

**CHAIRMAN ELIOT L. ENGEL**  
**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS**  
**WASHINGTON, DC**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019**

Madam Chair, Ranking Member Rogers, members of the subcommittee: thank you. I'm very glad to be back in front of this distinguished panel to reiterate a key point – that one of the most important things we can do to advance America's security, interests, and values around the world is to provide robust funding for our international-affairs budget.

This is an area in which Congress can—and should—assert its role as a co-equal branch of government.

Regrettably, there's a lot about the Trump Administration's foreign policy that Congress can't do a lot about. It's painful to witness a President denigrate out allies and cozy up to dictators... to walk away from international obligations and abandon the values that should be at the core of our policy. It's weakened our country. It's isolated us. And it's made Americans less safe.

In my view, one of the most problematic aspects of the Trump foreign policy is the way it's shelved American diplomacy. Senior State Department officials have been chased to the exits. Morale has plummeted. Expertise has gone ignored.

And with its first two budget requests, the Trump Administration showed us that they just don't get it. They don't understand the value of diplomacy and development. They don't understand that America needs these foreign-policy tools to defuse crises and stop wars before they start... that by prioritizing these efforts we avoid sending our men and women in uniform into harm's way somewhere down the line.

But one of the things Republicans and Democrats in Congress can do is turn back attempts by this Administration to hollow out American diplomacy and development. We've done so twice before in a bipartisan manner. I imagine the Administration's budget that will come to us next week will call for similar draconian cuts to we saw in the two previous years.

My request to this Committee is that we carry on the strong, bipartisan tradition of making sure our foreign affairs agencies and personnel have the support and

investments they need to carry out their critical work. Our constitutional power of the purse is a critical way we can effectively reverse the unwise course the Administration seeks for American diplomacy.

My commitment, as Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, is that I'll work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to bolster the State Department and USAID, and we'll use our oversight authority to make sure Congress's will is being followed. Last year, President Trump sought to pull back huge sums of State Department and USAID's funding and to redirect funding from the State Department to the Department of Homeland Security. That's a slap in the face to the constitutional authority of this Committee and this Congress, and we shouldn't stand for it.

I want to make sure the investments this Committee makes in our foreign policy are being put to use to make our country stronger and safer. And I want to make sure we take whatever legislative steps are necessary to make our State Department, USAID, and other foreign-affairs agencies modern, efficient, and effective. That's why one of my top priorities is to pass a State Department Authorization Act. The last time Congress sent such a bill to the President's desk was 2002. We owe more to the men and women working on the frontlines of diplomacy and development. We need to have their backs, especially when the current Administration lets them down.

So I look forward to working hand-in-hand with my Appropriations Committee colleagues to promote American leadership around the world with a strong, well-resourced foreign policy.

Thank you and I yield back.

# # #