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6 MARKUP OF VARIOUS MEASURES

7 Wednesday, September 14, 2022

8 House of Representatives,

9 Committee on Foreign Affairs,

10 Washington, D.C.

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14 The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:20 p.m., in
15 Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gregory Meeks
16 [chairman of the committee] presiding.

17 Chairman Meeks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will
18 come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to
19 declare a recess of the committee at any point. Pursuant to
20 Committee Rule 4, the chair may postpone further proceedings
21 on approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment.

22 Without objection, all members will have five days to
23 submit statements or extraneous materials on today's
24 business. To insert statements into the record, please have
25 your staff email the previously circulated address or contact
26 full committee staff. As a reminder to members joining
27 remotely, please keep your video function on at all times,
28 even when not recognized by the chair.

29 Members are responsible for muting and unmuting
30 themselves. And consistent with House rules, staff will only
31 mute members as appropriate when they are not under
32 recognition to eliminate background noise. As members were
33 notified yesterday, we intend to consider five measures and
34 their amendments en bloc. We will then move to consider five
35 measures and their amendments separately.

36 Any roll call votes will be postponed until the end of
37 the markup. Pursuant to notice for purposes of markup, I now
38 call up the measures and their amendments that were
39 previously circulated to members' offices which without
40 objection will be considered en bloc and each measure is

41 considered as read and the amendments to each are considered
42 as read and are agreed to.

43 [The measures and amendments offered en bloc of Chairman
44 Meeks follows:]

45

46 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

47 Chairman Meeks. And without objection, after remarks,
48 the committee will vote to order the measures favorably
49 reported en bloc as amended, if amended, and any amendment or
50 amendments that each measure shall be reported as a single
51 amendment in the nature of a substitute.

52 The measures in the en bloc package are H.R. 8446,
53 Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2022 with a Meeks
54 amendment in the nature of a substitute designated No. 71
55 with a Meeks amendment designed No. 72., H.Res. 1342,
56 Reaffirming the importance of diplomacy and development in
57 the United States -- African Union relations, promoting
58 strategic partnerships and shared objectives between the
59 United States and the African Union, and expressing strong
60 support for the successful implementation of the African
61 Continental Free Trade Area, H.R. 8681, the John Lewis Civil
62 Rights Fellowship Act with a Titus amendment in the nature of
63 a substitute designated No. 37., H.R. 8813, AFFECT Human
64 Rights in Venezuela Act, and H.R. 6846, CORRUPT Act with a
65 Malinowski amendment in the nature of a substitute designated
66 No. 130.

67 I will now recognize myself to speak on the en bloc
68 package. I strongly support all five of the measures
69 included within this en bloc package. It is no secret that
70 the historic challenges the world grapples with today are as

71 varied as they are complicated.

72 The range from global food insecurity to Putin's
73 continued senseless large scale invasion of Ukraine and the
74 corrupt oligarchs who sustain him to ongoing human rights and
75 humanitarian challenges in various parts of the world. And
76 as the world looks to the United States for its leadership
77 that Congress looks to this committee, this body to rise
78 through the test and meet these challenges. This en bloc
79 embodies the strength of this committee.

80 They are bipartisan, robust responses to some of the
81 most vexing foreign policy matters. And I encourage all of
82 the members to join me in support. First, I am proud that
83 this committee is advancing the Global Food Security
84 Reauthorization Act to extend the U.S. government's flagship
85 initiative to combat global hunger for another five years.

86 This comes at a critical time of profound food
87 insecurity around the world. And I want to thank
88 Representative McCollum, Representative Smith, and ranking
89 member McCaul for their partnership to move it forward.
90 Chairwoman Bass' resolution highlights the African Union's
91 significant efforts to our strengthening institutions across
92 Africa by promoting good governance, economic reforms, and
93 human rights.

94 It underscores the significance of the African

95 Continental Free Trade Area as a potentially transformative
96 initiative that could lift millions in Africa out of poverty.
97 The next measure is quite meaningful to me and many others
98 also. It has been a little more than two years that we lost
99 a cherished colleague, one that I call Mr. Legend, a civil
100 rights giant, one who is intertwined with American history
101 and that is the late, great Representative John H. Lewis.

102 John was the conscience of Congress, a champion of human
103 rights, not just here in the United States but globally. And
104 H.R. 8681, a fellowship created in John's name which honors
105 his legacy by supporting young scholars and studying the
106 history of nonviolent civil rights movements around the world
107 and improving the understanding of nonviolence as a critical
108 tool for change. I want to thank Representative Williams for
109 offering this important legislation. And if it wasn't for
110 Congressman Lewis, I might not be sitting here today.

111 I also want to thank my good friend and colleague from
112 the state next door to me in New York, Mr. Albio Sires for
113 the next measure. The people of Venezuela have been
114 confronting a historic crisis since 2014 that includes
115 failures in governance, economic access security, and
116 worsening human rights resolution. The independent
117 international fact-finding mission on Venezuela initiated by
118 the U.N. Human Rights Council three years ago has played a

119 key role in keeping the international community informed.

120 Renewing this mandate shows support for U.N. mechanisms
121 and the multilateral corporation needed to respond to many
122 challenges we face in the region and around the world. And I
123 am pleased with the work as a chair of the western hemisphere
124 of Mr. Sires who many of you may know chose not to run for
125 reelection this go around. And he will be missed on this
126 committee. But we have him for a few more months, and we
127 will enjoy continuing to work with him and all that he does
128 on a regular basis.

129 Mr. Sires. Thank you, Chairman.

130 Chairman Meeks. And finally, I want to thank
131 Representative Malinowski for this last measure in the en
132 bloc which shines a light and combats Putin's corruption.
133 One of the Kremlin's key assets for prosecuting is horrific
134 war of choice against Ukraine and for spreading its corrupt
135 influence throughout Europe and the world. It is a network
136 of kleptocratic actors that poison our financial systems and
137 enrich themselves at the expense of the Russian people.

138 If we aim to truly cripple Russian's war efforts, U.S.
139 sanctions policies must more effectively target these
140 individuals and their ill begotten finances. That is why I
141 am pleased to move this bill forward.

142 So I strongly support all the measures that we are

143 considering today in the en block. And I urge all members to
144 join me to do the same. And before we continue, of course, I
145 now would like to recognize my friend and our ranking member,
146 Mr. McCaul of Texas, for his remarks.

147 Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this
148 markup. I am glad we could work together on this. And I am
149 in support of all the measures we will be considering here
150 today, including my resolution of inquiry related to
151 Afghanistan and Ranking Member Foxx's resolution of inquiry
152 related to Iran. But I will talk about those in a minute.

153 As someone from an agriculture state myself, I am proud
154 to be an original co-sponsor of the Global Food Security Act
155 along with you, Mr. Chairman and Representatives McCollum and
156 Chris Smith. COVID-19 and unprecedented droughts have
157 already strained global food supply chains. And now Putin's
158 unprovoked and full scale invasion of Ukraine is yet another
159 nail in the coffin.

160 Globally, 50 million people across 45 countries are on
161 the brink of famine. In Somalia, we are days away from the
162 official famine declaration. Today over 300,000 children are
163 facing emergency starvation.

164 And amidst this global crisis, we cannot lose focus on
165 longer term investments and food security and agriculture-led
166 economic growth. Ultimately, this bill builds the capacities

167 of families and communities to provide for themselves.
168 Combating the global food crisis must be a priority for
169 Congress and this administration.

170 I hope the House will quickly advance this legislation
171 and also want to thank Senators Risch and Casey for their
172 leadership on this issue in the Senate. I am also pleased to
173 support my friend, Mr. Sires' bill, and we are going to miss
174 you. Sir, it has been a real honor to serve in Congress with
175 you and on this committee.

176 Your bill directs the State Department to support a two-
177 year extension of the international fact-finding mission in
178 Venezuela which is very important to me as well as I have
179 several constituents still in prison in Venezuela. Since it
180 was established in 2019, this mission has uncovered
181 systematic crimes against humanity being committed by the
182 Maduro regime. The mission was also the first independent
183 organization that found the Venezuelan regime was wrongfully
184 detained. I mentioned four nationals to extract concessions
185 including Americans.

186 Right now, at least 11 Americans were being wrongfully
187 detained by the criminal Maduro regime, again, some of whom
188 are my constituents. Last week, Matt Heath, and American and
189 Marine, marked two years as a hostage of Nicolás Maduro. I
190 take my obligation to these Americans seriously and implore

191 the State Department to work with Congress to please get them
192 home. And I want to thank you, sir, for introducing that
193 bill.

194 And lastly, I am a cosponsor of Mr. Sherman's Peace and
195 Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act. Before I yield back,
196 I also want to congratulate the brave Ukraine fighters as
197 they take back more of their land in this most impressive
198 counteroffensive. To me, it is a game changer, what we are
199 seeing take place. And we need to continue to get these
200 weapons in and particularly the long-range artillery that is
201 helping them win this fight.

202 I am getting firsthand accounts of Russians literally
203 running and fleeing from the Ukrainians, some taking their
204 uniforms off as they run into the woods. It has been quite a
205 change since you and I were down in Poland on the Ukraine
206 board and for the better. And as someone who values freedom
207 and democracy, I know you do, Mr. Chairman, we need to do
208 everything we can to help them win this war. And so with
209 that, I yield back.

210 Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. McCaul. I now recognize
211 members by committee seniority alternated between Democrats
212 and Republicans for the purpose of speaking on the en bloc
213 package. And if someone by chance missed their turn, please
214 let our staff know and we will come back to you. I now

215 recognize Mr. Albio Sires for five minutes.

216 Mr. Sires. Thank you, Chairman Meeks. Thank you for
217 working with me on this act. Ranking Member McCaul, thank
218 you for your contribution to this. This is as important to
219 me as it is to you and I know the chairman's also and my
220 colleague, Chairman Castro.

221 I would like to take this opportunity to speak about the
222 AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act which I am leading
223 alongside with my good colleagues. A report came out last
224 week that indicated that the total number of migrants and
225 refugees having fled Venezuela will eclipse seven million by
226 the end of this year. Seven million people have left their
227 home country which transform from a beacon of prosperity and
228 democracy to a failed state within my lifetime and on our
229 watch.

230 Nicolás Maduro and his cronies have stripped the
231 citizens of fundamental rights, imprison them for protesting
232 his assault on democracy, and deprive them of basic
233 necessities. Maduro has turned Venezuela sovereign wealth
234 into a slush fund for his accomplices and he has turned the
235 military on civilian protestors. Freedom House has
236 classified Venezuela as not free. That is not free, placing
237 it in the company of Iran and Afghanistan.

238 And the Wilson Center reports that merely 80 percent of

239 Venezuelans are living in extreme poverty. The U.N. Human
240 Rights Council which the United States rejoined as a member
241 earlier this year initiated an independent international
242 fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations
243 in Venezuela since 2014. This was not an easy task and it
244 was complicated further by the resistance from Maduro's
245 regime and restriction from COVID-19, meaning that they
246 weren't able to work on the grounds in Venezuela.

247 Despite the challenges, the fact-finding mission has
248 carried out its investigation to the fully extent possible.
249 Their reports contain overwhelming evidence that the
250 international human rights have been blatantly violated with
251 witnesses' statements describing extrajudicial killings,
252 torture, wireless surveillance, arbitrary detention, and
253 civilian trials taking place before a military tribunal.
254 This is in addition to nearly 1,000 political prisoners and
255 wrongfully detained foreign nationals, including 11
256 Americans.

257 And surprisingly, Venezuela's authorities have failed to
258 implement a fact-finding missions' recommendation to
259 improving human rights in the country. Meanwhile, our
260 attempts to encourage dialogue towards a peaceful democratic
261 transfer of power in Venezuela was stalled. And the
262 humanitarian situation on the ground continues to worsen.

263 The fact-finding mission mandate is set to expire this
264 month. We cannot allow this to happen. That is why I work
265 with my colleagues, Joaquin Castro, in consultation with
266 Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul to introduce the AFFECT
267 Human Rights in Venezuela Act.

268 I am proud to have secured endorsements and cosponsors
269 from both parties and all across the political spectrum.
270 This bill reflects the consensus of Congress and the American
271 people that we must use our voice and vote at the U.N. to
272 preserve the fact-finding mission and provide them with
273 assistance in completing the investigation. It directs the
274 President, Secretary of State, U.N. ambassador to take
275 concrete action to support accountability for human rights
276 violation in Venezuela and seek closure, justice, and
277 restitution for their victims.

278 Additionally, it empowers the administration to work
279 with international partners who deliver aid directly to the
280 Venezuelan people, including migrants and refugees residing in
281 other countries rather than channeling money through the
282 Maduro regime. Finally, the bill authorizes action to secure
283 the release of political prisoner and roughly detained
284 foreign nationals in Venezuela, including American citizens.
285 As we continue to strive to a transitional power in
286 Venezuela, the fact-finding mission reporting will continue

287 to serve as a source for victims who will have the
288 opportunity to pursue long awaited justice and restitution.

289 This mission has laid out steps that will be necessary
290 to resolve Venezuela's structural issues once constitutional
291 rights and separation of powers are restored. As our
292 partner, countries in the Western hemisphere come together,
293 casing aside ideology to take up, of course, at the U.N., it
294 is essential to show that we have their back. This bill will
295 make clear to the world that the United States will not
296 shrink from the responsibility of protecting human rights and
297 democracy around the world.

298 I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the AFFECT
299 Human Rights in Venezuela Act and to report it favorably to
300 the floor. Thank you, Chairman. I yield back.

301 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
302 recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey who is the
303 ranking member of the subcommittee on Africa, Global Health,
304 and Global Human Rights.

305 [Simultaneous speaking.]

306 Mr. Smith. Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman. And
307 thank you, Albio Sires, for that very good bill. I would add
308 it as a cosponsor, and I appreciate all the work you have
309 done, not just on that country and also Cuba and some of the
310 other human rights abusers in the hemisphere, including

311 Nicaragua. Thank you, Albio Sires, Chairman of the Western
312 Hemisphere Subcommittee.

313 I would like to speak in support of the bipartisan
314 Global Food Security Act of 2022. It was first introduced or
315 it was introduced by my friend, Betty McCollum, of which I am
316 the lead Republican cosponsor. It is nearly eight years to
317 the day when I first introduced the Global Food Security Act
318 in the House back in 2014.

319 But Betty is the lead Democrat. So we have worked very,
320 very closely together throughout the year as well. It didn't
321 pass that year. It did in the next Congress, and it has been
322 in the estimation of many a very successful piece of
323 legislation that has promoted food security, resilience, and
324 nutrition in developing countries in keeping with U.S.
325 national security interests.

326 It has been my pleasure to work with Betty over the
327 years on this legislation and our staff working together on
328 this one. And we have made some really good progress. One
329 of the objectives of the Global Food Security Act was to take
330 a whole of government approach led by USAID in promoting food
331 security in conducting oversight hearings with regards to its
332 implementation, and I chaired many of those hearings.

333 We found that there were several places where the whole
334 of agency approach, let alone whole of government approach,

335 was lacking. One area that needed attention was to make sure
336 that our nutrition efforts were firing on all cylinders.
337 While the original Global Food Security Act and subsequent
338 reauthorization placed great emphasis on reducing stunting,
339 especially places like Nigeria, and then addressing the
340 critical importance of the first 1,000 days of life, from
341 conception to the second birthday, it did not address the
342 deleterious impact of intestinal worms which could have on
343 the nutrition needs of children in particular.

344 And we have all seen pictures of children with distended
345 bellies caused by worms that rob them of needed nutrients.
346 Children are the future, and we need to do everything we can
347 to obliterate those worms in their systems. The USAID,
348 however, our deworming efforts were siloed in the global
349 health late with other neglected tropical diseases.

