



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

"FY 2020 Foreign Assistance Budget and Policy Priorities"
April 9, 2019

Remarks as Delivered

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ambassador Green, for here coming today. It is always good to see a former colleague come back home to the Congress.

You have been very engaged with us and I appreciate our discussions we've had on America's engagement in the developing world.

In particular, for me, a cause I have been fighting for a decade is childhood cancer, it's a priority for me and I look forward to working with you on this challenge in the coming months. I look forward to our trip to Africa, as well, and [note USAID's work] on global health issues.

Two weeks ago as the Chairman mentioned, we saw really firsthand USAID's critical work in Colombia.

Your agency is working around the clock to help provide lifesaving food and health supplies to those effected by this Maduro crisis. And it was heart wrenching, as the Chairman said, to see these little children and mothers coming across; 50,000 per day crossing from Venezuela into Colombia. It's not sustainable.

But in El Salvador, we also saw USAID helping, as you and I talked about, to address the drivers of migration and gang violence, particularly at-risk youth, and finding employment, and ways out of poverty, and ways out of MS-13.



So I am concerned about the decision to cut assistance to the Northern Triangle countries; I see it as the prevention side of this. I understand the President's frustration with the crisis on our southern border. I share that frustration, but I believe that this decision from a policy standpoint, if you really analyze that, could make the situation worse, not better.

We are going to have an important hearing on this tomorrow, and I thank the Chairman for scheduling that, to look at the possible effects of this decision.

Like always though, if there are programs that are not performing, I will be the first to propose reform, cuts, or streamlining.

And I agree that these countries must demonstrate that they are doing their part to address the root causes of the growing migration crisis.

I look forward to working with the Chairman on these specific authorizations for the Central American Regional Security Initiative and bilateral aid for the Northern Triangle.

We will pay particular attention to the anti-gang, anti-drug trafficking and rule of law programs. USAID and INL, the law enforcement piece of this is critical to protecting the United States.

Taking a wider view on U.S. Foreign Assistance, Congress plays a vital role to ensure that all of these dollars are used effectively, efficiently, and are achieving U.S. strategic objectives.

I welcome reforms that are proposed in the Administration's budget. In addition, I strongly support your work to better engage the private sector and business community, and to focus on a country's Journey to Self-Reliance.



However, certain cuts can have unintended consequences that cost us more in the medium and long-term. This includes deep cuts to our development and humanitarian assistance programs. I believe that we must maintain U.S. leadership and continue supporting programs that spur economic growth, improve health outcomes, promote democracy, and support countries' own ability to provide for their citizens.

I applaud the Administration for their focus on Indo-Pacific, for providing robust assistance for Venezuela, and continuing the funding to counter Russia's influence in Europe. We must continue U.S. leadership on issues such as HIV/AIDS/PEPFAR, prevention, food security, and human rights.

These efforts are critical, but we need to take the long term approach about our assistance. We must focus our efforts on prevention and stabilization to get to the root causes of extreme poverty. Unless we better address the underlying causes, we will continue to see radicalization and extremism in vulnerable communities.

That is why Chairman Engel and I introduced the bipartisan Global Fragility Act that we are going to markup later this afternoon to improve the way the U.S. approaches fragile states and stabilization efforts. I am glad we will mark up this bill later this afternoon.

"Sir, I applaud your service to our country both as Ambassador and now Administrator. I look forward to your testimony and I yield back the balance of my time.

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