

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Fiscal Year 2014 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill
Full Committee Markup
July 24, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

This meeting will come to order.

Thank you all for being here today. This is the tenth bill the Full Committee is marking up – and we're almost there.

You all have worked very hard so far, and should be proud of how much we've gotten done over a few short months. With luck and the cooperation of our Leadership, we'll be able to accomplish even more before the end of the fiscal year on September 30.

We meet today to consider the Fiscal Year 2014 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. With that, I will now turn to the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee, Kay Granger, to present the bill.

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Thank you. It's clear you both have worked very hard in producing this bill, investing a good deal of time and effort. I thank you for your hard work, leadership, and guidance in putting together this challenging, but important, funding bill. I want to thank the entire Subcommittee and the staff as well.

As Chairwoman Granger said, this bill provides \$34.1 billion in discretionary funding to promote American interests overseas, to provide aid to our allies, and to preserve our national security.

This year, we have to make a lot of choices – tough choices – in the face of uncertainty around the world. In order to fund our priorities, both domestic and international, in this very austere budget year, we've had to cut back.

This bill finds the necessary balance - acknowledging our limited budget by making steep funding reductions, but still meeting our most critical priorities.

We prioritized programs proven to advance U.S. interests, to preserve security both on our soil and off, and to fight crime across the globe – including anti-terrorism efforts, peace-keeping operations, narcotics control, and crime prevention.

Stability in the Middle East – and around the world – continues to be critical to American interests, so we've provided the necessary security assistance for our key allies in the region, such as Israel and Jordan.

The bill embraces the recommendations made after the tragic Benghazi terrorist attacks. To help keep our Foreign Service workers safe, we have implemented steps to protect against future incidents, and fully funded the Administration's embassy security request.

We continue to invest in democracy promotion, and health and humanitarian needs, including funding important USAID HIV/AIDS programs at the requested level.

And, like each of the bills we've released this year, we have prioritized government spending on programs that will encourage economic growth, supporting export and investment policies that will help U.S. businesses be competitive in a global marketplace.

While preserving our role in the global landscape, this bill recognizes that we must also do what's best for our nation here at home... and that is to get our budgets back into balance.

To bring down our dangerously high deficits, this bill cuts \$8 billion from last year – a 19 percent reduction. To achieve these cuts without causing irreversible harm to our international programs and involvement, the Subcommittee went line-by-line through the bill, and found wasteful, ineffective, lower-priority, or just plain unnecessary programs to target for reductions. In total, this bill eliminates more than 20 programs, saving American taxpayers more than \$2 billion. And we've preserved longstanding prolife riders to safeguard the sanctity of life.

While we face tough restrictions on our budget, we must ensure the dollars we send overseas are used properly and stay in the right hands. So we have added several policies to strengthen oversight and transparency, including conditions and restrictions on funding for Egypt, Pakistan, and the Palestinian Authority; funding for multi-year commitments; and direct assistance to foreign governments and organizations.

These reductions and oversight measures allow us to target our limited tax dollars where they are truly needed. Though we cannot afford to spend like we used to, we can still provide adequate funding to sustain our active role in global affairs if we budget carefully.

Again, I commend Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and the entire Subcommittee on a job well done under tough circumstances. I urge this Committee to support this critical legislation.

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