350 Nutrition efforts were split between global health and
351 the Bureau of Food Security. Thus we had a left hand/right
352 hand issue. And too often our deworming efforts were a one-
353 off not coordinated with our nutrition programs.

354 With this reauthorization however, we are seeing the
355 full integration of deworming with nutrition, and just as
356 importantly, with water sanitation, hygiene or wash
357 programming within our government. In other words, our
358 integrated programming will kill the parasites that harm the

359 nutritional needs of our children and make them more prone to
360 other sicknesses as well and illness. Feed the children and
361 teach methods with changing behavior and prevent re-
362 infestation by worms.

363 This coordination will help maximize the use of our U.S.
364 tax dollars and above all will help those children to be
365 healthier so they can thrive. I also want to strongly
366 support legislation introduced by my good friend and
367 colleague from California, Karen Bass. Chairwoman Bass
368 affirming the importance of diplomacy and development in the
369 United States, African Union relations, promoting strategic
370 partnerships, and shared objectives between the EU and AU and
371 expressing strong support for a successful implementation of
372 the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

373 So glad to be the cosponsor on Karen's bill, her
374 resolution. I thank her for her tireless efforts on behalf
375 of the people of Africa and for this resolution as well.
376 Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time. And again, I
377 thank you for this markup.

378 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
379 recognize Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia who is
380 the president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

381 Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you
382 to you and the ranking member for bringing a bipartisan en

383 bloc package of five bills. And I enthusiastically support
384 every one of them. I would add to my friend, Chris Smith,
385 when he talked about the need for coordination of global food
386 security and global health.

387 I have also been pleased to introduce with my friend,
388 Mr. Chabot, the Global Health Security Act for the last
389 several years which would reestablish a coordinated role in
390 hopefully the National Security Council to monitor pandemics
391 and big international health threats before they become
392 crises. And this committee should absolutely be the locus
393 for monitoring global food security and global health
394 security. And I agree with Mr. Smith on that argument.

395 Mr. Chairman, I do want to just pay tribute to two of
396 our departing colleagues who are here today, my friend, Albio
397 Sires, who has been a mentor, brings passion, especially to
398 south of the border issues, including in the Caribbean. He
399 reminds that the authoritarian and Communist threat remains,
400 that people suffer and they can't be forgotten, and that
401 American policy needs to reflect that. I salute Mr. Sires
402 for his years of service, both in New Jersey and here in the
403 United States Congress, and we will miss him terribly.

404 Mr. Deutch has been a leader as the chairman of our
405 Middle East subcommittee and has brought an astute
406 perspective that helps this committee try to approach the

407 region with some reason and balance. And I really have
408 appreciated that approach and his leadership. And we will
409 miss him as well and wish him God speed on his new endeavor.
410 I yield back. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

411 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back, and I join
412 him in regards to Mr. Deutch who I will talk about a little
413 bit later. We have got to finish this markup. But I do want
414 to mention him also because he will be missed, and I know he
415 is departing very soon. I now recognize Representative Joe
416 Wilson of South Carolina who is the ranking member of the
417 subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global
418 Counterterrorism for five minutes.

419 Mr. Wilson. Thank you, Chairman Greg Meeks and Ranking
420 Member Mike McCaul for bringing these important measures
421 before us today. I am grateful to support House Resolution
422 8446, the bipartisan Global Food Security Reauthorization
423 Act. War criminal Putin's war against a sovereign Ukraine
424 with subsequent food blockage has caused a sharp increase in
425 the number of food insecure persons around the world.

426 Victory for Ukraine is important for the world. The
427 United States has long been a leader in humanitarian aid, and
428 it is critical that his bipartisan commitment to reduce
429 poverty instability is continued. Also congratulations comes
430 to Albio Sires for the Human Rights in Venezuela Act.

431 Your service has made such a positive difference for
432 democracy, and we wish you the best in the future. You will
433 be missed. And I will always cherish your delegation
434 leadership as we visited with democratic leaders of Argentina
435 and Chile.

436 Finally, on February 24 today after war criminal Putin's
437 invasion of sovereign Ukraine, I was grateful to co-lead the
438 bipartisan Corruption Act which is House Resolution 6846.
439 This bill requires a determination within 30 days as to
440 whether certain specified oligarchs meet criteria to be
441 subject to sanctions related to corruption and human rights
442 violations. As the people of Ukraine continue their heroic
443 efforts to repel Putin's criminal forces for victory in
444 Ukraine, we must confront the corrupt network of kleptocrats
445 and human rights abusers who have enabled Putin's delusional
446 revisionist fantasy, sacrificing young Russians for Putin's
447 personal taking of oil, money, and power.

448 Additionally, I was grateful to co-lead House Resolution
449 1266 requesting that the President transmit certain documents
450 relating to any initiative or negotiations regarding Iran's
451 nuclear program. The Biden administration is desperate to
452 advance a bad deal, an insane agreement. Reportedly, more
453 than 170 sanctions would be lifted before Congress even has
454 an ability to review the deal.

455 These effects are devastating and expansive. Iran's
456 economic sector would be free to continue working with mass
457 murderers. Arms embargos will be lifted. The Islamic
458 Revolutionary Guard coordinate, embolden, and funded to
459 proliferate more terrorism, more rockets for Hamas and
460 Hezbollah to attack Israeli civilians all for the sake of
461 saying a deal has been reached.

462 It is also vehemently clear that part of the
463 negotiations, the Biden administration has implicitly green-
464 lit normalization with the criminal Assad regime who
465 continues to butcher his own people and is facilitating the
466 Iranian regime's production of missiles in Syria. Dangerous
467 negotiations have also been continued even as Iran continues
468 to develop ballistic missiles to fulfill their stated goal,
469 deal to Israel, death to America. It is not possible to
470 negotiate with those acting in bad faith.

471 It is critical that Congress not be kept in the dark
472 concerning the disastrous consequences of the concessions to
473 the Iranian regime. I am grateful that it is actually
474 bipartisan for similar concerns. In the tradition of former
475 Chairman Eliot Engel and former U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman.
476 And I urge all of us to work on this resolution of inquiry.

477 In addition, it is really bittersweet today and that is
478 we would be congratulating Chairman Ted Deutch who is

479 completing his service. And it is just been my honor to
480 serve with him on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global
481 Terrorism subcommittee. And I just wish him well for the
482 continued service that I know he will have not in the House
483 of Representatives. And with that, I yield back. Thank you.

484 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. And now I
485 would like to recognize the gentleman that individuals have
486 been talking about who will miss on this committee very much.
487 And I will miss him personally for all of the consulting with
488 him and talking to him and getting his thoughts and advice on
489 the Middle East and the region and abroad.

490 He has been more than just a member as Mr. Sires has on
491 this committee. He has been a friend. And so he is going to
492 be drastically missed. But I still have his cell phone
493 number as I have Mr. Sires. So just still expect to get
494 phone calls from me even though you won't be here.

495 There is a saying, you can run but you can't hide. And
496 so I will find you and still consult with you. So I now
497 recognize the chair of the subcommittee in the Middle East
498 and North Africa and Global Counterterrorism, Chairman Ted
499 Deutch.

500 Mr. Deutch. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The
501 phone service works both ways. So be careful what you ask
502 for. I hadn't realized until these nice words that in fact

503 this -- there may be one more hearing. This is definitely my
504 last markup.

505 And so I just wanted to take a moment to do a couple
506 things. I want to acknowledge the measures in this en bloc,
507 first of all, global food security, reaffirming the
508 importance of diplomacy and development in U.S.-African Union
509 relations, the John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship, and
510 fighting for human rights in Venezuela, fighting against
511 Russian corruption. There is in this en bloc I think a fine
512 representation of the way this committee works at its best.

513 I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for
514 the way that they have conducted themselves through their
515 leadership of this committee. I want to thank all of my
516 colleagues for understanding that at a time of really
517 significant challenges around the world the United States is
518 -- our leadership is most effective when our messaging is
519 clear and strong and bipartisan. And I am grateful to my
520 colleagues on this committee who time and time again find
521 ways to come together to assert that leadership on behalf of
522 our constituents and our country.

523 I am especially grateful to Mr. Connolly, for your kind
524 words and to the chairman for his very kind words. Mr.
525 Wilson, we have one more hearing together. So I have got
526 something planed for you.

527 But it is been an honor to serve with you, and I
528 appreciate your leadership on the subcommittee. And I would
529 like to acknowledge Congressman Sires especially on this day
530 with this bill before us. I too have traveled with Mr. Sires
531 to the region.

532 And those of us on this committee, most of us have
533 opportunities to travel all over the world. There are few
534 moments in all of the travels that I have done that stand out
535 quite the way this one particular moment does when
536 Congressman Sires led a trip to Colombia. And we stood
537 across the bridge from Venezuela.

538 And we had just finished taking a tour of the warehouse
539 that was overflowing with humanitarian supplies. So many of
540 those supplies with the flag of the United States of America
541 stamped on the side because we want to be of assistance.
542 That is what we do in our country.

543 And we want to reach out to those in need and those who
544 are challenged when their freedom is challenged and is
545 oppressed and is crushed. We left the warehouse. We stood
546 on the bridge and we looked across the way where Maduro had
547 put tractor trailers across the bridge telling us that he did
548 not want our help.

549 And I will finish with this. Albio, thank you for that
550 moment. And as we think about the role again of his

551 committee but more importantly just of the job that we do of
552 representing our constituents.

553 First and foremost for all us is making sure that we are
554 looking out for them and their interest and the interest of
555 the United States. And on this committee that often means
556 standing up for them and our values against other leaders who
557 do not share those values and making sure that in this case
558 the citizens of Venezuela, though they did not receive our
559 aid here, loud and clear, our commitment to them and their
560 freedom just as we do in some many places around the world.
561 It has been an incredible honor to do that important work
562 standing up for the values that we all share on both sides of
563 this dais as members Congress and most importantly as
564 citizens of the United States of America. I yield back.

565 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
566 recognize Representative Bill Keating of Massachusetts who is
567 the chair of the subcommittee on Europe, Energy, and the
568 Environment in Cyber for five minutes.

569 Mr. Keating. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also
570 want to thank Representative Deutch for his leadership and
571 the privilege of being on the committee he chaired since I
572 have been here in Middle East. And his leadership will be
573 missed.

574 We will have time in the future to talking about our

575 friendship. I think some of the committee members that have
576 traveled with us realize his fine appreciation for the fine
577 music that he has. And the edification of the members here,
578 his favorite song, Love Potion No. 9.

579 And he will be missed. His friendship will continue,
580 though, I know in his new role. And AJC will be blessed with
581 his leadership. Today's markup is an important one. I
582 support the bills on it.

583 I just want to draw your attention to two, the CORRUPT
584 Act, which I am an original cosponsor, requires the State
585 Department to review and determine if sanctions are
586 applicable, key individuals in Russia who have been accused
587 of corrupt acts. Russian's horrific illegal actions in
588 Ukraine are reprehensible. And any individual found to have
589 contributed to the Kremlin's ability to wage war in Ukraine
590 should and must be sanctioned.

591 While we must hold Kremlin leaders to account, we must
592 also address how Russia's illegal war on Ukraine impacts food
593 security around the world. To help address this issue, I
594 wholeheartedly support H.R. 8446, the Global Food Security
595 Reauthorization Act of 2022 with Russia attempting to use
596 starvation in food insecurities as a means to influence and a
597 weapon of war. I believe it is vital for the U.S. to
598 continue to use its resources to build food resilience and

599 increased capacity.

600 I supported the original Global Food Security Act in
601 2016 and its initial reauthorization in 2018. I support the
602 reauthorization today and encourage its reporting through the
603 committee. Also, for the notice of committee members, we
604 will be holding a hearing next Wednesday on the
605 accountability for atrocity crimes committed by Russia and
606 Ukraine.

607 It is Wednesday the 21st at 2:00 p.m. and a classified
608 briefing for members on the latest update in Ukraine which
609 will be Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. All of the committee members
610 are welcome to attend. And with that I yield back as the
611 chairman.

612 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative David
613 Cicilline for five minutes.

614 Mr. Cicilline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
615 for bringing these measures before the committee en bloc.
616 And thank you in particular for your leadership addressing
617 hunger that has really taken the world by storm over the past
618 year. Recent events around the world including Vladimir
619 Putin's unlawful invasion of Ukraine has spotlighted global
620 food insecurity kleptocracy and has struggled for human
621 rights around the world.

622 I am grateful that we can advance key legislation that

623 grapples with each of these important issues. In already
624 fragile states like Lebanon, the prospect of starvation hangs
625 over not only Lebanese people with a large refugee population
626 currently housed in that country. After years of fleeing
627 unspeakable violence in the horrors of war, refugees now face
628 the stark reality of not having enough to eat to sustain
629 themselves and their children.

630 With that and other flashpoints around the world in
631 mind, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8846, the Global
632 Food Security Reauthorization Act. The Lebanese people have
633 been badly let down by the corrupt political elite and has
634 left the general population angry and eager for change. Bad
635 actors eager to sow chaos will undoubtedly use food
636 insecurity to further destabilize the country, and we must
637 not allow this to happen.

638 As we work to stand up for human rights and American
639 foreign policy, we must do all that we can in this Congress
640 to ensure the most vulnerable are fed. Next, democracy
641 around the world is under attack, including of course in
642 Venezuela. I want to thank my friends, Chairman Sires and
643 Chairman Castro, for your leadership on human rights in
644 Venezuela and for inducing H.R. 8813.

645 For too long, the people of Venezuela have been
646 subjected to human rights abuses by the immoral and thuggish

647 government of Nicolás Maduro. We know that those fighting
648 for democracy and the rule of law have been subjected to
649 unspeakable crimes by the Venezuelan government. We know
650 that it is Venezuela has protested their government because
651 of food shortages and extraordinary economic mismanagement.

652 The Venezuelan government did all it could to crush this
653 resistance. We must insist the independent international
654 fact-finding mission on Venezuela established by the United
655 Nations Human Rights Council continue its work to expose the
656 crimes of the Maduro regime. For that reason, I
657 enthusiastically support Mr. Sires' AFFECT Human Rights in
658 Venezuela Act and urge my colleagues to do the same.

659 The people of Venezuela deserve democracy, human rights,
660 and the rule of law. They deserve to live in prosperity and
661 not under the thumb of kleptocrats and corrupt officials that
662 line their pockets while young and old alike suffer from
663 hunger and poverty. Next I turn to the illegal, unjustified
664 war against people of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin.

665 And I thank Mr. Malinowski for his strong leadership on
666 the issue of corruption and kleptocracy and Russia and urge
667 my colleagues to support H.R. 6846, the CORRUPT Act.
668 Vladimir Putin is the world's worst criminal. He has
669 foolishly leveraged the Russian state into an insane war of
670 conquest and a peaceful and democratic neighbor.

671 He has plundered the Russian state for his own material
672 wealth and for the personal enrichment of his cronies. And
673 he has murdered and imprisoned his political opponents and
674 brave journalists that dare report on his corrupt and immoral
675 regime. And he sought to foster instability in democratic
676 nations around the world, including here in the United
677 States, by interfering in elections and sowing social
678 divisions and discord. Because of his demented and grotesque
679 policies, Vladimir Putin risks the ruin of his own nation.

680 But he has not done it alone. For years, Vladimir Putin
681 has presided over a system of governance that enabled a small
682 country of corrupt elites eager to grow fat and rich while
683 the Russian people suffer under the brutal Putin regime. I
684 am working to make sure that for his crimes Vladimir Putin
685 and his inner circle face justice if they dare enter the
686 jurisdiction of the United States and the Judiciary
687 Committee. Until then, let's do all we can to punish those
688 who have stood by, enabled, or supported the 21st century's
689 most despicable tyrant.

690 And finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to also add my
691 voice to the praise of our colleague, Congressman Chairman
692 Deutch who has served on this committee and I have had the
693 privilege of serving on both the Judiciary and Foreign
694 Affairs Committee with Chairman Deutch. And in every way, he

695 has used his service not only to make really enduring and
696 important contributions to our country and to countries
697 around the world, always speaking to the deep values of
698 democracy, human rights, and peace, always presenting some of
699 the most thoughtful testimony and most incisive questioning
700 we have had in this committee and someone who will bring all
701 of those skills to his new position. But we often say, I am
702 sorry to see you go, my friend, and he will always be friend.

703 In this case, it really is my friend, someone who has
704 been a great mentor to me, a source of guidance and wisdom.
705 And very often when I am thinking glumly about the future of
706 our great democracy, I think of people like Ted Deutch who
707 have provided an extraordinary service to America. And I
708 wish him well and say thank you and God bless. And I yield
709 back.

710 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Joaquin
711 Castro who is the chair of the subcommittee on international
712 development, international organizations, and global
713 corporate social impact for five minutes.

714 Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman Meeks. I support the
715 measures being considered en bloc. The Global Food Security
716 Reauthorization Act, the John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship
717 Act, the resolution regarding the African Union, and the
718 CORRUPT Act. And I thank the sponsors for their diligent and

719 hard work.

720 I also want to thank Chairman Sires for his work with me
721 on the AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act which is included
722 in the en bloc package. As this committee knows, we are
723 currently facing the greatest number of displaced people in
724 the world since World War II. One of the biggest causes is a
725 refugee and migrant crisis in our own hemisphere.

726 The number of Venezuelans displaced now ties with
727 Ukraine as the world's largest. The United States must do
728 more to address the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and
729 support countries like Colombia and Ecuador who have been at
730 the forefront of responding to this exodus. I am proud to
731 co-lead this bill which marks a meaningful step towards
732 restoring democracy, stability, and prosperity for the
733 Venezuelan people.

734 The AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela bill will address
735 an urgent and worsening crisis that demands more attention
736 for the United States and from the world. This bill
737 solidifies the United States support for the U.N. independent
738 international fact-finding mission on Venezuela and affirms
739 the U.S. commitment to addressing the humanitarian needs of
740 the Venezuelan people. The fact-finding mission is crucial
741 in documenting human rights abuses, pervasive impunity, and
742 stifling repression committed by the Maduro regime.

743 This independent mission is also key in informing the
744 political negotiations and ensuring a coordinated and
745 effective global response to the humanitarian crisis. The
746 United States must also continue to support United Nations
747 efforts like the world food program to alleviate the
748 humanitarian situation and engage with key Venezuelan actors
749 in a constructive way. Additionally, we must reevaluate the
750 United States policy towards Venezuela to determine how we
751 can support a negotiated political transition while
752 simultaneously condemning continued oppression.

753 In particular, as I have said for years, the United
754 States must assess the effectiveness of our sanctions and the
755 unintended consequences in furthering poverty and suffering
756 of the Venezuelan people. Supporting this bill and in turn
757 the U.N. fact-finding mission, multilateral humanitarian
758 efforts, and inclusive negotiations is just one step in what
759 I hope will be a larger effort from the Congress and from the
760 administration. I encourage my colleagues on the committee
761 to support this bipartisan legislation and the other measures
762 as well. I yield back.

763 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
764 recognize the gentlelady from Nevada, Representative Titus,
765 for five minutes. No? I understand Representative Titus is
766 not there. So I recognize the gentleman from New Jersey,

767 Representative Malinowski, for five minutes who I caught by
768 surprise.

769 Mr. Malinowski. Yes, actually, if there is somebody
770 ahead of me because we have a couple of -- there is not? All
771 right. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, members.

772 In discussing the bill that I have before the committee,
773 I want to first thank my colleagues on both sides of the
774 aisle for their support, Representatives Curtis, Kinzinger,
775 Salazar, Fitzpatrick, and Joe Wilson. You led this bill with
776 me when Putin's invasion kicked off. And despite what the
777 news often says, behind the curtains, I have seen -- we have
778 all seen tremendous bipartisan unity over the last six months
779 to ensure that Ukraine's brave fighters have all of the
780 military hardware that they need and the support that they
781 need more broadly from the United States.

782 We have this bipartisan unity because of scenes like
783 this. This is a familiar image I hoped all of us now have
784 seen following the massacre in the Ukrainian village of
785 Bucha. And of course, we know it is only one of many
786 atrocities committed by the Russian military against the
787 Ukrainian people.

788 I have in my hand here a piece of shrapnel from the
789 fighting in Kharkiv which to me is it is something very
790 striking because it gives tangible meaning to the death, the

791 violence that has been unleashed on innocent people in
792 Ukraine by the Putin regime. And I will just pass it around.
793 But the point I want to make today is that this would not be
794 possible without this.

795 This is a picture of a friend of many people on this
796 committee, a Russian dissident named Vladimir Kara-Murza. I
797 believe he has testified before this committee. He is one of
798 the bravest people I have ever met.

799 Putin tried to poison him twice and he survived. In his
800 most recent trip to Russia, he was arrested and is now in
801 pre-trial detention. And the point here is that it is
802 Putin's fear of brave Russians like this, Russians who have
803 fought for democracy and human rights within their own
804 country that leads to his fear of the people of Ukraine who
805 have modeled democracy and respect for human rights in their
806 own country.

807 The war in Ukraine begins with repression inside Russia
808 and hence the bill that we are considering today. We have
809 before us a list of nearly 200 key cronies of Putin,
810 individuals who have been identified by these brave Russian
811 [inaudible] Alexei Navalny as the lynchpins of this regime as
812 the reasons why Putin is able to stay in power and fuel the
813 war in Ukraine while enabling him to steal money from the
814 Russian people to empower his regime. That is why we

815 continue to call for sanctions against enablers of the Putin
816 regime.

817 That is why we are separately moving legislation through
818 the NDAA to make the United States -- to secure our financial
819 system in the United States against the proceeds of the
820 corruptions. And that is why I hope everyone will join me
821 today in supporting this legislation that will under the
822 Magnitsky Act initiate the process of sanctioning this group
823 of individuals who have been identified by Russian democracy
824 activities as lynchpins of the Putin regime. I will end by
825 quoting something that Vladimir once said.

826 He said that the Magnitsky Act is the most pro-Russian
827 law ever to have been passed by a foreign parliament. Pro-
828 Russian because it stands with those Russians who honestly
829 speak the truth about the nature of the regime and who have
830 the courage to try to change their country for the better.
831 We stand with them just as much as we stand with the people
832 of Ukraine today. Thank you, and I yield back.

833 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Hearing no
834 further request for recognition, the committee will proceed
835 to consider the notice items en bloc. Pursuant to the
836 previous order, the question occurs on the measures en bloc
837 as amended if amended. We are going to take a vote by voice.
838 Well, all members please unmute your microphones.

839 All those in favor, say aye.

840 All those opposed, say no.

841 In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it.

842 The committee will now stand in recess pending the end
843 of votes on the floor. The committee is now in recess.

844 [Recess.]

845 Chairman Meeks. The committee will come to order.

846 And before we begin, I'd like to add that the measures
847 considered en bloc are agreed to.

848 And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid
849 on the table.

850 Pursuant to the previous order of the committee, each
851 measure is ordered favorably reported, as amended, if
852 amended, and each amendment or amendments to each bill shall
853 be reported as a single amendment in the nature of a
854 substitute.

855 And without objection, staff is authorized to make any
856 technical and conforming changes.

857 Now, let's move into the five measures being considered
858 separately.

859 H.R. 2374, Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education
860 Act; H.R. 4213, the YSEALI Act with a Castro amendment in the
861 nature of a substitute designated 108; H.R. 8153, the Indo-
862 Pacific Engagement Act; H.Res. 1240, Requesting the

863 President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit
864 to the House of Representatives copies of all documents in
865 their possession referring or relating to certain aspects of
866 the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan, and H.Res.
867 1266, Requesting the President to transmit certain documents
868 to the House of Representatives relating to any initiative or
869 negotiations regarding the Iran nuclear program.

870 We will, first, consider H.R. 2374, the Peace and
871 Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act.

872 Pursuant to notice, for purposes of the markup, I now
873 call up H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian
874 Education Act.

875 The clerk will report the bill.

876 Ms. Hallman. H.R. 2374, to require the Secretary of
877 State to submit annual --

878 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of
879 the bill is dispensed with and the bill shall be considered
880 as read and open to amendment at any point.

881 [The bill H.R. 2374 follows:]

882

883 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

884 Chairman Meeks. And at this time, I recognize myself to
885 speak briefly on this measure.

886 I support passage of H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance
887 in Palestinian Education Act, introduced by Mr. Sherman of
888 California. An identical bill was reported last Congress
889 with the full support of this committee. The State
890 Department helped to finalize the text of this legislation
891 and has no concerns about its passage in Congress.

892 This bill requires the Department of State to report on
893 the curriculum used in schools in areas controlled by the
894 Palestinian Authority or located in Gaza. Among the topics
895 it includes, the report must address: one, whether the
896 materials used encourage violence or intolerance toward other
897 nations or ethnic groups; two, the steps the Palestinian
898 Authority has taken to reform such materials, and three,
899 whether the United States Foreign Assistance is used to fund
900 the dissemination of the offending materials.

901 The State Department must make such reports publicly
902 available. Both the State Department, the United Nations,
903 and the Palestinian Authority have taken measures to improve
904 the content of Palestinian textbooks in recent years, but
905 there is still work to be done, particularly by the PA.

906 This legislation will help Congress better monitor
907 progress in this area and assure we are spending American

908 taxpayer dollars to promote peace as opposed to intolerance.
909 Please join me in supporting this bill.

910 I now recognize Representative Brian Mast of Florida for
911 5 minutes.

912 Mr. Mast. You're surprising me. I didn't know you were
913 going to come over here first, but happy to talk about it.
914 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

915 So, I'm proud to be one of the Republican leads on this
916 piece of legislation. I want to thank Congressman Sherman
917 for his work on this as well.

918 And just to underline a few of the examples, I guess,
919 that we could give, I have a number of them here. But I want
920 to give two of them.

921 So, here's one example: it's a fourth grade Palestinian
922 math problem, and in this fourth grade Palestinian math
923 problem, they ask this: the number of martyrs of the First
924 Intifada is 2,026 martyrs and the number of martyrs of the
925 Al-Aqsa Intifada is 5,050. The number of martyrs in the two
926 Intifadas is X number of martyrs. That's an actual math
927 problem out of a Palestinian textbook.

928 I could give another one here. Here's a geography
929 question that says -- this is for sixth grade geography --
930 define the borders of Palestine, right? And they're to find
931 the borders of Palestine. They completely erase Israel's

932 existence, right? So, there's one right there. The list
933 goes on and on in these books.

934 So, basically, the hope for peace in that region is to -
935 - what? -- ask the kids to not attend school? No, that can't
936 be the answer. So, the answer has to be make sure that they
937 are not being taught this type of curriculum, and above that,
938 make sure that U.S. taxpayers certainly are not paying to
939 make this the curriculum that they are being taught. And
940 that's why this particular piece of legislation is so
941 important.

942 So, I thank my colleague for his work on this, and I
943 yield the balance of my time.

944 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields.

945 I now recognize Representative Brad Sherman of
946 California for 5 minutes.

947 Mr. Sherman. Thank you.

948 At the outset, I'd like to commend the chairman for all
949 the bills that are being brought forward. I support all of
950 them. I realize there are resolutions of inquiry that I put
951 in a different category than that.

952 I want to commend our very close friend, Ted Deutch, who
953 has served as chair of the Middle East and North Africa
954 Subcommittee. He has left an incredible legacy. I know
955 he'll be leaving Congress in a few weeks. I believe this is

956 his last markup in this committee. And I just want to take a
957 moment to commend him for his outstanding service to our
958 country.

959 I also want to commend Congressman Albio Sires, not only
960 for his bill AFFECT Human Rights, the Venezuela Act, but also
961 for his service to the committee. And I know that he will be
962 serving with us through the end of this year.

963 I want to thank the chairman for bringing up my bill,
964 the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act. I
965 proposed this bill in the last Congress. It passed in this
966 committee in December of 2019, without objection, by voice
967 vote. And my hope is that we can do that here today, to be
968 as expeditious as possible.

969 My hope, also, is that this time we'll not only just
970 pass the bill through this committee, but that it will be
971 brought forward on the Floor. Given its bipartisan support,
972 I think it could easily pass on a suspension.

973 I want to thank so many members of this committee for
974 cosponsoring the bill, including Representatives Mast,
975 McCaul, Chabot, Fitzpatrick, Salazar, Chris Smith, Schneider,
976 Manning, Malliotakis, Steube, Wagner, and Cicilline -- a
977 diverse and bipartisan group of our members. And, of course,
978 we have a host of cosponsors who aren't members of the
979 committee.

980 For decades, the United States has been the top donor to
981 the Palestinian people, including the Palestinian Authority
982 and UNRWA. But American support must reflect American
983 values. It doesn't always do that when it funds certain
984 programs at certain UNRWA-funded schools.

985 On March 11th, 1978, the al-Mughrabi and 10 other PLO
986 militants hijacked two civilian buses and killed 38 civilian
987 passengers, including 13 children in what is known as the
988 Coastal Road Massacre. Today, children educated at UNRWA and
989 Palestinian Authority schools receive textbooks calling the
990 perpetrator of this act of terrorism that killed 38 civilians
991 a crown of the nation, with a full chapter discussing the
992 massacre in detail and exalting the terrorism for her so-
993 called -- and particularly one terrorist for her so-called
994 heroism. This is but one example of many instances of the
995 glorification of terrorism, the encouragement of violence,
996 antisemitic in arts that, unfortunately, permeate much of the
997 Palestinian curriculum.

998 I think all of us on this committee favor a peace
999 between the Israelis and the Palestinian people; favor two
1000 states, and a solution to a crisis that has been intractable
1001 for over 75 years. That piece depends upon how people are
1002 educated and how they think. And the glorification of
1003 killing 38 civilians who just happened to be on a bus,

1004 including 13 children, is a step away from peace.

1005 The violent curriculum has violent consequences. Just
1006 this May, a report found that a 17-year-old Palestinian who
1007 attempted to kill Israelis in a stabbing attack was taught
1008 incendiary and violence against Israel and anti-Israel hate
1009 at an UNRWA-paid-for school.

1010 My bills comes at an important time. While UNRWA has
1011 made commitments to address this issue in its 2021 Framework
1012 for Cooperation, serious concerns with UNRWA incitement
1013 schools persist, including an incident in June where six
1014 UNRWA staffers, including teachers, were placed on
1015 administrative leave after having social posts that stated it
1016 is time to fight against the Jews and kill them. Slaughter
1017 the Zionists. This is not helpful.

1018 This bill does not, by its own terms -- hopefully, it
1019 will lead to prevention of some of this most extreme speech -
1020 - but what it does is it simply demands a report be provided
1021 to Congress. So, even if you are the most free speech
1022 purist, this bill doesn't prevent speech; it requires speech
1023 by the State Department to tell us what the State Department
1024 already knows internally, and that is whether the textbooks
1025 used in UNRWA and Palestinian Authority schools are educating
1026 for peace or educating for terrorism.

1027 I yield back and I urge a quick and expeditious vote on

1028 the bill.

1029 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

1030 I now recognize Representative Cathy Manning of North
1031 Carolina, who is the vice chair of the Subcommittee on the
1032 Middle East, North Africa and Global Counterterrorism, for 5
1033 minutes.

1034 Ms. Manning. Thank you, Chairman Meeks and Ranking
1035 Member McCaul, for your leadership and for working to pass
1036 this and several other important measures.

1037 I am proud to support H.R. 2374, the Peace and Tolerance
1038 in Palestinian Education Act, a bipartisan legislation I
1039 cosponsored, introduced by Representatives Brad Sherman and
1040 Lee Zeldin.

1041 Mr. Chairman, this week marks the two-year anniversary
1042 of the signing of the Abraham Accords, which represents a
1043 huge shift in the region towards a bright future built on
1044 peaceful coexistence. Making that vision a reality requires
1045 the next generation of young people in the Middle East to
1046 believe in acceptance and tolerance.

1047 Last year, members of this committee traveled, as part
1048 of a bipartisan congressional delegation, to the region,
1049 where we met with Palestinian youth who were deeply
1050 disillusioned about the possibility for peace with their
1051 Israeli neighbors.

1052 Sadly, we have seen the continued use of textbooks and
1053 other educational materials in schools run by the PA and
1054 UNRWA containing anti-Israel content, which perpetuates
1055 antisemitism, Palestinian victimhood and martyrdom, erases
1056 Israel from the map, and even glorifies violence and
1057 terrorism.

1058 Mr. Chairman, children of the West Bank and Gaza deserve
1059 the chance to learn without using textbooks that are biased,
1060 promote intolerance, and demonize or mischaracterize Israel.
1061 That is why this bill would require the State Department to
1062 investigate, report to Congress, and make publicly available
1063 important information about the content of the curriculum
1064 used in these schools.

1065 This bipartisan bill helps build on and reinforce the
1066 commitments made under the U.S.-UNRWA Framework for
1067 Cooperation, which calls for monitoring and addressing
1068 problematic content in textbooks that violates the U.N.'s own
1069 principles of neutrality and tolerance.

1070 Mr. Chairman, no child is born to hate; they have to be
1071 carefully taught. Educational materials that teach them hate
1072 by demonizing Israel only make it harder to resolve the
1073 conflict and achieve lasting peace. This bipartisan
1074 legislation will help ensure that the PA and UNRWA schools
1075 improve their curriculum and meet internationally-recognized

1076 standards for peace and tolerance.

1077 In closing, I urge all my colleagues to support this
1078 important bipartisan bill that I am proud to cosponsor. And
1079 I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their
1080 leadership.

1081 I yield back.

1082 Chairman Meeks. Any other member who wishes to speak?

1083 Hearing none—for what purpose does the Representative
1084 from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, seek recognition?

1085 Mr. Pfluger. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the
1086 desk.

1087 Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the
1088 amendment.

1089 Ms. Hallman. Mr. Chairman, which number amendment is
1090 the gentleman offering?

1091 Mr. Pfluger. I thank the chairman. It's 180, I
1092 believe.

1093 Chairman Meeks. 180.

1094 Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

1095 The clerk will please report the amendment.

1096 Ms. Hallman. Pfluger Amendment No. 180 to H.R. 2374.

1097 Add at the end of Section 3 the following:

1098 It is the further sense of Congress --

1099 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of

1100 the amendment will be dispensed with.

1101 [The Amendment No. 180 offered by Mr. Pfluger follows:]

1102

1103 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1104 Chairman Meeks. And the Representative from Texas is
1105 recognized for 5 minutes in support of the amendment.

1106 Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking
1107 Member. And thank you for allowing me the opportunity to
1108 speak on this amendment.

1109 And thanks to Congressman Sherman for your leadership on
1110 this bill.

1111 My straightforward amendment doesn't change the nature
1112 of the bill. It just goes a small, but important step
1113 further -- adding the sense of Congress clause that states
1114 that antisemitism, Xenophobia, and claims that Israel is an
1115 apartheid state should have absolutely no place in any
1116 curriculum used by the Palestinian Authority.

1117 For far too long, Palestinian students have been
1118 subjected to the curriculums that contain materials promoting
1119 violence and extremist ideology -- all while being subsidized
1120 by United States taxpayer money.

1121 And specifically, these textbooks, as it's been
1122 previously discussed here in this hearing, produced by United
1123 Nations Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA, contain material
1124 that de-legitimizes Israel as a nation, denigrates Jews, and
1125 supports martyrdom.

1126 More troubling is the fact that UNRWA has allowed Hamas
1127 to use their facilities to store weapons to wage their war

1128 with Israel. These issues are compounded by the fact that
1129 the President of Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, has
1130 peddled conspiracy theories, trivializing the Holocaust, and
1131 claims that Israel is an apartheid state. It's alarming that
1132 our constituents could potentially be helping promote this
1133 type of hateful propaganda from President Abbas, the
1134 Palestinian Authority, and Hamas through our taxpayer
1135 dollars.

1136 In addition to these alarming revelations, I find it
1137 incredibly concerning and disgusting that members of this
1138 committee have also participated in peddling these hateful
1139 talking points with little to no recourse, either from
1140 leadership or within our institution. Echoing this rhetoric
1141 not only spreads these hateful messages to a broader
1142 audience, but undercuts the values this Nation was founded on
1143 and our interests across the globe. And in order to ensure
1144 that we are holding the PA responsible for their hateful
1145 propaganda, we must also consider the words that we have and
1146 the effect that they have -- the words that we use and the
1147 effect that they have.

1148 My amendment intends to make it crystal-clear that our
1149 Nation will not fund hateful propaganda that works to
1150 undermine a pathway to peace in any region of the world or
1151 indoctrinate the next generation of jihadists.

1152 And furthermore, this amendment will finally put Members
1153 on the record as to where they stand in denouncing
1154 antisemitism, Xenophobia, and the idea that Israel is an
1155 apartheid state.

1156 Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record a
1157 statement by President Abbas in which he refers to Israel as
1158 an apartheid state.

1159 And I'd also like to submit for the record a series of
1160 tweets by a member of this committee, Congressman Omar, where
1161 she accuses Israel of being an apartheid state, and a tweet
1162 stating that Israel has hypnotized the world, a phrase
1163 routinely used by extremist groups that spread hateful
1164 rhetoric about Jewish people and the State of Israel.

1165 I think it's important that we recognize what this bill
1166 does and where Members stand on this very important issue.

1167 With that, I yield back.

1168 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the request by the
1169 gentleman is accepted.

1170 [The information follows:]

1171

1172 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1173 Chairman Meeks. Let me, first, recognize myself. I'll
1174 just do this quickly.

1175 I want to say that I support the amendment expanding the
1176 sense of Congress introduced by Representative Pfluger, and I
1177 very much support its passage.

1178 And now, we'll recognize Representative Claudia Tenney
1179 of New York for 5 minutes.

1180 Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
1181 Ranking Member McCaul, and thank you to Mr. Sherman for
1182 introducing the bill in chief.

1183 I would like to speak in support of Representative
1184 Pfluger's amendment to H.R. 2374. Despite widespread calls
1185 for reform, the Palestinian Authority's curriculum continues
1186 to incite hatred of the Jewish people -- with school
1187 textbooks and other learning materials filled with
1188 antisemitism, calls for jihad, rejection of reconciliation,
1189 and the de-legitimatization of the State of Israel.

1190 Palestinian students have long been subjected to these
1191 materials that promote violence and antisemitism -- all at
1192 the expense of the American taxpayer. This must end. As
1193 detailed by Mr. Mast earlier, we saw some examples of what
1194 the curriculum actually holds.

1195 Mr. Pfluger's common-sense amendment rightly makes it
1196 known that the United States will not fund extremist ideology

1197 and hateful propaganda, while also putting Members on the
1198 record to denounce the antisemitism and the absurd notion
1199 that Israel is an apartheid state. Time and again, Members
1200 of Congress, and even some on this very committee, take
1201 action that weakens Israel's security. These actions often
1202 embolden countries that wish to see Israel wiped off the face
1203 of the map, including Iran, which is back in the news again.
1204 When Iran sees Members of Congress in our own body, elected
1205 here in the United States, attack Israel, one of our allies,
1206 Israel's right to self-defense, or advance the propaganda
1207 that somehow Israel is an apartheid state, this perpetuates
1208 the cycle of violence that we continue to see in the region
1209 today.

1210 This is why I strongly support the amendment and I
1211 encourage my colleagues to do the same.

1212 And thank you again to the members for recognizing the
1213 importance of the State of Israel as a great ally in the
1214 Middle East for the United States.

1215 I yield back.

1216 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

1217 I now recognize Representative Brad Sherman for 5
1218 minutes.

1219 Mr. Sherman. I believe this amendment is accurate. I
1220 hope it will continue to provide for universe acceptance of

1221 the underlying bill.

1222 I think all of us would condemn antisemitism; all of us
1223 would condemn Xenophobia. There might be someone who would,
1224 or at least I've met a few people that would, claim that
1225 Israel is an apartheid state, and I want to rebut that I
1226 think extreme conclusion.

1227 We want a two-state solution. That means that there
1228 will be one state for one people, apart from another state
1229 for another people. That is not apartheid. Apartheid was a
1230 vicious system in southern Africa that the entire world
1231 worked to destroy. And to call Israel an apartheid state is
1232 to call for a worldwide effort to destroy Israel.

1233 The fact is that there is a border between Israel and
1234 Egypt. So, the Egyptian people are separated from Israel by
1235 a border. They live apart from Israel in Egypt. That is no
1236 different from what we see in Europe. Nobody has called the
1237 Netherlands an apartheid state because it has a border with
1238 Germany. And the Dutch live predominantly on one side of the
1239 border, and Germans tend to live on the other side of the
1240 border, and they both have different states for different
1241 people. And, of course, there are some Germans living in the
1242 Netherlands and some Dutch living in Germany, and their
1243 rights are respected.

1244 So, to say that those who want a Jewish state living

1245 side-by-side with a Palestinian state are embracing the evils
1246 of apartheid is to say that virtually every international
1247 border constitutes a separateness and apartheid because it
1248 divides people into different countries. And I think that's
1249 an extreme and ridiculous conclusion.

1250 We do want a two-state solution, and that is the
1251 majority sentiment in Israel, and is the official position of
1252 the Israeli government. It's almost the position of the
1253 Palestinian Authority. So, to condemn Israel because it
1254 wants to be a Jewish state should be done right after we
1255 condemn the Netherlands for wanting to be a predominantly
1256 Dutch state.

1257 With that, I yield back.

1258 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

1259 I now recognize Representative Steve Chabot of Ohio for
1260 5 minutes.

1261 Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will not
1262 use the full 5 minutes, nor even most of it, I don't think.

1263 But I do feel very strongly about this matter. And I
1264 want to begin by thanking Mr. Pfluger for his very
1265 constructive amendment. I'm glad he offered this, and I
1266 think, hopefully, all members will support it, because it
1267 makes total sense.

1268 I also want to thank Mr. Sherman and Mr. Zeldin for the

1269 underlying act itself, the Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian
1270 Education Act, which also is very constructive and common-
1271 sense, and should be supported by all members.

1272 It's absolutely critical that the next generation of
1273 Palestinian children are taught that peace with Israel is
1274 possible, instead of indoctrinated into a narrative of hate
1275 and resentment and instability. And that's what,
1276 unfortunately, is in a lot of these books that they use as
1277 education material.

1278 And as a former school teacher myself of the seventh and
1279 eighth grade, to think that there are children that rely upon
1280 that hatred in those books is just appalling. There can
1281 never be peace between the Palestinians and Israel when such
1282 a narrative remains widespread, that there can't possibly be
1283 peace, and worst, if it's widely taught.

1284 Unfortunately, the textbooks developed by the
1285 Palestinian Authority far too frequently espouse such a
1286 narrative and all this propaganda and hatred for Israel, and
1287 being an apartheid state, allegedly, and all of the rest.
1288 It's ludicrous.

1289 And as some of my colleagues have already said, the fact
1290 that there are people, or at least a person on this
1291 committee, who has adopted some of that propaganda and has
1292 espoused it, is very disturbing as well.

1293 And it's beyond absurd that U.N. schools -- U.N.
1294 schools, the United Nations schools -- sometimes are using
1295 these various textbooks as well. That's got to stop.

1296 Today's legislation I believe is an important step
1297 towards stopping this egregious behavior and these egregious
1298 materials, so that we can actually at least have the children
1299 who are being brought up want to have tolerance for each
1300 other, rather than hatred and figure they have to be enemies
1301 for life, will never have peace, if that's the case.

1302 So, again, all those involved in putting this forward,
1303 both the amendment and the underlying legislation, I commend
1304 them. I urge my colleagues to support it, and yield back.

1305 Chairman Meeks. Is there any further debate on the
1306 amendment?

1307 Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on
1308 the Pfluger Amendment No. 180, and we're going to take a vote
1309 by voice. All members please unmute their microphones.

1310 Mr. Vargas. Mr. Chairman?

1311 Chairman Meeks. Mr. Pfluger? Oh, no.

1312 All those in favor, say aye.

1313 All those opposed, say no.

1314 In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it, and the
1315 amendment is agreed to.

1316 Mr. Vargas. Mr. Chairman? Could we have a recorded

1317 vote on this one, please?

1318 Chairman Meeks. A roll call vote is requested.

1319 Pursuant to Committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings
1320 on the amendment shall be postponed.

1321 Are there any other amendments?

1322 Hearing no other amendments, we now move on to the next
1323 measure.

1324 We'll now consider H.R. 4213, the YSEALI Act, with a
1325 Castro amendment in the nature of a substitute designated
1326 108.

1327 Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call
1328 up H.R. 4213, the YSEALI Act, and the clerk will report the
1329 bill.

1330 Ms. Hallman. H.R. 4213, to establish the Young
1331 Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and for other purposes.

1332 Be it enacted --

1333 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of
1334 the bill is dispensed with and the bill shall be considered
1335 as read and open to amendment at any point.

1336 [The bill H.R. 4213 follows:]

1337

1338 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1339 Chairman Meeks. And without objection, the Castro
1340 amendment in the nature of a substitute designated 108,
1341 circulated to members, shall be considered as read and will
1342 be treated as an original text for purposes of amendment.

1343 [The Amendment No. 108 in the nature of a substitute
1344 offered by Mr. Castro follows:]

1345

1346 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1347 Chairman Meeks. And at this time, I recognize myself to
1348 speak briefly on the measure.

1349 I support this bipartisan measure from Representatives
1350 Castro and Tenney which provides statutory authority for the
1351 Department of State's Young Southeast Leaders Initiative, or
1352 YSEALI. This program, which began in 2013, allows young
1353 emerging leaders from Southeast Asia to gain exposure to the
1354 United States. It allows them to develop professional skills
1355 that will enable them to contribute to good governance,
1356 economic development, and regional cooperation on shared
1357 challenges, and strengthen bilateral ties with the United
1358 States.

1359 This program reinforces American soft power and
1360 diplomacy in the best ways -- making it that much easier for
1361 our diplomats in the region and that much less likely that
1362 we'll need to call on the utilization of our military to deal
1363 with crises.

1364 It also provides us an opportunity to connect with
1365 future leaders and entrepreneurs in the region who are going
1366 to be shaping the trajectories of the countries and the
1367 region.

1368 Southeast Asia is absolutely critical for the United
1369 States strategically and economically. And this bill will
1370 bolster cooperation with these nations and facilitate

1371 stronger people-to-people to ties to ensure a free and open
1372 Indo-Pacific organization authorizing and extending this
1373 program, and this is a very smart thing to do, as I witnessed
1374 with a recent trip that I made to Southeast Asia, and talking
1375 to them, where they want to know that we are utilizing our
1376 soft power and that we are engaged in that region.

1377 So, I wholeheartedly support this bipartisan bill and
1378 urge my colleagues to do the same.

1379 Do any other members wish to speak on this measure?

1380 I recognize Representative Joaquin Castro of Texas for 5
1381 minutes.

1382 Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman.

1383 The YSEALI Act is named for the Young Southeast Asian
1384 Leaders Initiative, or YSEALI, and would codify this
1385 important program. I'm glad to lead this bipartisan bill
1386 together with Representative Claudia Tenney.

1387 Since YSEALI launched in 2013, thousands of young people
1388 from Southeast Asia have participated in these programs,
1389 learning best practices to support good governance,
1390 transparency, and accountability. Across the 10 countries of
1391 the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, 58
1392 percent of the population is younger than 35 years old. The
1393 ASEAN youth of today will shape the political and economic
1394 institutions of one of the fastest-growing regions of the

1395 world at the strategically important crossroads of the
1396 Pacific, China, and India. Young leaders' programs like
1397 YSEALI are among the best way that the United States can
1398 reach out to this rising generation.

1399 The committee has previously considered this bill as
1400 part of the COMPETES Act, but I asked for it to be marked up
1401 as a standalone measure because of the importance of YSEALI
1402 and the outcomes from the U.S.-ASEAN Special Summit in May.
1403 There, the United States made a commitment to double the size
1404 of the YSEALI program within three years -- a testament to
1405 the program's effectiveness and demand for its programming
1406 within the region.

1407 The amendment in the nature of a substitute we are
1408 considering today includes an authorization of appropriations
1409 that is consistent with that commitment and is the product of
1410 bipartisan negotiations.

1411 Reporting it favorably will reaffirm that Congress is
1412 invested in Southeast Asia's future and that the United
1413 States is a reliable partner ahead of a next round of summit
1414 diplomacy between the U.S. and ASEAN in November.

1415 I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to
1416 reject any hostile amendments.

1417 Chairman Meeks. Does the gentleman yield back?

1418 Mr. Castro. I yield back.

1419 Chairman Meeks. Any other members wish to speak?

1420 Representative Tenney is recognized for 5 minutes.

1421 Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

1422 I really also would like to speak in support of H.R.

1423 4213, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Act, or

1424 YSEALI. And I thank Representative Castro for his work on

1425 this bipartisan bill and this initiative. And I echo all of

1426 the sentiments on why this is so important, which is why I'm

1427 honored to co-lead this.

1428 I also just want to really mention my thanks and

1429 gratitude to Representative Castro for his continued long-

1430 time support of the Burmese people. It's just that we've

1431 been doing this for years, and I really appreciate your

1432 support and your compassion for these people in this really

1433 important part of the world.

1434 Southeast Asia is a dynamic region of critical

1435 importance to the United States, situated at the crossroads

1436 between Pacific China and India, as my colleague stated. The

1437 10 member states of the ASEAN are a major destination for

1438 U.S. exports and investment, with a combined Gross Domestic

1439 Product of \$3.2 trillion.

1440 The YSEALI program, originally founded in 2013, plays a

1441 critical role in building people-to-people ties between the

1442 United States and this rising generation in the ASEAN

1443 countries. The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy includes building
1444 connections within and beyond the region, underscoring the
1445 importance of YSEALI's work, supporting people-to-people
1446 ties.

1447 Mr. Chairman, I strongly support the passage of this
1448 important bill and look forward to working with my colleagues
1449 on this effort. And I urge everyone to support it. It's
1450 going to be a great bill.

1451 And I thank again Mr. Castro for his support and for
1452 making this a standalone bill and taking it out of the
1453 COMPETES Act.

1454 Again, I thank you, and I yield back.

1455 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

1456 Any further requests to speak on the amendment?

1457 Ms. Titus. Mr. Chairman, it's Dina Titus.

1458 Chairman Meeks. Yes. Ms. Titus is recognized for 5
1459 minutes.

1460 Ms. Titus. Thank you very much.

1461 I'm just pleased to speak in support of this bill, too.
1462 It's a premier program to support networking and develop
1463 leadership skills in this area.

1464 Sixty-five percent of the individuals in ASEAN
1465 countries, plus Timor-Leste, are under the age of 35. So,
1466 this will be a critical tool for attracting and training and

1467 benefitting from these leadership programs for these young
1468 people. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this.

1469 And while we are talking about education programs, if
1470 you would indulge me for just a minute, Mr. Chairman, I'd
1471 like to go back and speak on behalf of the John Lewis Civil
1472 Rights Fellowship Act.

1473 I want to thank you for bringing this legislation and
1474 for all you've done to look for new opportunities and
1475 diversification for getting into the State Department. And I
1476 think this would be one of those mechanisms.

1477 I also thank Representatives Nikema Williams and Nancy
1478 Mace for their leadership on this bill.

1479 You know, John Lewis, who was such a hero for all of us,
1480 would appreciate us continuing his legacy by supporting
1481 efforts to study non-violent civil rights movements abroad.
1482 His work on the civil rights movement is known far and wide
1483 and respected by many people around the world. His long-time
1484 commitment to non-violence and human dignity is something
1485 that inspires countless people and something to aspire to.
1486 This is a dream that makes the world a better place.

1487 This new fellowship within the Fulbright Scholarship
1488 Program would support young scholars studying a history of
1489 non-violent civil rights movements around the world, so we
1490 can have a better understanding of non-violence as a critical

1491 tool for change.

1492 Many people see the United States as an opportunity and
1493 a place to take advantage of educational opportunities and
1494 cultural exchanges offered through the State Department.
1495 However, there are not a whole lot of opportunities in these
1496 programs and we haven't seen the diversification of the State
1497 Department itself to provide new entry points for people to
1498 join.

1499 Yesterday, the State Department released a five-year
1500 Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and
1501 Accessibility to address that problem. And I believe this
1502 legislation for the John Lewis Internship Program or
1503 Scholarship Program really fits with the goals that are
1504 spelled out by Secretary Blinken in this Strategic Plan.

1505 Also, I'd point out that the John and Lillian Miles
1506 Lewis Foundation named this program as a priority and said
1507 that there was no better way to pay tribute to the legacy of
1508 our late, great colleague John Lewis.

1509 So, I support the YSEALI Act as an opportunity for soft
1510 diplomacy and education from both sides. And I also support
1511 the John Lewis Scholarship Act because it does the same
1512 thing, just in a more specialized way. As opposed to
1513 economic leadership, it's knowledge of civil rights and how
1514 that movement can move forward diplomatic and democratic

1515 provisions.

1516 And I yield back.

1517 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

1518 Do any other members wish to speak on this measure?

1519 Hearing no requests, let's move on to amendments.

1520 For what purpose does the Representative from

1521 Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

1522 Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an

1523 amendment at the desk, No. 761.

1524 Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the

1525 amendment.

1526 Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

1527 The clerk will please report the amendment.

1528 Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment No. 761 to the amendment

1529 in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4213.

1530 Page 8, after line --

1531 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of

1532 the amendment will be dispensed with,

1533 [The Amendment No. 761 offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

1534

1535 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1536 Chairman Meeks. And the Representative from
1537 Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes in support of the
1538 amendment.

1539 Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, this amendment simply
1540 prohibits the Secretary of State from including the People's
1541 Republic of China in this program. To me, it's pretty
1542 common-sense. If we're going to authorize this kind of
1543 program with all its purported benefits for the young
1544 Southeast Asian leaders, we shouldn't be providing that
1545 benefit to the PRC, which has destabilized the region to the
1546 detriment of scores of young people. Again, I hardly think
1547 promoting young leaders in the CCP is a prudential cause and
1548 use of taxpayer money or is in the best interest of our
1549 Nation or those nations, not including the CCP.

1550 So, that's the extent of it. And with that, I urge -- I
1551 hope it's not controversial, but I certainly urge my
1552 colleagues to support the amendment.

1553 And I yield back.

1554 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

1555 But I do oppose -- I recognize myself now for 5 minutes
1556 -- and I oppose this amendment because, to me, it's just
1557 completely unnecessary. The Southeast Asian Leaders
1558 Initiative, as it is titled, makes explicit it's open to
1559 countries from Southeast Asia. And last I checked, China is

1560 not in Southeast Asia and there is no danger of it being
1561 included.

1562 Moreover, our partners and allies in the region
1563 constantly tell us that they want us to engage them for their
1564 own sake and do not want to participate in initiatives that
1565 are explicitly anti-China. So, not only would this amendment
1566 have no benefit, but it could also make it politically
1567 difficult with some of our ASEAN countries to want to
1568 participate. Such an outcome could be -- and therefore,
1569 would be in my estimation -- a win for China strategically.

1570 We need to be smart for our diplomacy to be effective
1571 against China. Therefore, I oppose this amendment and urge
1572 my colleagues to do the same.

1573 Is there any further debate on the amendment?

1574 I recognize Mr. Castro from Texas for 5 minutes.

1575 Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman.

1576 I also oppose Mr. Perry's amendment to H.R. 4213, and I
1577 urge my colleagues to do so as well. I believe this
1578 amendment is unnecessary and would actually undermine U.S.-
1579 ASEAN relations.

1580 While the YSEALI program has been focused on Southeast
1581 Asia, as it should be, the 10 ASEAN member states, plus
1582 Timor-Leste, which hopes to join ASEAN, the People's Republic
1583 of China has never, and would never, be a part of the YSEALI

1584 program, which has strived under both Democratic and
1585 Republican administrations.

1586 In my opening remarks, I spoke about why it was so
1587 important we consider this bill as a standalone now at a
1588 critical moment for U.S. diplomacy in Southeast Asia, and why
1589 programs like YSEALI that focus on meeting Southeast Asia's
1590 needs for youth engagement are so important.

1591 Years of persistent diplomacy across multiple
1592 administrations, as well as initiatives like the YSEALI
1593 Caucus, which I co-chair, have tried to demonstrate that we
1594 care about Southeast Asia in its own right, not just because
1595 of strategic competition with others in the region. I think
1596 if we were to adopt this amendment, it would confuse that
1597 critical message and undermine U.S. influence in Southeast
1598 Asia.

1599 For these reasons, I urge my colleagues not to support
1600 this amendment.

1601 Chairman Meeks. Any further requests to speak?

1602 Ms. Tenney is recognized for 5 minutes.

1603 Ms. Tenney. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just I want to yield my
1604 time to the author of the amendment for a clarification, if I
1605 may.

1606 Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1607 In the world that we live in where everything, like

1608 literally everything, is being redefined, I just want to
1609 clarify that in the bill as it currently stands it's the
1610 Secretary of State, the Secretary, that person themselves will
1611 determine who's in this organization.

1612 So, look, I'm not opposed to the bill at all. I think
1613 it's probably a pretty good deal. But I think it's important
1614 that Congress make the rules, Congress decide, the
1615 representatives of the American people decide who's going to
1616 be involved in this organization, who's going to receive
1617 taxpayer funds and who does not.

1618 The bill explicitly states that the Secretary will
1619 decide, which is why I think the amendment should explicitly
1620 state that China shouldn't be included. China calls the
1621 United States its enemy, the CCP. Why would we allow,
1622 potentially allow, a Secretary of State sympathetic to the
1623 needs of China, or under the influence of China, to at some
1624 point decide that the CCP should be -- they're already buying
1625 up land; they're stealing our property. I can go through the
1626 list of infractions and egregious activity that the Communist
1627 Party commits against the United States of America and,
1628 particularly, in the West in general.

1629 Look, the road to Hades is paved with good intentions,
1630 and I think the intentions of this bill, and the makers of
1631 this bill, is good. But I don't know why the legislative

1632 branch would cede its authority to the executive branch so
1633 blatantly. I mean, it says right in the bill who's going to
1634 decide.

1635 And, you know, look, in a general purpose, I'm okay with
1636 that, except for the Communist Party of China. And if they
1637 decide that, all of a sudden, they've seen the light and they
1638 want to let Hong Kong reestablish itself as a more democratic
1639 enclave, if they want to abandon their totalitarian communist
1640 activities, if they want to abandon their hegemonic activity
1641 around the globe, and their desire to be the preeminent force
1642 around the globe and impose their will on everybody, then I
1643 think we should revisit it, but that's not where we are.

1644 We are where we are at this moment, and if we fail to
1645 recognize this -- look, I hear what you're saying; like they
1646 don't -- these other agencies, these other countries don't
1647 want to have to pick and choose. Mr. Chairman, we're going
1648 to have to decide whether we're for ourselves as a country or
1649 we're not, and I think this is a perfect opportunity.

1650 Look, if you all want to vote in favor of China, God
1651 bless you; I do not. I represent the American people, and
1652 I'll be darn if my votes are going to go for taxpayer money
1653 to go fund the Communist Party of China, who will use it to
1654 continue their egregious activities against us. And at some
1655 point, you know, look, it's no mystery that they want to

1656 eclipse the United States as the preeminent and dominant
1657 force on the planet.

1658 The communist party, and communism in general, is not a
1659 force for good. It is responsible for the countless
1660 unfavorable, unpleasant loss of lives and misery for
1661 centuries -- well, not for centuries -- for decades around
1662 the globe. I don't know how we in good faith -- again, with
1663 good intentions -- can stand for that.

1664 I think this is an easy amendment, and I think we're
1665 making way too much of it. I didn't write the bill. I might
1666 not have put what's in the bill in the bill, but since it is
1667 in the bill, I think it's important that we clarify who's
1668 involved and who's not. Because if we don't clarify it,
1669 somebody else is going to, and we're going to have given them
1670 carte blanche to do it. And I'm not sure how you're going to
1671 explain to your constituents that you said it was okay to
1672 give their money to the people that would cut our throats and
1673 abandon our way of life in this country for theirs in that
1674 country.

1675 So, I thank the gentlelady. I yield back the balance of
1676 the time to her, and I appreciate the sentiments.

1677 Chairman Meeks. Does the gentlelady yield back the
1678 balance of the time?

1679 Ms. Tenney. Yield back.

1680 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

1681 Are there any further requests to speak on the
1682 amendment?

1683 Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on
1684 the amendment, Perry 761. We're going to take a vote by
1685 voice. All members, please unmute your microphone.

1686 All those in favor, say aye.

1687 All those opposed, no.

1688 In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it.

1689 Mr. Vargas. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

1690 Chairman Meeks. A roll call vote is requested.

1691 Pursuant to committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings on
1692 the amendment shall be postponed.

1693 Are there other amendments?

1694 Hearing no other amendments, we now move on to the next
1695 measure.

1696 We now consider H.R. 8153, the Indo-Pacific Engagement
1697 Act. Pursuant to notice, and for purpose of markup, I now
1698 call up H.R. 8153, and the clerk shall report the measure.

1699 Ms. Hallman. H.R. 8153, to support diplomatic and
1700 development resourcing to the Indo-Pacific, and for other
1701 reasons.

1702 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of
1703 the bill is dispensed with, and the measure shall be

1704 considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

1705 [The Bill H.R. 8153 follows:]

1706

1707 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1708 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize myself to speak briefly
1709 on this measure.

1710 I support this legislation because it will help align
1711 the United States efforts in the Indo-Pacific with resources
1712 and help demonstrate to the other countries of the Indo-
1713 Pacific that the United States remains engaged in the region,
1714 not for the short term, but for the long term, whether we are
1715 referencing the pivot or the rebalance to Asia, or the Indo-
1716 Pacific strategy.

1717 So, the intent and the thrust of U.S. foreign policy is
1718 clear. We need to deepen our engagement with the presence in
1719 this vibrant and populous region which is home to half of the
1720 world's people, accounts for 60 percent of global GDP, and
1721 includes critical U.S. allies and partners.

1722 While give credit to the last three Presidents for
1723 focusing on this critical region, our resourcing does not
1724 sufficiently reflect the region's strategic importance to the
1725 United States national security interests. This legislation
1726 will, ideally, serve as the bases for the administration to
1727 match up resources with policy priorities and further the
1728 objectives outlined in our Interim National Security
1729 Strategic Guidance. In other words, in the neighborhood I
1730 grew up in, we're going to put our money where our mouth is.

1731 The 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy and the State-USAID Joint

1732 Strategic Plan is putting our money where our mouth is. We
1733 need to empower the State Department bureaucracy to outline
1734 what resources are necessary in this critical region, so that
1735 Congress can play a more informed oversight role and ensure
1736 that our policies in the Indo-Pacific are properly resourced.

1737 So, I want to thank Mr. Bera and Mr. Chabot for working
1738 on this timely piece of legislation, and I urge all of my
1739 colleagues to support this measure.

1740 And I now recognize -- any other members wish to speak
1741 on this measure?

1742 Mr. Bera. Mr. Chairman?

1743 Chairman Meeks. I recognize Chairman Ami Bera for 5
1744 minutes.

1745 Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1746 As the chairman stated, the Indo-Pacific is home to
1747 approximately 60 percent of the world's population. It's
1748 also home to three of the largest global economies and many
1749 of the most important transit points for global commerce.
1750 And yet, the region remains significantly under-resourced in
1751 U.S. development and diplomacy dollars. Let me just offer a
1752 few examples from this year's budget request.

1753 In bilateral economic assistance, the Indo-Pacific made
1754 up just 13 percent of the total request. In security
1755 assistance, foreign military financing to the region is just

1756 3 percent of the global total. In diplomatic presence, we
1757 lack sufficient diplomatic personnel and facilities in key
1758 parts of the region, like the Pacific Islands, while the
1759 People's Republic of China rapidly expands its presence in
1760 the various activities in those same places.

1761 The under-resourcing of the Indo-Pacific has been a
1762 problem for years. It's not unique to one administration,
1763 but it must change. That's my friend and the ranking member
1764 of the Asian Subcommittee, Steve Chabot, and I introduced the
1765 Indo-Pacific Engagement Act.

1766 The bill will help address this resource problem by
1767 creating more transparency around the diplomatic and
1768 development resources needed in the region. Our bill directs
1769 the senior leaders of U.S. Asia policy at the State
1770 Department and USAID to provide an independent cost
1771 assessment for fulfilling the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy.
1772 The bill directs those leaders -- the Assistant Secretaries
1773 of State for East Asia and the Pacific and for South and
1774 Central Asia, and the Assistant Administrator for Asia -- to
1775 make their assessment public. It also requires them to
1776 submit an update to the assessment every year.

1777 Our legislation is modeled off the success that the
1778 Armed Service Committee has had a few years ago through a
1779 report they required of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. They

1780 have drawn a lot of attention to the defense resources needed
1781 in the region with notable changes in the annual defense
1782 appropriations specific to the region each year.

1783 That's why we need to do the same for diplomatic and
1784 development resources. It will make our presence in the
1785 region stronger. It will help us compete with the PRC, and
1786 it's the right thing to do to help strengthen the region.

1787 So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I urge all members to
1788 support this bill, and I yield back.

1789 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

1790 Any further requests to speak on this bill?

1791 Hearing no further requests, let's move on to
1792 amendments.

1793 For what purpose does the Representative from
1794 Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

1795 Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to decide whether I
1796 offer amendments or not, depending on what the timeframe is
1797 for votes. Are we going to vote on the bills and the
1798 amendments immediately following these proceedings --

1799 Chairman Meeks. No.

1800 Mr. Perry. -- or are we going to --

1801 Chairman Meeks. I'm reserving votes until tomorrow
1802 morning.

1803 Mr. Perry. Until tomorrow morning? All right. Then, I

1804 do have an amendment at the desk, Mr. Chairman. It's No.
1805 760.

1806 Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the
1807 amendment.

1808 Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

1809 The clerk will please report the amendment.

1810 Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment No. 760 to H.R. 8153.

1811 Page --

1812 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of
1813 the amendment will be dispensed with.

1814 [The Amendment No. 760 offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

1815

1816 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1817 Chairman Meeks. And the Representative from
1818 Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

1819 Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1820 I understand the bill sponsor's concern over under- or
1821 misallocation of resources; I really do. On a similar note,
1822 I agree that we must ensure our actions in the Indo-Pacific
1823 reflect reality, especially and most importantly, as it
1824 relates to countering the malign influence of the PRC.

1825 All this being said, this amendment seeks to really get
1826 to the root of the resources necessary in a way that should
1827 be consistent with the bill sponsor's policy objectives by
1828 separating the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. It should
1829 be abundantly clear that the current administration will stop
1830 at nothing, while sacrificing our national security and
1831 energy independence to promote supposedly clean energy and,
1832 essentially, force other countries in a colonial style into
1833 joining us on our paternalistic quest to reach BlackRock-
1834 backed emission goals.

1835 Agree or not with that sentiment -- and I know many
1836 won't -- but I know that, or I'd like to hope that, folks
1837 would agree that including unrelated climate change
1838 activities into the resource assessment required by this bill
1839 would obfuscate the true cost of this engagement. And so,
1840 this amendment seeks to just remove that portion of it, so

1841 that we can see what the actual cost of the engagement is.

1842 So, I would urge support, and I yield the balance.

1843 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance.

1844 I now recognize myself, and I oppose the amendment, as
1845 this amendment, clearly, would disrupt and undermine the
1846 independent assessment that this report calls for to
1847 adequately fund our Indo-Pacific policy.

1848 You know, in a democracy -- and it cuts both ways --
1849 elections are important. Elections matter. You know, when
1850 the prior administration was in, they did things that I might
1851 not have wanted, but elections matter and they won.

1852 In this instance, President Biden won the presidential
1853 election, and he has the right under our Constitution to
1854 chart the foreign policy course he chooses. In his Indo-
1855 Pacific Strategy, he has, rightly in my mind, identified that
1856 climate change is -- and I think most folks will agree --
1857 that climate change, with all that we've seen taking place
1858 around the world today, it is a critical challenge,
1859 particularly in this region.

1860 So, just look at what's taking place in the Pacific
1861 Islands or Singapore or Bangladesh, or dozens of other
1862 partners that we have in the region. They are actively
1863 asking for help with climate change and calling for United
1864 States leadership. And guess what? If we choose not to

1865 offer it, China will. So, trying to strip climate out of
1866 this report would only undermine what we're trying to do --
1867 to get more resources to the Indo-Pacific.

1868 So, I oppose this amendment, and I urge all of my
1869 colleagues to do the same.

1870 Any further debate on the amendment?

1871 Mr. Bera. Mr. Chairman?

1872 Chairman Meeks. Mr. Bera is recognized for 5 minutes.

1873 Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1874 I also oppose this amendment proposed by my colleague,
1875 which, as the chairman said, would only serve to weaken the
1876 United States' ability to compete effectively with the
1877 People's Republic of China.

1878 Representative Perry offered this amendment, but I also
1879 note he shares my view that one of the most significant
1880 challenges the United States faces in the 21st century is the
1881 strategic competition from China. I believe he and I also
1882 agree that, to compete effectively, the United States must
1883 put a significant portion of our resources towards countering
1884 Beijing's malign influence in the Indo-Pacific.

1885 Yet, when it comes to leveraging a unique U.S. advantage
1886 in competition with Beijing, our ability to help the Indo-
1887 Pacific nations combat a threat that they themselves identify
1888 as existential, this amendment would give up that advantage.

1889 So, I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to
1890 oppose this amendment. If this amendment were adopted, it
1891 would undercut the United States' ability to address a clear
1892 and present danger to the livelihoods of our friends in the
1893 Indo-Pacific. It would undercut our ability to address one
1894 of the challenges our friends in the region care about most.
1895 In short, this amendment would hand the win to Beijing.

1896 And with that, I'll yield back.

1897 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

1898 Any further requests to speak on the amendment?

1899 Hearing no further requests to speak on the amendment,
1900 Perry 760, we're going to take a vote by voice. All members,
1901 please unmute your microphones.

1902 All those in favor, say aye.

1903 All those opposed, say no.

1904 In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it, and the
1905 amendment is not agreed to.

1906 Are there any further --

1907 Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I've got an amendment at the
1908 desk, No. 764.

1909 Chairman Meeks. Will the clerk please distribute the
1910 amendment? Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?
1911 The clerk will please report the amendment.

1912 Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 764 to H.R. 8153,

1913 Page 7 --

1914 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of
1915 the amendment will be dispensed with. The representative of
1916 Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for five minutes
1917 to support the amendment. Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr.
1918 Chairman. This amendment ensures the activities of the
1919 special climate envoy, John Kerry, including his travel, are
1920 not counted toward the resources needed for the
1921 administration's Indo-Pacific engagement.

1922 The special envoy has made clear that the administration
1923 is willing to sacrifice America's principles and our
1924 prosperity to further its green Utopian dreams. For example,
1925 Secretary Kerry belittled the genocide of Uyghurs and other
1926 minorities in East Turkistan as differences on human rights
1927 that do not have to get in the way of something that is as
1928 critical as dealing with climate.

1929 Let's think about that. That is nearly -- that is
1930 unbelievable. At the same time the special envoy, the
1931 administration, and the majority are promoting technologies
1932 made with slave labor in East Turkistan where roughly half of
1933 the world's supply of polysilicon, an essential ingredient in
1934 solar panels, is produced. Meanwhile, the special envoy's
1935 attempts to convince the Chinese to cooperate on climate
1936 change have failed by any conceivable metric.

1937 As of July, China has proposed permitting or begun
1938 construction on 174 new coal mines or coal mine expansion
1939 projects capable of producing 596 million metric tons per
1940 year once completed. It doesn't sound like, you know, they
1941 are very committed. They might say it. It doesn't sound
1942 like they are too committed to me. Coal accounted for nearly
1943 64 percent of China's power generation in 2021.

1944 Since China signed the Paris Agreement, its coal fired
1945 capacity has increased, increased, by 185 gigawatts. For
1946 reference, the entire U.S. operational coal capacity was
1947 209.6 gigawatts at the beginning of this year. And I will
1948 remind everybody, California is out there telling people, you
1949 know, plug in your electric vehicle they are going to force
1950 you to make. Meanwhile, they are telling you not to plug it
1951 in because we don't have the power.

1952 We have the power. We just refuse to make it. We
1953 refuse to give it to you. This about control, ladies and
1954 gentlemen. It is about anything but that. And
1955 unfortunately, it is going to be about the control from the
1956 Communist Party.

1957 While we should not be demonizing coal or the expansion
1958 of electrical access, this is a striking, striking example of
1959 the special envoy's failure to accomplish the cooperation
1960 with the Chinese. By sacrificing America's values and still

1961 failing to effectuate the changes he sought, Special Envoy
1962 Kerry's work has been to the detriment of the U.S. Indo-
1963 Pacific engagement.

1964 The administration should not get credit for his
1965 stunning failure. Well, actually, I think they actually
1966 should get credit for the failure. But they actually should
1967 wake up to the reality that the Chinese are using the Western
1968 elite's obsession, obsession, with climate to economically
1969 neuter the United States of America and the Western world.

1970 I am not going to even get into his private travel on
1971 his jet, you know, while he is out there telling us, I guess
1972 we got to walk to work or ride a bike or something like that.

1973 But anyhow, look, I urge support of the amendment,
1974 obviously, and I yield the balance.

1975 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance. I
1976 now recognize myself for five minutes, and I'll take my two
1977 minutes, of course. I just want to let everyone know that I
1978 oppose this amendment.

1979 Mr. Perry's amendment sounds to me basically it is
1980 political in nature. And it is really designed to attack a
1981 sitting U.S. official and an individual who I know is a
1982 strong public servant, who has served this country very well
1983 from the time that he was in the military on.

1984 Moreover, you know, what we are really trying to do and

1985 what we are trying to do here is resourcing our Indo-Pacific
1986 strategy. The report is about the Indo-Pacific, and it would
1987 not implicate or delve into the very specific matter that
1988 this amendment refers to.

1989 It is thoroughly unnecessary, and it is a distraction.
1990 It's a distraction from the important effort that this
1991 bipartisan bill is trying to advance. Therefore, I strongly
1992 oppose this amendment. Is there any further debate on the
1993 amendment?

1994 Mr. Chabot, I recognize you for five minutes.

1995 Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want to
1996 voice my support for the Perry amendment. I think it is well
1997 written, well said. And even though I didn't hear it all,
1998 knowing it was coming from Mr. Perry, I knew it would be well
1999 said.

2000 But he's absolutely right. Kerry has gone way
2001 overboard, and it is an obsession. It's a religion how far
2002 they want to go on this stuff. And unfortunately, we are
2003 paying a price right now. And I am afraid they would sell us
2004 down the river to get -- and unfortunately, PRC knows this.

2005 So I think this is a good amendment, and I certainly
2006 support it although I am quite sure it won't pass this
2007 committee under its current makeup but probably would in
2008 about two months from now -- well, we don't take over until

2009 January. That is right. We don't know that.

2010 Chairman Meeks. Maybe you won't take over at all.

2011 Mr. Chabot. We will see, Mr. Chairman. You are
2012 certainly the chairman of this committee right now. And you
2013 are doing a pretty fine job of that I got to say as well.

2014 But I also want to voice my support of this important
2015 legislation, the underlying legislation, the Indo-Pacific
2016 Engagement Act, which my good friend, Chairman Bera and I
2017 introduced to get a better understanding of the needs from
2018 the State Department and USAID what they face in the Indo-
2019 Pacific.

2020 Mr. Chairman, we are locked in a generational struggle,
2021 really it's a multi-generational struggle, with the Chinese
2022 Communist party, which will determine whether the world is
2023 safe for democracy, literally, or whether we will succumb to
2024 Communist tyranny and government control over our lives and
2025 over our economy and the lives and economies of people all
2026 across this globe.

2027 We didn't ask for this challenge. And I dare say nobody
2028 here wants it, but we must win. And we aren't going to
2029 outcompete China on a shoestring budget. Unfortunately,
2030 while many people talk as if China is 10 feet tall, most of
2031 Washington acts like China is about 2 feet tall.

2032 For instance, while the Indo-Pacific has over half of

2033 the world's population, think of that half of the world's
2034 population in the Indo-Pacific, the region only accounts for
2035 11 percent of our total international affairs budget. Think
2036 of that, half the world. And I think most people would agree
2037 because of our confrontation, our competition, on our
2038 adversary the PRC, some would call it an enemy, that this is
2039 our greatest challenge across the globe at least yet only 11
2040 percent of the foreign affairs international budget goes
2041 there.

2042 When it comes to Asia, we have simply failed to put our
2043 money where our mouth is. And this is a bipartisan problem
2044 as that number hasn't changed that much over the last three
2045 administrations. So we are talking both Republican and
2046 Democratic administrations.

2047 Speak loudly and carry a small stick unfortunately seems
2048 to be this administration's policy for China right now. To
2049 help remedy this, Ami's bill and mine, the Indo-Pacific
2050 Engagement Act, would require the State Department to tell
2051 us what resources we need to be spending in the Indo-Pacific
2052 independent of the Presidential budget process. This will
2053 help us understand what it truly takes to counter China.

2054 This bill gives Congress the tools we need to better
2055 evaluate where we should be spending increasingly scarce
2056 taxpayer dollars. Now I'm saying increasingly scarce, but I

2057 also have to say this administration and their cohorts in the
2058 Congress also have been spending money like there is no
2059 tomorrow, like money grows on trees, and the debt has
2060 continued to rise as a result of that.

2061 And that spending is also -- you know, we're seeing
2062 inflation. I know some of my colleagues on the other side
2063 were hoping it was going to come down. Well, unfortunately
2064 it went up. Despite their party yesterday, the inflation
2065 went up. And the spending is what is causing that inflation,
2066 that plus the fact that we used to be energy independent, and
2067 we are no longer energy independent because we have
2068 discouraged energy production in this country rather than
2069 encouraged it.

2070 But that being aside, the bill itself is bipartisan.
2071 And I want to commend Ami Bera for his hard work on this and
2072 his ideas and his leadership because I think he has done a
2073 very good job also. So with that, I urge my colleagues to
2074 support this legislation as well as the Perry amendment, and
2075 I yield back.

2076 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
2077 recognize Representative Ami Bera of California. Mr. Bera.
2078 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my good friend and
2079 colleague from Ohio for those kind words. His staff has been
2080 great to work with this in a bipartisan way, and we look

2081 forward to continuing to work, as I say generally, in January
2082 of 2023.

2083 Let me speak to the amendment by my other good friend
2084 from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry. I oppose this amendment and
2085 here is why. One of the most important elements of U.S.
2086 diplomacy is actually showing up in person. We see this very
2087 acutely in the Pacific Islands where the Chinese are present.
2088 We need to have a big presence there, and nothing can fully
2089 replace direct face-to-face, people-to-people engagement.

2090 That is why having the special presidential envoy for
2091 climate travel to the region is incredibly important because
2092 it demonstrates the U.S. commitment and willingness to work
2093 with our allies and partners on this existential threat. And
2094 this threat is nowhere greater than in our Pacific Island
2095 allies. And, you know, having the envoy being able to travel
2096 is incredibly important.

2097 So I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment. And
2098 with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

2099 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Any further
2100 debate on this amendment? Hearing no further request to
2101 speak, the question is on the amendment, Perry Number 764.
2102 And we are going to take a vote by voice. So I'm asking all
2103 members to unmute your microphones.

2104 And all those that are in favor say aye.

2105 All those opposed no.

2106 In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it.

2107 Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

2108 Chairman Meeks. A roll call vote is requested pursuant

2109 to Committee Rule 4(a)(2). Further proceedings on the

2110 amendment shall be postponed. Are there any other

2111 amendments? Hearing no further amendments, we will now move

2112 on to the next measure.

2113 We now consider H. Res. 1240, requesting the President

2114 and directing the Secretary of State to transmit to the House

2115 of Representatives copies of all documents in their

2116 possession referring to or relating to certain aspects of the

2117 United States withdrawal from Afghanistan. Pursuant to

2118 notice for purpose of markup, I now call up H. Res. 1240.

2119 [The H. Res. 1240 follows:]

2120

2121 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2122 Chairman Meeks. And the clerk will report the
2123 resolution. Ms. Hallman. House Resolution 1240,
2124 requesting the President and directing the Secretary of State
2125 --

2126 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of
2127 the resolution is dispensed with and the measure shall be
2128 considered as read and open to amendment at any point. And
2129 at this time, I recognize myself to speak on the measure.

2130 First, I want to say thank you to ranking member for
2131 this resolution. But this measure unfortunately, as I look
2132 at it, seems to be just a fishing expedition and has been
2133 since the withdrawal occurred last August.

2134 I believe that oversight related towards U.S. policy on
2135 Afghanistan is important, and we have had this conversation.
2136 But I don't believe it can be done in a partisan manner. The
2137 withdrawal from Afghanistan cannot be, and I've said this
2138 consistently over and over again, cannot be effectively
2139 reviewed by simply looking at 20 days in August and not the
2140 20 years in Afghanistan.

2141 And it must also include, of course, the evaluation of
2142 former President Donald Trump's DOHA deal, which led to that
2143 withdrawal, a deal which excluded the Afghan government, a
2144 deal that required the U.S. to withdraw all troops, a deal
2145 which forced the Afghan government to release 5,000 Taliban

2146 prisoners, fundamentally altering the power structures in the
2147 country.

2148 So no evaluation of the withdrawal is credible unless it
2149 also includes a real evaluation of the deal that led to those
2150 days in August. This request for information is entirely
2151 political in nature, requesting documents solely based on who
2152 was in office despite the impact the previous
2153 administration's policies had on administrations that
2154 followed.

2155 This document request, again, it's a fishing expedition
2156 that fails to account for the information the administration
2157 has regularly provided to this committee and continues to
2158 provide to this committee and to this Congress.

2159 The administration has had more than 150 engagements
2160 with members of Congress since the August withdrawal, has
2161 answered numerous requests for information on many of the
2162 subjects in the resolution, and has been willing to do so,
2163 including in a briefing this committee held in June with five
2164 senior State Department officials in which many of the
2165 measure's co-sponsors failed to attend.

2166 So I still know -- there is a report that we are waiting
2167 -- the administration will be releasing. I still think that
2168 there are ways that we can get that. I think that it is
2169 important for us to work in a bipartisan way so that we can

2170 evaluate Afghanistan and the withdrawal in its entirety.
2171 That is what oversight is. That is what we have been doing
2172 and will continue to do. And thereby I strongly oppose this
2173 measure and urge that my colleagues join me in voting to
2174 report it adversely.

2175 I now recognize my friend on this one, I know we
2176 disagree, but Ranking Member Michael McCaul. Mr. McCaul.
2177 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, you know, our relationship is
2178 always agree to disagree and work civilly together and that
2179 is what I fully intend to do here today.

2180 But I do disagree. I think this committee has
2181 jurisdiction over this. And we have to exercise that
2182 jurisdiction of oversight. And I don't think we've had one
2183 document produced to this committee. And now the
2184 administration is not even working with the SIGAR, the
2185 Inspector General. And they certainly didn't work with me
2186 when we conducted this report on the strategy failures,
2187 strategic failure.

2188 But over a year ago, we did really watch in horror as
2189 the 20 years of blood, sweat, and tears of the United States
2190 and NATO came crumbling down in Afghanistan almost overnight.
2191 And I think that was shared on both sides of the aisle.

2192 I believe in spite of DOHA, which is a conditions based
2193 agreement, this decision to unconditionally withdraw led to

2194 the failure. In May of 2021, Ambassador Crocker and I warned
2195 them it is very likely the Taliban will try to take control
2196 of the country. And we strongly urged President Biden to
2197 urgently establish a plan to protect U.S. national security
2198 and bring our Afghan partners and allies home or at least to
2199 safety.

2200 Unfortunately, we now know the State Department and SC
2201 did very little to prepare. The IC warned us. The
2202 Department of Defense warned us. But the State Department
2203 and the White House seemed to be in a different time and
2204 space.

2205 At the time the country fell, only 15 consular officers
2206 were in the country. One week into the evacuation, that
2207 number only rose to 36. The administration waited until the
2208 end of July to begin evacuating Afghan allies who fought
2209 alongside our troops.

2210 Because of this delay, only 1,962 SIV applicants and
2211 their families were evacuated before the country fell. And
2212 now we have almost 100,000 left behind. No one left behind
2213 is what we talked about. We told them we would protect them,
2214 and they trusted us. And we left them behind to the mercy of
2215 the Taliban.

2216 And the reporting I am getting is horrific, and only 25
2217 percent of the women got out. And Americans were left

2218 behind. The request for military assistance and planning for
2219 an evacuation really didn't even come until August 11, four
2220 days before the Taliban would encircle the City of Kabul.

2221 The ambassador to Afghanistan, Ross Wilson, took a
2222 vacation at that time, the same time that General Miller, the
2223 U.S. commander on the ground in Afghanistan, was warning of
2224 the rapid loss of district centers.

2225 They told us when they pulled the air power out, when we
2226 do, the country would fall. And then President Ghani left,
2227 like a coward, unlike President Zelensky in Ukraine. That
2228 was also when the United States military officially left
2229 Bagram Air Base, which we know conducted ISR capabilities in
2230 Russia, China, and Iran.

2231 And as a result of this failure, the emergency
2232 evacuation that followed forced tens of thousands of people
2233 to flee to the one remaining place with U.S. troops, and that
2234 would be HKIA or the Kabul Airport. And then for 15 horrific
2235 days, we watched as Americans and Afghans alike desperately
2236 tried to get inside the gates and on the plane for freedom,
2237 some even grabbing onto the wheels of the airplane.

2238 But the chaos both outside and inside the gate made it
2239 extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get inside. As a
2240 result, outside groups, composed of veterans, journalists,
2241 congressional offices, and even active military duty and

2242 intelligence officers banded together to help people they had
2243 worked alongside for years and then the unthinkable happened.

2244 Because we had to put the Taliban in charge of security
2245 around the perimeter of HKIA and in charge of the evacuation,
2246 an ISIS-K terrorist was able to get close enough to the
2247 airport to detonate a bomb that killed 13 U.S. service
2248 members and more than 160 Afghans and injured another 45 U.S.
2249 service members and countless other Afghans. It was the
2250 deadliest day in Afghanistan since 2011.

2251 He was able to get that close because, again, we were
2252 relying upon the Taliban to provide security at the airport.
2253 And we learned later that the administration was offered a
2254 chance to secure the city ourselves. But the offer was sent
2255 to the White House, and the State Department ignored that
2256 request and declined it.

2257 And one year the State Department has confirmed that
2258 more than 800 Americans have been evacuated since the
2259 departure and recently told us that another 200 still remain
2260 there.

2261 The American people, quite honestly Mr. Chairman, just
2262 deserve answers as to how this catastrophic event happened.
2263 But the State Department has ignored or denied every attempt
2264 that I have made. Many of us on both sides of the aisle
2265 fought together to urge the administration to evacuate our

2266 partners, Afghan partners, because it was the right thing to
2267 do.

2268 During evacuation, we worked together to help people get
2269 out of the country and into safety relying on outside
2270 veterans groups. It was almost like a Schindler's List. If
2271 you're on the list, you get out. If you're not, you don't.
2272 And we mourned the deaths of the service members.

2273 And I think getting these answers is important. And as
2274 I close, Mr. Chairman, you know, I think this is a legitimate
2275 exercise. And, you know, when the President said there was
2276 going to be no circumstance where you see people lifted off
2277 the roof of an embassy like in Vietnam, that's exactly what
2278 we saw.

2279 So I don't know what was going on in the White House,
2280 but I think the American people deserve to know the truth,
2281 and I yield back.

2282 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. I
2283 now recognize Representative Tim Burchett of Tennessee for
2284 five minutes. Mr. Burchett. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
2285 Ranking Member. I'd like to express my strong support for
2286 Mr. McCaul's resolution, calling for the President and the
2287 Secretary of State to provide Congress with all the documents
2288 related to this botched withdrawal from Afghanistan.

2289 I think it's crazy that this administration has refused

2290 to provide Congress with these documents for over a year.
2291 You know, somebody that ran for office on transparency has
2292 failed to do so greatly.

2293 It's also crazy to me that this committee is not
2294 exercising its proper oversight of the State Department given
2295 this abject failure. To me this means that these documents
2296 in question disprove Secretary Blinken and the
2297 administration's claim that they planned for every
2298 contingency. They obviously did not.

2299 And folks need to know why this administration waited
2300 until August 14 to begin making decisions about evacuations,
2301 and why at the height of these evacuations only 36 consular
2302 officials were on the ground, and why the administration
2303 ignored an offer from Guam to serve as an interim processing
2304 location for the SIVs. Furthermore, why was the Taliban's
2305 offer to give the U.S. more control of Kabul's security
2306 during the evacuation turned down?

2307 I could go on, but because of these policy failures, a
2308 young man whose family lives in my district, who I know very
2309 well, Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss, and 12 others perished
2310 needlessly, Americans, fighting men and women, in addition to
2311 the scores upon scores of dead Afghans.

2312 The American people deserve to know how the
2313 administration bungled this so badly, and they should feel

2314 the heat if they continue this cover-up. Mr. Chairman, I
2315 yield back. Thank you.

2316 Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now
2317 recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey for five
2318 minutes. Mr. Smith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
2319 Chairman, I strongly support Ranking Member McCaul's
2320 resolution of inquiry, of which I am a co-sponsor, and for
2321 America's egregiously flawed retreat from Afghanistan.

2322 We abandoned American citizens. We trained our allies
2323 who fought alongside and emboldened their enemies from China
2324 to Russia to Iran to North Korea. As a matter of fact,
2325 parenthetically, I read the Chinese media all the time, in
2326 English, of course, and they are constantly telling the
2327 people of Taiwan don't expect the Americans to have your
2328 back. They write editorial after editorial. Just look what
2329 the Americans did in Afghanistan. They left their own people
2330 behind, and they left their allies.

2331 Parenthetically as well, I remember going to the joint
2332 base to meet a number of the incoming refugees. And I was
2333 kind of shocked when I learned that they had a huge gap when
2334 it came to translators at the base. They couldn't talk to
2335 the people in the way that they would like. Well, we left
2336 translators behind as well. They weren't on the planes to a
2337 large extent.

2338 Mr. Chairman, there needs to be robust accountability.
2339 And this is the first step in the process. Last year at a
2340 hearing before this committee, I asked Secretary of State
2341 Blinken why President Biden made misleading statements about
2342 the strength of the Afghan Armed Forces and why in a July
2343 2021 phone call to then President Ghani, President Biden
2344 encouraged Ghani to, whether it's true or not, project a
2345 different picture about the Taliban's battlefield successes.

2346 To this day, we have received, and I was told, no answer
2347 because it was a leaked phone call by the media. The media
2348 are the ones that got this out. To this day, we have
2349 received no answers from the administration on this apparent
2350 attempt by our President to mislead the public. And why
2351 wouldn't the Americans themselves still in Afghanistan at
2352 that particular point not say, look, he's talking about how
2353 strong they are and made, again, a misleading perspective
2354 about the Taliban advancement.

2355 As our House Foreign Affairs Republican Report, A
2356 Strategic Failure, finds the Biden administration failed to
2357 plan for an orderly withdrawal from Afghanistan, both
2358 consigning millions of Afghans and thousands of American
2359 citizens to unspeakable, cruelty, violence, terrorism, and
2360 egregious abuse of women at the hands of the Taliban and
2361 ISIS.

2362 Again, we have this report. We need, the American
2363 people need, this information, and there has been no
2364 accountability.

2365 From the start, I've also called attention to the
2366 failure to properly vet Afghan refugees, many of whom we have
2367 no idea how we can get them into the path because the
2368 database has not been available. But even when we had such
2369 information, we didn't do the job that they were touting that
2370 they were getting accomplished.

2371 Indeed, in February of 2022, the DoD Inspector General
2372 noted U.S. agencies did not use all available data in vetting
2373 evacuees from Afghanistan. This failure now followed, 50
2374 Afghan personnel into the U.S. with information in the DoD
2375 records that would indicate potentially significant security
2376 concerns, posing a direct threat to the United States
2377 homeland.

2378 Mr. Chairman, this is unacceptable. The American people
2379 deserve answers. This resolution, I think, is a great start
2380 to getting a full accountability. And I yield back the
2381 balance of my time.

2382 Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now
2383 recognize Representative Mark Green of Tennessee for five
2384 minutes. Mr. Green. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am glad
2385 to see this important oversight measure make it into today's

2386 markup schedule. H. Resolution 1240 is essential for the
2387 work of this committee and this body to conduct oversight of
2388 the most important foreign affairs issue of our time, the
2389 disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

2390 And I appreciate Chairman, your comments about -- I
2391 think you said that you were against this because it didn't
2392 look at the entire 20 years. But I would point out to you
2393 that the initial 20 years of this operation was a war run by
2394 the Department of Defense, oversighted by the House Armed
2395 Services Committee.

2396 However, when the withdrawal decision was made under
2397 this administration to execute the withdrawal, it was turned
2398 into what is a non-combatant evacuation operation often in
2399 parlance a NEO.

2400 NEOs are overseen by the State Department. They took
2401 over at that point to operate the withdrawal, the non-
2402 combatant evacuation operation, and they are oversighted by
2403 this committee. The jurisdiction of this committee begins
2404 when the State Department took over the NEO.

2405 And so absolutely, the idea that we can't look into what
2406 the State Department did in this withdrawal is absurd. I'm
2407 sorry. You know, I think the world of you, but it makes no
2408 sense.

2409 Just a few quick questions, you know, have there been

2410 any documents produced to this committee about the challenges
2411 with the State Department's paperwork process to get the SIVs
2412 done?

2413 We know there were holdups. They gave us classified
2414 briefings on this. We won't talk into what those are now
2415 here in this unclassified setting. They admitted to it. But
2416 no, there were no documents produced.

2417 Has there been a committee hearing on the billions of
2418 military equipment that were left? As I understand it,
2419 foreign military sales are a State Department issue. We left
2420 to a foreign government \$87 billion or \$85 billion, whatever
2421 it is. No. There has been no committee hearing on that.

2422 Has there been a report on the decision to move the NEO
2423 from Bagram Air Base to Kandahar or to Kabul? No. No, we
2424 haven't sat and talked about that. There has been no
2425 oversight of that decision, which belongs to this committee
2426 as soon as the State Department took over.

2427 I am glad to see this resolution. I think it makes --
2428 to vote against this is a political decision, not to ask the
2429 State Department to save documents on this egregious failure.
2430 To say no to that, is a political decision.

2431 For the future of our country and for future NEO
2432 operations executed by the State Department, we must have the
2433 documents so that real oversight can be done. It's that

2434 simple. And to vote against that, well, that is a political
2435 decision. I yield.

2436 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I just want
2437 to say, because it is occurring, NEO is oversighted by DoD,
2438 not by this committee. This committee, we've all been here
2439 for 20 years, has complete oversight. We've had it for the
2440 past 20 years.

2441 And, you know, and I know that real oversight is the
2442 effort and what took place in Afghanistan was the Afghanistan
2443 War Commission. And that is what they are set to do just as
2444 soon as the GOP names a co-chair so that they can begin to
2445 work. That is what they are waiting for. And I recognize
2446 Representative Peter Meijer of Michigan for five minutes.

2447 Mr. Meijer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, as my
2448 colleagues have spoken, it has been over a year since we
2449 completed the withdrawal in Afghanistan. And we have so many
2450 unanswered questions to this date.

2451 Now, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned that June classified
2452 briefing that there were a lot of members who weren't in
2453 attendance. I was there the entire time, and it was
2454 frustrating. That became largely an exercise in blame
2455 casting and trying to cast the buck. And I think we see that
2456 in our committee hearings here where it becomes you are fully
2457 targeting the Biden administration or fully defending the

2458 Biden administration.

2459 I remember back when the announcement to withdraw was
2460 made in the spring of 2021, it wasn't Secretary Blinken and
2461 President Biden saying our hands are tied. There is nothing
2462 we can do. We don't want to do this. It was the fulfillment
2463 of a campaign promise.

2464 And I will not spend my time trying to blame cast. I
2465 supported the withdrawal under President Trump. I supported
2466 the withdrawal under President Biden. But I have serious
2467 reservations and serious questions on how the withdrawal was
2468 executed over that phase.

2469 And as somebody who had been involved in the SIV process
2470 going back close to a decade and was part of a private
2471 gathering that was trying to look for legislative solutions
2472 going in, it was incredibly frustrating to see the
2473 miscalculations, to see the assumptions that were being made
2474 by the administration, and how they didn't err on the side of
2475 caution. They thought they had more time. And they just
2476 continued punting things along.

2477 And shortly after the withdrawal was completed, after
2478 that horrific August where I spent most of it living on Kabul
2479 time, waking up to, you know, WhatsApp messages and Signal
2480 messages from folks who were trying to get out, I had a
2481 couple of members of a NATO ally come into my office and ask

2482 sincerely, you know, what they thought accountability for how
2483 this was executed would look like in the U.S. because in
2484 their country they had senior military and senior, you know,
2485 foreign diplomatic officials resign because they left behind
2486 several dozen interpreters. And in our case, I think, you
2487 know, Ambassador Khalilzad resigned, but that was mostly
2488 because his role was no longer necessary. But that was the
2489 only accountability that we had.

2490 And we haven't had the transparency. We haven't had the
2491 document production. We haven't had the sincere questions
2492 being answered. I mean, I appreciate that we are on Foreign
2493 Affairs.

2494 And as my colleague, Mr. Green mentioned, you know, we
2495 have more specific jurisdiction, but the amount of times
2496 where a question would be asked and because we had the
2497 involvement of the Department of Homeland Security, we had
2498 HHS and their Office of Refugee Resettlement. We obviously
2499 had the DoD. We had the CIA. Crossing across multiple
2500 committee jurisdictions, it just ended up in the interagency
2501 runaround.

2502 This ROI is an opportunity for us to actually get some
2503 documents to actually get something produced. I think this
2504 is an opportunity we have to seize. We owe it to not only
2505 those we left behind in Afghanistan who had served us

2506 loyally, the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marine, diplomatic
2507 personnel, intelligence personnel who were on the ground at
2508 HKIA doing an unimaginably hard task, given an impossible
2509 mission, and executing it to the best of their ability,
2510 having to undertake a moral injury level that, I think, is
2511 incredible to try to fathom.

2512 I mean, the Ranking Member mentioned that comparison to
2513 Schindler's List. I had a lieutenant colonel on the ground
2514 at HKIA tell me, you know, some days he felt like Schindler,
2515 like saving people from a horrific fate. And other days he
2516 felt like Himmler, having to turn folks away who didn't have
2517 the proper documentation because there were not enough
2518 diplomatic personnel and consular officials at those gates.

2519 So this should not be a partisan issue. I completely
2520 agree with the Chairman on that. I would humbly suggest and
2521 recommend that we can make it not a partisan issue. We can
2522 make this vote a bipartisan vote to have some accountability
2523 if we have both majority and minority coming to cast votes in
2524 approval of this.

2525 So I think it is important that we understand what
2526 influences the decision going in. That we not get caught up
2527 in trying to blame cast after the fact, but actually owe it
2528 to those who were on the ground, owe it to those who
2529 sacrificed, who served, and who are still in harm's way to

2530 make sure that we never again repeat the mistakes that were
2531 made in the lead-up to August of 2021, that we learned every
2532 lesson imaginable and move forward.

2533 I mean, our job in Congress is to conduct this
2534 oversight. This is an opportunity to conduct oversight of
2535 the executive branch and is one that we should not miss.
2536 With that, I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the
2537 aisle to vote in support of this bill for its passage. And I
2538 yield back.

2539 Chairman Meeks. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.
2540 And I just want to say, Mr. Meijer, thank you. Thank you,
2541 Mr. Green, Mr. Mast because you served this country in an
2542 admirable way, putting your lives on the line defending for
2543 it. And we are happy to disagree on methodology here. We
2544 agree, though, that we do need to make sure that we have
2545 complete oversight into looking into what and why the
2546 circumstances in Afghanistan and the leaving, collectively.

2547 But I just wanted to give a recognition, and you were
2548 there. I want to acknowledge the fact because what I said
2549 earlier about some, but you were there. And you were there
2550 the whole time. And I respect that even when we disagree.
2551 So I just want to say thank you on the record for that.

2552 And I recognize Mr. Mast for five minutes.

2553 Mr. Mast. Thank you, Chairman. I also want to urge

2554 support. You know, sometimes in war, there is just bad luck.
2555 A sniper's bullet finds you, or you find a trip wire, or you
2556 walk across somebody that's hidden in the dark of night,
2557 things that are a part of war, but that you can't -- you
2558 couldn't have prevented. It was bad luck.

2559 The reason that this is so important is because it is so
2560 transparent to everybody that what happened in Afghanistan,
2561 it wasn't bad luck. It was bad leadership. And bad
2562 leadership, bad planning, cost the lives of our service
2563 members. That's a very important distinction.

2564 And for that reason alone, it's what is owed to those
2565 that put on the uniform that gave their blood, sweat, and
2566 tears for 20 years, that demand the closure of understanding
2567 how it was allowed to unravel at the very end. And for those
2568 families that are grieving to this moment, it is what is owed
2569 because it wasn't an episode of just bad luck. That's how I
2570 feel. I yield back.

2571 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Any further
2572 requests to speak on the bill? Do any members wish to offer
2573 any amendment?

2574 Hearing none, we will now take a vote by voice. The
2575 question is to report H. Res. 1240 adversely, in other words,
2576 if you share my opposition to the resolution, you will vote
2577 aye.

2578 Again, I repeat, the question is to report H. Res. 1240
2579 adversely, in other words, if you share my opposition to the
2580 resolution, you will vote aye.

2581 And we are going to take a vote by voice so all members
2582 please unmute your microphone.

2583 And all those in favor say aye.

2584 All opposed say no.

2585 In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And
2586 without objection, the motion to reconsider --

2587 PARTICIPANT: Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

2588 Chairman Meeks. A recorded vote is on it. And pursuant
2589 to Committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings on the
2590 amendment shall be postponed.

2591 And we will now move on to the next measure. So we will
2592 now move on to the final measure, and consider H. Res. 1266,
2593 requesting the President to transmit certain documents to the
2594 House of Representatives relating to any initiative or
2595 negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program.

2596 Pursuant to notice for purposes of markup, I now call up
2597 H. Res. 1266.

2598 [The H. Res. 1266 follows:]

2599

2600 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2601 Chairman Meeks. The clerk will report the measure.

2602 Ms. Hallman. House Resolution 1266, requesting the
2603 President to transmit --

2604 Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of
2605 the resolution is dispensed with. And without objection, the
2606 resolution shall be considered as read and open to amendment
2607 at any time. At this time, I recognize myself to speak on
2608 this measure.

2609 H. Res. 1266 is a privileged resolution, introduced by
2610 Representative Foxx of North Carolina that would require the
2611 President of the United States to transmit to the House of
2612 Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the
2613 adoption of this resolution, copies of any document,
2614 memorandum, or other communication in his possession, or any
2615 portion thereof, that refers or relates to any initiative or
2616 negotiation regarding Iran's nuclear program.

2617 This I strongly recommend to my colleagues on both sides
2618 of the aisle that we oppose and here is why.

2619 First, H. Res. 1266 would create a harmful precedent
2620 with respect to Presidential communications of an ongoing
2621 negotiation. There is no precedent for Congress mandating
2622 the executive turn over living documents related to an
2623 ongoing, multilateral national security-related negotiation.

2624 Passage of H. Res. 1266 risks directly damaging the

2625 administration's ability to successfully conduct
2626 negotiations, threatening to upset allies, and allow for the
2627 premature leaking and manipulation of sensitive materials.

2628 Second, this resolution is merely a partisan exercise
2629 that threatens the United States' longstanding strategic
2630 posture of not negotiating in public.

2631 During the Trump administration, Congress did not
2632 receive documents in real-time related to any negotiations
2633 conducted with parties such as the Taliban or North Korea.
2634 Furthermore, the broad grasp of documents H. Res. 1266 will
2635 require the President to transmit would likely be challenged
2636 under the doctrine of executive privilege.

2637 Third, a robust process through which Congress will
2638 review any negotiated agreement already exists. Shortly
2639 before the conclusion of the original JCPOA negotiations in
2640 2015, the United States Congress passed with a strong
2641 bipartisan vote the now statutory plan for the transmission
2642 of the documents requested by H. Res. 1266 to Congress.

2643 This law, commonly known as the Iran Nuclear Agreement
2644 Review Act, INARA, provides the official bipartisan process
2645 for reviewing the documents related to the JCPOA. The Biden
2646 administration has acknowledged to Congress, the American
2647 people, and our negotiating partners that they will abide by
2648 INARA.

2649 The administration's commitment to adhere to the
2650 requirements under INARA renders H. Res. 1266 unnecessary.
2651 INARA mandates the administration to transmit all documents
2652 required in H. Res. 1266 in addition to an assessment of the
2653 agreement to Congress within five calendar days for review.

2654 Once those documents enter Congressional possession,
2655 Congress is provided 30 calendar days to review the
2656 materials, hold hearings, receive briefings, and hold up or
2657 down vote of approval or disapproval should Congress desire.

2658 The administration is not authorized to implement a
2659 nuclear agreement with Iran while this review period is
2660 taking place. So if Congress disapproves of the agreement
2661 over the veto of the President of the United States, the
2662 administration is prohibited from moving forward with
2663 implementation.

2664 Both our allies and adversaries are aware this process
2665 is in place. The House Foreign Affairs Committee has primary
2666 jurisdiction over the Iranian nuclear file. And while
2667 administration engagement on this issue could be better in
2668 the House, members of this committee have been briefed on the
2669 negotiations and classified sessions as the negotiations have
2670 progressed.

2671 In fact, they held a briefing this morning, and we heard
2672 from the White House, the State Department, and intelligence

2673 community. Unfortunately, we had a number of members who
2674 decided, and some decided not to attend these briefings over
2675 the last one and a half years, members' options. Others have
2676 received unclassified updates of the talks upon request.
2677 This issue is regularly reported in the free press.

2678 At present, members have the means at their disposal to
2679 understand what these P5+1 talks are attempting to achieve
2680 and the sacrifices in the United States we have to make to
2681 reach an agreement with our adversaries.

2682 We are not operating in darkness. If a deal is
2683 concluded, as I have noted, we will receive the full extent
2684 of the relevant documents. We will hear from the
2685 administration. We will hear from partners and allies. And
2686 Congress will have a vote. Congress will then have a vote to
2687 vote up or down the agreement.

2688 So to me we don't need to play games or go back and
2689 forth with this document request. And as a result of that, I
2690 think it's in the interest of all of us, Democrats and
2691 Republicans, for every current President, the same as in the
2692 past Presidents and future Presidents, that we reject this
2693 resolution. I now recognize Ranking Member McCaul.

2694 Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just say
2695 to start the ROI could be complied with in the classified
2696 space, which would take your national security concerns, I

2697 think, off the table. But I understand what you are saying
2698 about INARA. I have been given assurances by the Deputy
2699 Secretary of State that that will be complied with. And we
2700 look forward to that.

2701 But, you know, put simply, Iran continues to pose a
2702 direct threat to the national security of the United States.
2703 And I think it's important this comes after the Afghanistan
2704 ROI, which led to a projection of weakness that then led to
2705 Putin invading Ukraine, and then President Chairman Xi
2706 threatening Taiwan in the South Pacific. And now Iran is
2707 emboldened, the Ayatollah and North Korea as well. You know,
2708 Reagan said of the Soviet Union, trust, verify. I think in
2709 this case we cannot even trust, much less verify.

2710 You know, we were at the IAEA, you and I and the
2711 committee, with the director general who talked about three
2712 undisclosed sites that the Iranians failed to report,
2713 absolutely failed to report to the IAEA. And then after
2714 that, the cameras went down on the sites. And what happened
2715 after that, