



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

*“The State Department’s Foreign Policy Strategy and FY20 Budget Request”
March 27, 2019*

Remarks as Prepared

Welcome Mr. Secretary, I applaud the work that you are doing for our country. In my recent visit to the State Department I found that the morale was very good. Over the last two years the Administration has embarked on a forward leaning agenda which is putting America back where it needs to be. I want to thank you for ending the era of “leading from behind” and “strategic patience”.

The importance of our diplomatic mission cannot be overstated. With the growing crisis in Venezuela, an unpredictable North Korea, China and Russia creating mischief around the globe, terrorism on the rise in Africa, and Iran threatening Israel, we must show our strength through hands on diplomacy.

The President’s budget request identifies our most challenging threats. For example, it includes \$662 million to counter Russia’s malign influence in Europe and Eurasia. This vital assistance will support our allies like Ukraine to help enhance their cybersecurity infrastructure to counter Russian attacks and their propaganda and disinformation campaigns.

In regards to Ukraine’s upcoming elections, I will closely watch, and I know you will as well, how the Russians interfere; it may be a precursor to what we will see here in 2020.

“The President’s budget proposal also contains some much-needed reforms. However, I do agree with the Chairman. I believe that certain cuts can have unintended consequences that cost us more in the long term.



This is especially true of cuts to critical humanitarian and developmental assistance programs that promote democracy, support economic growth, and provide lifesaving resources to bolster stability in areas at risk of terrorism and extremist ideologies. As the former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis once said, ‘If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.’

On Terrorism

A few years ago, you and I had the opportunity to travel to Northern Africa and the Middle East. I remember watching F-18s take off in the Persian Gulf from the deck of the “Harry Truman” to hit ISIS targets in Syria. Today, it almost feels a little surreal to be able to finally say their so-called Caliphate is gone, and I applaud your efforts in that mission. But we also still know the threat from ISIS, Al Qaeda and others still remains.

On Fragile States

A key lesson from violent conflicts in fragile states is that they provide fertile recruiting ground for terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations. This broken model can be fixed and we need to do more in terms of prevention. That is why Chairman Engel and I reintroduced our Fragile States bill this Congress.

It will require that the Administration launch a new initiative to coordinate our assistance to these broken states.

On the Middle East

Any strategy there must always include strengthening our ties with Israel. For starters, I was very proud of your efforts and the President’s to see our Embassy move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.



Mr. Secretary, I want to applaud your efforts also in countering Iran. Some don't see their true menace. They are the #1 State Sponsor of Terror, they support Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis; hold Americans hostage; they have an assassination campaign in Europe; a reckless missile program; suppress their peoples' freedom; and let's not forget, want to wipe out Israel and chant "Death to America".

I applaud last week's sanctions that targeted Iranian Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferators; we cannot let Iran get nuclear weapons – ever.

On China

Their government aggressively steals our intellectual property, threatens Taiwan, partakes in growing military adventurism and targets both developed and under-developed nations through their One Belt One Road Initiative.

I am very supportive of the action items laid out in your Indo-Pacific speech last year. As you know, many countries tell us America is just not there the way the Chinese and others countries are. That is why I introduced the Championing American Business through Diplomacy Act with Chairman Engel.

In sum, it bolsters U.S. economic and commercial diplomacy by mandating that our diplomats have better training and do more to ensure countries do business with American companies rather than with the Chinese.

On Venezuela

We can all agree that the socialist policies of Nicolas Maduro have turned the once rich country into a failed mafia state. With little food and medicine, millions of people are suffering more every day and forced to flee to other countries in the region.



Maduro's armed thugs are blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid. They've shot innocent civilians, kidnapped the Chief of Staff of interim President Guaido and just yesterday attacked Guaido's motorcade. I also would like to note, Maduro has taken four Texans who worked for CITGO and put them in a Venezuelan prison.

I commend the President for supporting the people of Venezuela in their quest to take back their country through free and fair elections and applaud neighbors like Colombia, Brazil and the Lima Group for their effort.

Secretary Pompeo, it is a great honor to welcome you today as a Secretary, as a former colleague, and a friend. I've always said that partisanship, as the Chairman says, must end at the water's edge. This hearing gives us a chance to put partisan politics aside and offer solutions to complex issues.

I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.

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