron pulling into the field and doing acres upon acres in minutes of time. We know how to farm and make farming practices effective and productive, not
only in the United States, but worldwide.

I mean, Norman Borlaug, whose statue sits not far from us, likely credited for the salvation of hundreds of millions of people, I think would be -- he would be rolling over in his grave if he saw the policies that global elites are demanding in the name of what I am going to start characterizing as so-called sustainable agricultural practices.

I am glad both of you, as witnesses, understand the importance of fertilizer in a global agricultural system. The increased cost of fertilizer and fuel, or the inability to obtain fertilizer, have wreaked havoc on farmers across the globe.

I think it is important to mention the impact of the Green New Deal policies on the global food shortage. And I would just refer to -- I know there has been a lot of discussion about it today -- Sri Lanka, where, in 2021, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides were banned -- were banned. Now, they have got a great ESG score, but they can't eat. Predictably, at least to me, this policy change has wreaked havoc in that country, and other than overturning the government and forcing people into poverty and potential starvation, the government has spent nearly half a billion on rice imports.

This is going to fall on deaf ears, some folks on this committee. But I would just urge you to please do not impose these nonsensical policies from your vantage point. Synthetic
fertilizer and many of technologies pioneered since Norman Borlaug's time helped lift these very countries out of poverty, and now, we're headed back there to try and help them, to demand these policies at multilateral and bilateral settings that would prohibit them from utilizing the innovations that we have come up with, which is, frankly, insulting and in the long term potentially deadly.

I would like to start out with Ms. Charles. In your written testimony, you mentioned the difficulty posed to USAID by statutory requirements imposed by the Cargo Preference Act; specifically, the requirement that at least half of all tonnage -- all tonnage -- is shipped on U.S.-flagged vessels. I would love for that to be the case. Do you know how many U.S.-flagged bulk vessels there are in the fleet? I am just asking. It is not like a "gotcha" question. I am just asking if you know.

Ms. Charles. Three.

Mr. Perry. Three, right? Yes, we both know that, apparently. That is good that we know that. It just artificially inflates the shipping costs and makes it difficult, and you see it firsthand.

I would ask you this question, and then I will turn to Ms. Barry for a secondary question. But what policy changes would you support in reducing the burdens that you face? Would you support a modification to the requirement in the Cargo Preference
Act or some sort of waiver exemption?

And then, for Ms. Barry, based on what is occurring in Sri Lanka -- and quite honestly, to echo the questions of the gentlelady, my colleague from Nevada, Ms. Titus, to get ahead of the problem -- is USAID considering denouncing publicly the consequences of ESG and the pursuit of sustainability?

So, the first question is for Ms. Charles.

Ms. Charles. So, thank you. I think you have highlighted the challenges with supply of U.S.-flagged vessels. And certainly, we would be eager to work with the committee on some relief in that space as well.

I will say we estimate that waiving or notwithstanding cargo preference requirements in 2021 would have amounted to a $31 million cost savings and could have fed 16 million more people.

Mr. Perry. How many more? A million people?

Ms. Charles. Sixteen million more people.

Mr. Perry. That is a lot of people. That is a lot of money. Just waiving the requirement -- I would like to go further, but at least you are advocating for that.

Ms. Charles. Having said that, we do stay in compliance with the --

Mr. Perry. I understand, as you should, as you must.

All right. Ms. Barry, my question regarding getting in front of the problem and identifying it. It is not just issues
of climate. I mean, Sri Lanka, it could have been predicted, once they banned fertilizer and pesticides used in the modern world effectively and safely. So, is there any appetite to really get to the root of the problem that we are having right now?

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I think investments through Feed the Future are really taking advantage of what you mentioned earlier, you know, about the great innovations here in the United States and helping smallholder farmers look at what are all the tools in the toolbox.

So, I think Sri Lanka is a good cautionary tale for us to look at. And right now, in response to this current crisis, and when it comes to fertilizers, we are helping farmers make the right decisions and look at what is available, and how they can use fertilizers --

Mr. Perry. But if a country bans them --

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Perry. -- I am hoping that you will sound the alarm.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Dean Phillips of Minnesota for five minutes.

Mr. Phillips. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question for both of you is relative to Port Odessa and, of course, Friday's announcement of an important deal to open the port for exports. Twenty-four hours later, two Russian
missiles attack the port. What is the current status as of right now, most updated as to the circumstance at the port? And what is the prospective likelihood of it opening for exports?

Ms. Charles. Sir, I think afternoon there will be a classified briefing, where I think our colleagues from the State Department can give additional details.

But, as of today, we understand the Joint Coordinating Committee, the JCC, will stand up for the first time. They are working on communication and deconfliction protocols.

I think success or failure of this deal will land in the lap of Putin and the Russian forces in terms of whether they are going to allow the wheat to get out Odessa.

Mr. Phillips. And to that end, what are the implications? It will land in his lap, certainly, but what are the implications if it opens and, of course, the consequences if it doesn't?

Ms. Charles. I mean, I think we have already seen the devastating impact of having that port offline. Just in the food assistance space, the Black Sea region provided 50 percent of WFP's food aid that they used around the world. We have seen prices spike as a result of that coming offline, and even as we have worked with the European Union and other partners to increase storage inside of Ukraine, and try and get out through other means, it can't be replaced by taking the Port of Odessa offline.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. And my second question is more micro,
but, of course, around the world, small farms and small producers are kind of the backbone of food supply. And perhaps you can speak to the challenges that you are facing in ramping up those small operations? I know fertilizer is a challenge. Climate change is affecting. But what role do small producers, small farmers play in trying to mitigate these great challenges, and what could we do better?

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question.

I think, you know, as you said, smallholder farmers are the backbone of the economies of so many countries where we work. And so, through the Feed the Future Initiative, our focus is on working with smallholder farmers to help lift them up out of their situation, and rolling out and scaling innovations that we know do work; promoting drought-resistant seed, for example, and other technologies related to food loss and waste. We working on a lot of those technologies.

I hope that gets at your question.

Mr. Phillips. But what are the challenges? What are the great challenges right now that you are facing relative to supporting them, ramping up those producers, and inspiring more entrepreneurship, you know, more farms?

Ms. Barry. Yes. I think some of the big challenges are access to finance for smallholder farmers, of course, and then just access to fertilizer and other inputs, because of the
disruption to supply chains. So, we are -- yes.

Mr. Phillips. And how are you handling the access to fertilizer? Is there any way to mitigate that at all?

Ms. Barry. What we are doing right now is we are looking for partnerships with the private sector. We are working on helping farmers get access to finance for fertilizer, and then we are helping them with more efficient use of fertilizers, so that they can use less fertilizer or use a fertilizer, I should say, more efficiently for production, and look at blending fertilizers. So, just getting information out there, getting access to fertilizer out there, when it is possible; looking at local productions of fertilizer.

Mr. Phillips. And relative to financing, that seems to me the easiest challenge to solve. But what are the impediments to doing so, and how might we be helpful?

Ms. Barry. I think some of the impediments are just, you know, when it comes to finance for smallholder farmers, full stop. And the risk that is involved can be challenging, but we are working closely with other partners in the U.S. Government, like the DFC. We are working with AFDB to see what innovative solutions we can come up with.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. Is it a lack of resources, a lack of intention? I want to understand what prevents more entrepreneurship in developing nations relative to food supply.
So, I am trying to probe a little bit. Can you share any more?

Ms. Barry. I think lack of resources, you know --

Mr. Phillips. So, it is a lack of resources?

Ms. Barry. A lack of resources is part of, is definitely part of the problem, and the risk that is involved is part of the problem. Yes.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. All right. Well, thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Darrell Issa of California for five minutes.

Mr. Issa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to follow right behind that, Ms. Barry. You mentioned small farms. Isn't one of the problems particularly in some of the countries that are most impacted that they are farm--small farms because, purely from a standpoint of sort of their socialist past, they have divided large acreage into small acreage? Even though you don't operate there, we will take Zimbabwe for example. They were once the breadbasket of Africa; today they don't feed themselves and yet they have the same amount of arable land.

Isn't one of the challenges that we face making sure that efficient farming is a practice in many of these countries in which aid is most needed?

Ms. Barry. I think, you know, we recognize smallholder
farmers are so important to the backbone of the economy, and we are working with small and medium --

Mr. Issa. That didn't answer my question. I am not trying to do a "gotcha."


Mr. Issa. Smallholder farming, in most cases, particularly wheat production, and to a certain extent corn and other commodities, in fact is adverse to efficiency. Isn't that correct?

Ms. Barry. I'm not sure I would answer that question, so maybe I can get back to you on the record.

Mr. Issa. If you would, please. I think you could fly over the so-called flyovers of America and find out that we don't do small farming and we do it more efficiently, and that in fact socialism, dividing up into five-acre lots, destroyed Zimbabwe from a standpoint of being able to feed itself.

Moving on, I want to go to Ms. Charles. Historically USAID has had a role in Lebanon, but the role has been both through the U.N. and separately for refugees, first the Palestinians, then others, including the Syrians. With the collapse of the Lebanese pound and the absence of ability even to gain funds that are available many, many Lebanese now live in adverse poverty who were just two years ago globally considered middle class.

What changes are you making to respond to that?
Ms. Charles. So we made the extraordinary decision, about 18 months, ago to start providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Lebanese citizens. We have--

Mr. Issa. And how large is that?

Ms. Charles. About $58 million since 2021, as part of an overall assistance package of about 210 million. About three-quarters of that was for Syrian refugees that were in Lebanon. And historically that's where our support has gone, but because of the adverse economic conditions, we did decide to start providing assistance to vulnerable Lebanese.

That was a very difficult decision, because it wasn't as a result of war or natural disaster; it was because of this economic collapse, and it's not a sustainable way to address Lebanon's economic challenges.

Mr. Issa. No question at all. I might disagree only in that Lebanon has been at war for decades. The war simply was its own form of cold war were Iran, through Hizballah, has continued to destabilize the country, kill leaders, and so on.

One of the areas historically that is the poorest, of course, is the Shi'a in the south. That is also the area in which Hizballah gets a lot of credit for their so-called humanitarian work. How do you de-conflict areas that are essentially sympathetic and part of a base of the problem versus other areas?

How do you make those decisions? We know you don't make it based
on religion, but how do you make it based on areas under control of other outside funds, including funds from Iran?

Ms. Charles. So, we make the decisions really at the level of household. So we're not targeting assistance based on specific geographies, but looking at particularly vulnerable households--

Mr. Issa. So the poorest could be those most in the pocket of Hizballah or they could be the least. It is just a matter of poverty?

Ms. Charles. We provide assistance impartially. And in particular, you know, in a place like Lebanon, it's really again targeted at the most vulnerable households: female head of households, households particularly elderly. Yes.

Mr. Issa. For either one of you, but probably for Ms. Barry, the United States is the--probably the largest producer of corn-based ethanol in the world by far. Every pound, every bushel of corn that gets turned into ethanol or other uses is the alternate feedstock to wheat that is not available. Is it time to at least consider doing a surge of corn production or others even if that means a backing off of ethanol?

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired, so that would have to be answered in writing.

I now recognize Representative Tom Malinowski of New Jersey, the Vice Chair of the Full Committee, for five minutes.
Hearing not from Mr. Malinowski, I will now go to Representative Levin from Michigan for five minutes.

Mr. Levin. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I really want to thank you for holding this vital hearing. What an important topic.

I will let the witnesses and members of this committee know that I am in the middle of a markup in the Education and Labor Committee and we are taking up a bill focused on domestic food security, and specifically ensuring our kids can access healthy meals in schools. Access to one of our basic needs, food, shouldn't be a question in 2022. Yet in fact far too many people across our globe are facing food insecurity, enduring extreme hunger, and succumbing to famine.

I would like to start by asking about the Global Fragility Act and food insecurity. In 2019, in December of that year I believe, Congress passed the bipartisan GFA which requires the development of a whole-of-government, multi-sectoral, and integrated approach to prevent and mitigate conflict and build sustainable peace.

In April, the Biden Administration announced the law's four priority countries and one region: Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, and coastal West Africa. Successful implementation of the GFA is more urgent than ever.

So Assistant Administrator Barry, how will the administration address food insecurity caused by the war in
Ukraine in the priority GFA context, particularly in Haiti, Libya, and coastal West Africa?

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. It was great to see the Global Food—the Global Fragility Act pass, and certainly some of those countries are the same countries where the global food security strategy are—is focused. They're Feed the Future focus countries; that is in Haiti and Mozambique and some of the places in coastal West Africa, which creates great opportunities for us to make sure that we're bringing to bear all the best of U.S. ingenuity to address what are extremely complex problems. And we know that certainly food security can be a compounding issue when it comes to security in a country, something that we talked about earlier in this hearing.

Mr. Levin. All right. Turning to the nexus between hunger and conflict, there are far too many conflicts and wars today, from Yemen, to Ethiopia, to Ukraine, where hunger is used as a weapon of war to devastating effect. Conflict-sensitive approaches to food assistance can create more effective, more sustainable humanitarian interventions while ensuring that food aid will not be co-opted by bad actors or contribute to the conflict by failing to account for the local political, social, and economic conditions.

Assistant Administrator Charles, as you seek to provide food aid to countries in conflict how does the Bureau for Humanitarian
Assistance ensure that its food assistance is not making the situation worse and increasing the possibility of violence and conflict?

Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question. I think it's been a major area of focus and development, even the last decade of providing humanitarian assistance and in particular food assistance, to do it in a conflict-sensitive way, everything from deep engagement around issues of access to ensure that partners are able to deliver assistance in an impartial way, using our diplomatic tools around that in places like northern Ethiopia and elsewhere, to even at the community level working with our partners on issues of targeting in a way that supports peace-building and doesn't exacerbate conflict even at the very local level.

Mr. Levin. Is USAID actively focused on ways it can better equip humanitarian organizations and actors providing food aid to ensure that their approach aligns with conflict sensitivity principles and doesn't further exacerbate conflict dynamics or increase social tensions or marginalize vulnerable groups? It is hard work. I mean how is that coming?

Ms. Charles. Yes, in addition to working with partners at the kind of individual program level on conflict dynamics. We also support research and development of best practice, proliferation of that best practice in the humanitarian community
around these issues of conflict-sensitive delivery of assistance.

Mr. Levin. So can you give me a specific examples of working with such groups where we were really able to change or improve things?

Ms. Charles. So, you know, it's everything from--I just got back from a trip to northern Kenya and Somalia, and in northern Kenya it's working again with our partners at a very, very local level on identifying beneficiaries in a way that's transparent and constructive, that takes into account dynamics between individual communities and tries to minimize conflict that way.

It's also investing in--

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Levin. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Mark Green of Tennessee, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, Migration, and International Economic Policy, for five minutes.

Mr. Green. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member McCaul. And I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. You have a tough challenging job and a long day today, so thanks for being here.

As the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee I would like to focus my time on the region under my purview first
and then make one quick comment.

Latin America has sometimes been referred to as the world's breadbasket also as it is the largest net food exporting region in the world. Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil are among the world's top 10 exporters of agricultural products and many other countries in the region are major food producers. Chances are your morning cup of joe comes from Latin America. According to the USDA Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, and Central America produce 86 percent of America's coffee. Additionally, Brazil is the world's largest beef exporter. America's Brazilian beef imports have surged 500 percent earlier this year, and 93 percent of our fresh fruits come from just nine Latin American countries.

Yet despite the region's remarkable agricultural productivity the Inter-American Development Bank reports that there are still 42.5 million under-nourished people in Latin America and the Caribbean. That is a tragedy. Food insecurity and malnourishment are undoubtedly part of the root causes of our border crisis. Combined with the pull factors such as the open border that the Biden Administration has, the migration crisis is no surprise. Both the push and pull factors must be addressed if we are to reduce migration and the often dangerous border crossings which hit an all-time record in May of this year.

We have to secure our border and we need to do that by a myriad of things: First, not repealing Title 42, re-implementing
migrant protection protocols, and may other things. But that is not what we are here to talk about today.

Today there is an area where Democrats and Republicans agree, and that is on the push factors and creating opportunities in Latin America. And myself and Chairman Sires have a bill, the Western Hemisphere Nearshoring Act. I am hopeful that bill will be calendared, Mr. Chairman, and in a markup soon. And any of my colleagues who want to provide input on that, I would love to hear it.

I would also like to take a stab before I go to my questions at Chairman's Meeks' question that he asked you earlier about are there substitutes to the loss of Ukraine--Ukrainian wheat and corn? And Tennessee is one of the nation's biggest ag producers. It is our number one export. And we are making cars, we are making all these--but ag is still our number one export.

And I will tell you that across the country, because of fertilizer prices, our farmers are using less fertilizer. So we expect yields are going to be significantly down relative to our normal production. So answer in one respect Chairman Meeks' question, no, the substitutes are not going to be there.

Further, our President's assault on the energy sector which significantly increased the price of diesel way before the war started has. Every plow that drags across--or a combine that crosses a field and pulls in grain is going to actually cost a
ton more because of the increase in diesel price. That is going
to have an impact on production.

And there are two other reasons that are specific to
Tennessee that I would like to mention: We are going to decrease
production for two reasons, too, because one, we are turning our
farmland into solar fields; and two, people fleeing California
and New York looking for freedom in Tennessee and Texas and Florida
are turning the farmland into housing developments. We are
losing our farmland.

So, no, there are no substitutes, Mr. Chairman. We are going
to have some significant world problems with this decrease in
production.

My question: does the administration consider hunger in
Central America a driver of migration? And if so, what is the
administration doing to address that hunger issue? Either of
you can hit that.

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question, and I think, you
know, hunger is—certainly can be one of many drivers. So Feed
the Future initiative is working in some parts of Latin America
to help smallholder farmers, particularly coffee farmers and
whatnot, to help improve their livelihoods. So absolutely, we
are doing some work there. And I know through the supp; thank
you very much, we're also looking at a larger set of countries
including in the Caribbean to help support issues around hunger.
And just to mention also I know that during the Summit of Americas there was a number of agricultural producing countries that came together and made some commitments to try and work together to solve some of the hunger problems.

Mr. Green. And I will take this question in writing since I am about to run out of time. Your thoughts on the fertilizer price's impact in Latin America. If you all could send me a letter or note on that, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Colin Allred of Texas for five minutes.

Mr. Allred. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing. And thanks to our witnesses for appearing before the committee to answer our questions. As you all have discussed throughout the day in this hearing the world is currently beset by a confluence of major crises: the war in Ukraine, climate shocks causing extreme weather, and the continued fallout from COVID-19, all combining and resulting in unseen hunger levels in modern times.

According to the World Food Programme as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night. The number of those facing hunger and acute food insecurity has soared from 135 million to 345 million just since 2019. We have seen that such major shocks,
particularly in fragile states already suffering from weak institutions, can leave these places more susceptible to political instability forced migration, and at greater risk of conflict and violence. According to the data collected by the World Food Programme 60 percent of the world's hungry people are currently living in areas afflicted by violence. USAID has a strategy focused on countering violent extremism, or CVE, to foster the self-reliance of communities in partner countries to prevent violent extremist challenges that threaten to derail their development. Democracies and global stability have never been more at risk, something that has been a focus of mine in my time in Congress.

Can you explain how your work to combat food insecurity incorporates the USAID's CVE programming to reduce the risk of recruitment, and two, and support for violent extremism and build the capacity and commitment of our partners in government, civil society, and the private sector to prevent and counter the violent extremist threats that we face?

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I think, you know, broadly speaking just to, you know, iterate that, the Feed the Future initiative is focused on ending hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. And I think those are key--can be key drivers behind violent extremism.

Mr. Allred. Yes.
Ms. Barry. So where we're working in countries—in fact all the countries that we work in right now with the supplemental are being impacted in one way another by internal conflict, conflict, or by extreme violence like you mentioned. So it's certainly top of mind for us. And we work closely across our agency and with the interagency to see—to work on our approaches so that they can be integrated and we can better pool our funding in those communities that are being impacted the greatest.

Mr. Allred. Sure.

Ms. Charles. So our delivery of humanitarian assistance is prioritized according to need, but there's no question that there's an intersection between areas where extremists tend to operate and increased humanitarian need. And so as I was discussing with your colleague Representative Levin, we've really worked over particularly the last decade, but in recent years to ensure that our humanitarian assistance is delivered in a conflict-sensitive way and that it's not fueling extremist groups.

Mr. Allred. Well, I appreciate that work. And if you could also explain how you are investing in long-term agricultural growth and resilience-oriented programming such as Feed the Future in order to help build resilience in those communities to future shocks and stresses. If you could just discuss that a little more.
Ms. Barry. Yes. No, thank you very much. Again, the initiative is very much focused on exactly that: on investing in long-term sustainable food systems. So we work in a number of areas where communities are particularly vulnerable to recurrent crises, whether it's conflict or climate, and partner closely with our colleagues in BHA to make sure that we're able to layer and synchronize some of that assistance. But we're providing alternative livelihoods and also helping communities with inputs and access to information so they can produce more food with less input on less land and prepare them to be better prepared for the next shock that--that comes their way.

Mr. Allred. Well, for my constituents in Dallas I just think it is important to discuss how their tax dollars are being put at use to help us increase stability and decrease instability around the world and that hunger is not just a moral issue, it is not just an issue of humanitarian rights and values. It is also a driver of political instability that will ultimately put us at greater risk as well here in the United States. And that is why it is so important that we have these investments.

And I appreciate your work. And with that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Representative Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania for five minutes.

Mr. Meuser. I thank my friend the chairman very, very much
I was on a congressional trip to Europe seven or eight weeks ago, and I am sure this was discussed earlier, but if you wouldn't mind, they had great concerns about just overall food shortages, not just in the border countries to the Ukraine, but as well as Egypt and various countries in Africa. Can you address what we are doing, and relatively quickly, if you wouldn't mind; I know it is a big question, what we are doing to help that situation?

Ms. Charles. We're certainly seeing the impact of Ukrainian wheat, corn, and vegetable oil coming off of--largely coming off the market in the region and beyond. The administration is focused on; not just with congressional support, ramping up humanitarian assistance to places that are most vulnerable to price shocks and shortages, but also these longer-term investments in smallholder farmers and productivity and in resilience around the world, but also working diplomatically to really press on countries that have put in place export bans that are disrupting markets and driving prices higher.

Mr. Meuser. So we are concerned intensely on it? Okay.

Next, the energy issue in Africa, which of course particularly natural gas relates to cost of fertilizer and relates to cost of food. Here in the United States fertilizers costs are up over 300 percent primarily because the administration is handling our domestic energy in ways that I think would be far
better for everyone.

But in Africa are we reversing--I did speak with Secretary or Administrator Samantha Power about it and really wasn't completely satisfied with the direction we were going as far as
assisting in the development of natural gas as opposed to solely or more so renewable energies, which I think is not the transitionary plan that they should have. Could you comment on that? No?

Ms. Charles. I think we'd probably have to defer to other colleagues in the administration, but we can get back to you in writing.

Mr. Meuser. Okay. I want to ask you--something has come to my attention related to Central America and the Caribbean. There are many cigar manufacturers throughout the Caribbean and Nicaragua and elsewhere, and thousands, tens of thousands of jobs are dependent upon that industry. There are billions of dollars in revenue created. It is a very important product and industry for that area. And here we are focusing on root causes to our disaster at our southern border, yet the administration seems to be interested in raising taxes in an extreme sense on premium cigars as well as banning--the FDA is looking to ban flavored cigars, which will be incredibly disruptive.

I had the Minister of the Dominican Republic in my office. I have had the ambassadors of the D.R. as well as other countries.
Clearly that will create problems, to say the least, for the--those that are dependent upon this industry and related to shortages of housing, food, health. So is that anything that is on your radar?

Ms. Barry. I would say what is on our radar is certainly the--Russia's war on Ukraine is impacting the whole world, right? And the impact on the Caribbean I think is also being felt. I know that, you know, there were discussions at the Summit of America where folks came together. And through the supp we are providing some support and working closely with CARICOM to really come up with a strategy to help work in that area to address food insecurity. So that's how I would answer your question. Thank you.

Mr. Meuser. Okay. All right. I have limited time. I just wanted to ask: we contribute, the United States, 3.9 billion to the World Food Programme. We understand the PRC contributes $3 million. Many other countries are in a very weak category as well, far less than us. Are we working with them to try to get them to participate in a more meaningful way?

Ms. Charles. I mean, I think the contrast with the PRC is particularly egregious. And even since Ambassador Power used that statistic our contribution to the World Food Programme has even gone up and will hit the $5.5 billion mark this year, so an even greater contract--contrast. But it has been a priority
of this administration to really target particularly
non-traditional donors in the Gulf to be doing more, particularly
as energy prices have gone--
Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.
Mr. Meuser. Thank you. Thank you, and I yield back.
Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.
I now recognize Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia
for five minutes.
Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome.
Russia and Ukraine have been described as Europe's
breadbasket. They account for 30 percent of the world's wheat
exports, 20 percent of the corn exports, and 80 percent of the
world's sunflower oil. So when anything happens that disrupts
the export of those products from those two countries, it has
worldwide ripple effect both in inflation, food inflation, but
also in supply. And some countries of course are more dependent
on those exports that others, like Egypt. Big country, largest
Arab country in the world, 82 percent of its wheat imports come
from those two countries. Eighty percent. So some countries
are disproportionately affected and that is why we are worried;
correct me if I am wrong, about the African continent and Egypt
in particular. Is that correct?
Ms. Barry. Yes, we're--yes, I agree with you. We're very
certainly about the impact of exactly--
Mr. Connolly. Yes. So sometimes hearing about people rail on about inflation kind of conveniently overlooks the fact that while it is actually where stuff comes from and that if that is disruptive and that supply is not available, that means—unless demand changes, that means few—less supply, same demand, prices go up. Is that how economics work kind of basically? Ms. Barry or Ms. Charles?

We like verbal answers in this committee.

Ms. Charles. Yes.

Mr. Connolly. So we have a record. Thank you. And would that be true about gas and oil as well?

Ms. Barry. Yes, I would agree that the impact of rising food, fuel, and fertilizer prices are having a tremendous impact on the global economy.

Mr. Connolly. Right. Well, Ukraine's not so much a big producer, but Russia is the second largest producer and exporter in the world, is that correct, after Saudi Arabia?

Trust me. Here we go. So obviously, if we are trying to limit the ability of Russia to sell its gas and oil because that revenue finances its war effort in Ukraine, so we are trying to cut that off, that means, again, less supply, same demand, prices go up. Would that be a fair statement, Mr. Charles?

Was that a yes?

Ms. Charles. Yes.
Mr. Connolly. Yes. So let me ask a question about food security: We talk a lot about food security. It seems to me that sometimes that might be vaguely defined. So food security is kind of--would it be fair to say it is on a spectrum? So food security, total supply available, easy distribution, lots of access, plenty of storage, and everybody is happy and eating well. That is one end of the spectrum. But the other end of the spectrum in extremists would be actually we don't have enough food. And that means there are people going hungry, that means malnutrition, that could even mean in extremis cases starvation. So when we are talking about food insecurity in the current situation on that spectrum where are we and how do you measure it? How does USAID determine we are at a point that we need to be sounding alarm bells?

Ms. Charles. Yes, we tend to talk about the Integrated Phase Classification System. So one, relatively food-secure; five in a catastrophic situation. We're seeing in 2021 193 million people were in need of food assistance. That was a 24-percent increase over the year before.

Mr. Connolly. Yes, but where on the one to five scale is that? Because that doesn't necessarily mean there is imminent starvation threatening. It may mean the distribution system is collapsed.

Ms. Charles. It really is place-specific, but we're seeing
more places in what we call IPC 4 and IPC 5, really emergency
and catastrophic levels of food insecurity than we have at any
point in our--

Mr. Connolly. And you attribute that to?

Ms. Charles. It's a combination of conflict, crisis, economic shocks from COVID, and the impact of climate change, and the accelerant of Russia's war on Ukraine which has disrupted supply chains, driven prices higher, and impacted supply.

Mr. Connolly. Great. And final point: and when we have that kind of scale what gets triggered? Does the World Food Programme immediately step in? Do you start adding to our food aid?

Ms. Charles. We certainly--according to available resources, but we certainly look to that scale of kind of one through five and have been prioritizing our assistance in places where there's either emergency or catastrophic levels of food insecurity to prevent death.

Mr. Connolly. Thank you. My time has expired.

Chairman Meeks. That is correct. The gentleman's time has expired.

I now recognize Representative Young Kim of California for five minutes.

Mrs. Kim of California. Thank you, Chairman, for holding this very important hearing.
And I want to thank our witnesses for appearing before our committee and answering all of our questions.

Recently I helped launch a woman's foreign policy group and the last speaker that we hosted was Paula Dobrinsky, who is the Undersecretary for Global Affairs. And this was very issue, challenges facing global food security is what we just discussed. So I am really glad that our hearing is focused on that.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not only taking a devastating toll on people of Ukraine, but is creating food--global food security crisis that is hurting especially the low-income countries throughout the Middle East and Africa that rely heavily on the importation of every cultural products, and especially in the years of a severe drought. So we are addressing that.

But the last--I believe it was last week in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee several witnesses including Samantha Power, the administrator Samantha Power, stated that--she mentioned there as a U.S.--I think my colleague Dan Meuser just talked about--United States contributes $3.9 billion to the World Food Programme where China is only doing just millions.

So I just wanted some clarification. In one of your responses you said they ramped up their contribution to about 5 million. Is that right?

Ms. Barry. We have.
Ms. Charles. We will provide before the end of this fiscal year $5.5 billion to the World Food Programme. So that contrast between us and China--

Mrs. Kim of California. Even more?

Ms. Charles. --is even more.

Mrs. Kim of California. Even more. So obviously we need to do more to ensure that other countries around the world understand this severity of crisis and contribute more and do their part. So in that regard I hope that we can collectively pray for them to do so.

But, Ms. Charles, is BHA facing a staff shortage? If so, how is that complicating efforts to get humanitarian aid to the Horn of Africa, because I want to get into that next.

Ms. Charles. So, there is no question that USAID staffing, and in particular the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance staffing, has not kept up with the pace of increased humanitarian need and humanitarian budgets. In order to rapidly and responsibly program the supplemental funding, we've shifted a lot of human resources towards this. Contracting officers from other parts of the agency are supporting our efforts to surge assistance.

We've also put on hold really critical investments in readiness, training, and policy work in order to focus on delivery assistance. We announced just last week the provision of nearly $1.3 billion in assistance. That's assistance that's already
with our partners in the Horn of Africa. We've prioritized the Horn of Africa assistance above all other activities that we're doing. So it's not delaying delivery to the Horn, but we'll certainly need longer-term solutions in order to address our staffing.

Mrs. Kim of California. So you mentioned the Horn of Africa, of course, is one of the direst food insecurity situation in the world, and they have like 20 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia. They are experiencing the worst kind of levels of food insecurity, among them being more than 200,000 people in Somalia, they are already facing like catastrophic hunger.

So what immediate actions can United States do to commit and transfer additional humanitarian funding to those drought-affected countries in the Horn of Africa, especially in the swift delivery of those humanitarian actors?

Ms. Charles. I just actually returned last night from Kenya and Somalia. And like I said, we have announced an additional $1.3 billion in assistance to address drought-affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. As of last week we're providing 86 percent of the World Food Programme's appeal to respond to immediate needs in the Horn of Africa. We really need other donors to step in and do more.

We also need countries like India and elsewhere who have export bans on critical commodities to lift those in order to
help bring prices down because our assistance dollars aren't going as far as they would have even a year ago because of Russia's war in Ukraine and the export bans that countries have put in place as a result of that war.

Mrs. Kim of California. Sure. Do you think USAID adequately responded to early warnings about the depth and duration of the current drought and the impact the drought and other factors would have had on the food insecurity in the region?

Ms. Charles. What we're seeing now is an unprecedented fourth failed rain. So even when we saw two failed rains back last year, we started to scale up our assistance to the Horn of--Horn of Africa. When we saw the third failed rain earlier this year we used funds from the first Ukraine supplemental in order to scale up assistance in Somalia. We took the extraordinary measure back in April of drawing down the full amount of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust with most of that assistance targeting Yemen and the Horn of Africa.

Mrs. Kim of California. Thank you, Chairman. I think my time is way over.

Chairman Meeks. Time has expired.

Mrs. Kim of California. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. I will now recognize Representative Susan Wild of Pennsylvania.

Unfortunately, I have another meeting that I have to go to,
so I would ask Representative Wild also to chair the rest of the hearing unless I get the opportunity to come back. She is now recognized for five minutes.

Ms. Wild. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for Ms. Charles. As members on both sides of the aisle on this committee have said, the Saudi blockade is a key driver of the hunger and humanitarian suffering in Yemen. Despite recent diplomatic progress the Saudis have only allowed 24 out of 36 fuel ships agreed to as part of the Yemen truce into Hodeida's port so far.

According to United Nations' assessment U.N. inspected vessels are still subject to significant delays in the coalition holding area offshore causing further price increases in Yemen.

What additional leverage is the administration preparing to use to ensure that enough ships containing food, fuel, and medicine are entering Hodeida port unimpeded?

Ms. Charles. Thank you, Representative, for that question.

There's no question that the ceasefire in Yemen has provided a much-needed respite for the people of Yemen, but as you said, they're still facing extreme increases in prices due to Russia's war on Ukraine and the particular vulnerability that Yemen has to imports from Ukraine and Russia, but also like you said, to continued disruption over regular commercial supply to Yemen.

And so this is certainly an issue that we are regularly raising with the Saudis to ensure regular commercial supply to
Ms. Wild. Thank you. And as you note in your testimony, food prices in Yemen have skyrocketed and this year, as you say, 19 million people in Yemen are expected to face crisis or worse levels of food insecurity, which is really just unfathomable, an 18-percent increase over 2021. What is the administration's approach on this issue specifically?

Ms. Charles. First and foremost, we're working diplomatically again in order to address supply chain disruptions including export bans that a number of suppliers have put in--a number of countries have put in place that are impacting overall supply worldwide and driving prices higher. We're also increasing our humanitarian assistance to Yemen and we're critically calling on and really pressing other donors, particularly donors in the Gulf: the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Kuwaitis, to provide more and sustained humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

Ms. Wild. All right. Thank you. And I am going to follow up with a question about the importance of--and this is still for you, Ms. Charles--of the importance of cash transfer policies as a mechanism for reducing hunger, not just as provided by organizations like the World Food Programme in the aftermath of humanitarian disasters, but also as government policy.

We know that it worked in Brazil between 2002 and 2016 when
they implemented a highly successful cash transfer policy for low-income families. And that resulted in the country being removed from the global Hunger Map. Unfortunately and tragically, Brazil returned to the Hunger Map starting in 2018 as a result of cuts in those same social programs, which I certainly hope we in the United States are able to avoid, and now more than half of the population of Brazil is facing some degree of food insecurity.

Given our country's own highly successful Child Tax Credit Program, does the administration share the assessment that cash transfer programs can have a transformative impact in reducing hunger around the world?

Ms. Charles. As you mentioned, multipurpose cash, cash for food security purposes has become an important tool in the humanitarian tool kit. It allows people to access in a very efficient manner assistance and meet their needs in that way.

We've also been advocating as part of this crisis, and even before, that the World Bank and others support social safety net programs that we know help communities and families withstand climate-related, conflict-related, and now price-related shocks that are driving this global food security crisis.

Do you want to add anything?

Ms. Wild. [Presiding] The chair now calls upon
Representative Houlahan for her questions.

Ms. Houlahan. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just making sure that you can hear me okay. Terrific.

Ms. Wild. I can hear you. It was my fault to be on mute.

Ms. Houlahan. No worries. Thank you very much to you all for putting up with a very long course of many, many questions.

And I am actually going to follow up on a similar line of question that Mr. Levin and Mr. Allred asked you as well.

According to the World Food Programme conflict is the main driver of food insecurity. And we have talked a lot about that today. A hundred and thirty-nine people around the world, as we have talked about today, are at food crisis levels. Conflict and food insecurity are also something that compound one another. They are sort of the opposite of having a symbiotic relationship. Conflict disrupts food distribution systems and food deprivation is often used as a weapon of war, while food insecurity can trigger and exacerbate violent conflict.

So you guys have talked a little bit about conflict-sensitive approaches to food assistance and that they can create a more effective and long-term humanitarian intervention strategy while ensuring that food aid will not be co-opted by bad actors in a country and therefore contribute to the conflict itself by political, social, and economic conditions contributing.

So I guess with all of that being said and with the several
of my colleagues having asked that question, why did we not
necessarily have somebody here speaking to us today and testifying
to us today from USAID's Bureau on Conflict Prevention and
Stabilization? And perhaps I could maybe ask Ms. Barry to start
with that and then Ms. Charles.

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I think it's a
good question, and, you know, perhaps--I'd have to say, honestly,
in hindsight, perhaps we should have had one of our colleagues
that--we certainly work very closely with our colleagues in the
Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Stabilization.

Ms. Houlahan. Excellent. I mean, that is a terrific and
fine answer. I mean, perhaps next time we can make sure that
that happens. And to that end one of our jobs in terms of
oversight is obviously to ask the questions, but also to say what
is it that the Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs and the Bureau
for Resilience and Food Security are doing to coordinate and is
there--with the Conflict group and is there anything that we can
do in Congress to help that coordination better?

Ms. Charles. So I would just add that Maura, myself, and
my colleague Rob Jenkins, the head of the Bureau for Conflict
Prevention and Stability, together we make up, our bureaus make
up what we call the R3 family. And I think it's really a
recognition by USAID of the intersection between the longer-term
food security work, humanitarian assistance, and our conflict
prevention and security work. And so we've coordinated based on how we've been prioritizing the supplemental resources that you've all provided, but also how we work together in specific conflicts in specific countries.

Ms. Houlahan. Thank you. And if it is okay with what is left of my time I am going to transition over to the center of--CGIAR, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, which is the world's largest international research system that develops and improves seed varieties that are more productive, more nutritious, and more resilient to drought. In fact the CGIAR wheat technology is used in a majority of wheat areas that are cultivated in the U.S. and we know that this technology and innovation allows U.S. farmers to adapt to extreme weather so that even in bad years we have a decent harvest.

I was wondering if you all could comment a little on how Feed the Future is working with scientists with the CGIAR system to develop and disseminate these same kind of drought-tolerant seed technologies to help farmers other places adapt to local conditions. And I likely believe that that also would be first for Ms. Barry.

Ms. Barry. Yes, thank you. Thank you for that question and recognition of the very important work that CGIAR does in the area of research and innovation, not just with wheat seed, but so many seeds. We work with a host of the research institutes.
I think there's 15 in total that make up the CGIAR. And I believe the U.S. is probably the largest donor to the CGIAR. Of course we work in close partnership with other big donors: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the U.K. and the Germans being some of the other large donors to the CGIAR. And, yes, they are incredible in terms of the research that they're doing.

And also right now we're looking at how we can work with them in the current crisis. We've been having conversations in particular with CIMMYT in how we can get more seed out there that is resistant to drought, that can survive better without fertilizer, just to mention a few things that we're doing with CGIAR. Thank you.

Ms. Houlahan. And, Madam Chair, I can't see the timer, so am I --

Ms. Wild. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Ms. Houlahan. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. Wild. I now call upon Representative Omar. And I apologize. I think I skipped over you before. I recognize you for your questions.

Ms. Omar. It is quite all right, Chairwoman. Thank you.

Ms. Charles, I wanted to first start by saying just how pleased and thankful that I am that the administrator Power recently visited Kenya and Somalia. The drought that is being experienced by the Horn has been on my mind. I have been
communicating with the administration to take urgent action in helping us address that. So I am thankful to see USAID take it seriously in addressing that. And the funding that was announced over the weekend I know will save countless lives.

According to recent calculation over half of Somalia's population is food insecure with 1.5 million children being malnourished. There is no question that we need a global response to combat the effects of this drought. I think we would agree that for this to be most effective it needs to be multilateral.

What have the conversations been with our partners on addressing the drought and what still needs to be done?

Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question. I was actually traveling with the administrator in northern Kenya and Mogadishu. Just arrived back last night for this hearing. And it was really important, one, that we make that announcement in the region and also that we meet with the new president in Somalia as well as his Special Envoy for Famine. And I will say it's been a marked change with the appointment of the Special Envoy for Famine, with his Special Envoy for Famine in terms of the government of Somalia's own leadership in raising the profile of this crisis, not just with media and others, but also in other capitals.

While we were there Administrator Power convened a meeting of other donor representatives, including what we might consider
non-traditional donor representatives, the Turks, the Emiratis, the Saudis, the Qatars, and others, to try and again raise the profile and motivate greater investment in the humanitarian response in Somalia. This has also been a feature of conversations with G7 counterparts as well.

Ms. Omar. I am glad to hear that. I had recently also had conversation with the envoy that was appointed as well as the new president and the new prime minister. And I am curious to know what USAID's plans are for using this money to build sustainable and resilient solutions for food security in Somalia. And if you can also maybe make some recommendations or suggestions for things that we here in Congress can do to assist you all in that work.

Ms. Charles. So in the face of what the people of Somalia are facing now with a fourth failed rain and potentially even likely a fifth failed rain in this upcoming season, even potential for a sixth failed rain, I'm loath to highlight kind of a silver lining, but I will say I heard from partner after partner when I was in Mogadishu that the resilience investments that had been made following the 2011 and then 2017-2018 droughts had been paying dividends. And in fact, you know, we would have seen unfortunately much more excess death by now had those investments not been made.

I'm very worried that in responding to the immediate crisis
and saving those that are closest to death right now, that we are going to have to move resources from those critical resilience investments that are needed to help folks sustain future shocks in order to address lifesaving needs now. So when we're talking about our own assistance but also other donors we're really encouraging not just increased humanitarian assistance, which is absolutely needed, but also longer-term investments in resilience in Somalia and climate adaptation as well.

Ms. Omar. And do you have any recommendations of things that Congress can be doing to help assist further?

Ms. Charles. I certainly think support for those resilience, for the Feed the Future type of investments are critical. I also think—you know, I met with—the Administrator and I met with a number of Senators before the trip, and I will give this message here, but when you meet with your counterparts in other countries we've really seen the devastating impact of the U.K. in particular step back from investments in the Horn of Africa and critical resilience investments in the Horn. We need other donors to step up and in your engagement with your counterparts in other parliaments, raising this issue with them.

Ms. Omar. Yes, I appreciate that. And I know, Madam Chair, I am out of time. But I was recently in London meeting with MPs there and raising this issue and I do agree with you that that is important.
With that I yield back, Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. Wild. Thank you. The chair recognizes Representative Jacobs for questions.

Ms. Jacobs. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Ms. Charles and Ms. Barry, for testifying before the committee today on this incredibly important issue.

Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine we have seen the effects of climate change, the pandemic, and conflict-fueled food crises around the world, in Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, South Sudan. And now Russia's invasion has made all of these situations worse. Oxfam and Save the Children estimate that more than 23 million people in the Horn of Africa are facing extreme hunger because of the effects of Russia's invasion. And we have seen Putin repeatedly weaponize food during this war including as we have seen in the blockade of Odessa and Russia's recent strikes on the port even after the landmark grain deal was reached.

So together with Representative Meijer I introduced a bipartisan resolution that the committee is marking up tomorrow on condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war. And for either of you, could you please describe in detail the ways in which Putin has weaponized hunger as a result of its invasion and why it is important for the global community to condemn and respond to these actions, not just in Ukraine, but all over the world?

Ms. Charles. I don't know that I can say it better than
you. There's no question that—Putin has unleashed a senseless war on Ukraine that is being felt most acutely by the world's poorest, the world's most vulnerable. We've seen in places like Yemen the price of wheat skyrocket 30 percent, upwards of 30 percent.

We've seen in the region, in Ukraine itself, Russian forces encircle and blockade critical cities, and we've seen again the impact of a Russian ban on—export ban on fertilizer. And their blockading, and stealing in some cases, Ukrainian wheat is driving prices up around the world, disrupting supply and leaving people around the world hungry.

Ms. Jacobs. Thank you. As we are working to address hot spots around the world I think one of the things we have heard today is how important making long-term investments is in addition to rapid response. I was just in South Sudan where we saw the need for both very acutely.

So I was wondering if you could talk about how you are working together to layer humanitarian and development funding in high-priority environments.

Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I'm glad you got to see some of our work in South Sudan where I think that's a good place to look at that where through the Feed the Future initiative we have a focus on resilience, where we're working in areas that are experiencing recurrent humanitarian crises.
And in those situations we work very closely with colleagues on the ground who are addressing the humanitarian side of that crises.

So what that means is layering in, using--providing life-saving assistance, but then stepping in with support that can help families recover from crisis and disaster and really boost their ability to bounce back through providing support to their livelihoods and--yes. I don't know, Sarah, if you want to add to that.

Ms. Charles. Maybe I'd just add, you know, we're facing a historic crisis in terms of both prices and the climate shocks, the COVID--impact of COVID-related disruptions. But we do have a strong evidence base, including in places like Karamoja in Uganda, where that layering, that targeting of resilience investments, longer-term investments in places that have been chronically reliant on humanitarian assistance that actually allowed people to graduate out of humanitarian assistance and become self-sufficient in part because of the investments that we've all made, that Congress has supported, and those resilience activities.

Ms. Jacobs. Well, thank you. And in the last minute unfortunately this is not the first global food crisis we have had. We have seen ones in 2008, 2011, 2016.

Ms. Charles, I was wondering in our brief time left if you
could please explain how USAID is using lessons learned from those food crises, in particular to inform country prioritization, program modality prioritization, and how you are obligating funds in the areas of greatest need.

Ms. Charles. Yes. We've certainly made investments even starting after the 1984 famine in the Horn of Africa in early warning and much better science around vulnerability and building the research base for what works. And we still to this day have innovated and improved our forecasting and early warning capabilities and used that to really target at the local level where interventions are most needed.

So with our limited food assistance dollars, even though they're quite significant over the last couple of years, they're never going to be enough. And so this kind of data, this kind of early warning allows us to target assistance on those that are most vulnerable in order to prevent excess death.

Ms. Jacobs. Thank you.

And, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. Wild. Okay. Thank you. Are there any other Representatives who wish to ask questions?

It appearing not, in closing I would like to again thank our esteemed witnesses for appearing before this committee and providing their insight into these important questions.

The challenges we faced in overcoming threats to global food
security only highlight how susceptible the global supply chain really is, whether to conflict or instability, disease or drought.

It is imperative that the United States again lead on issues of global responses to the upstream causes of food insecurity and provide relief wherever it is needed.

Thank you to Chairman Meeks for holding this hearing and I look forward to having this committee continue engaging with USAID on finding solutions to the growing food security crisis.

Thank you. This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:21 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]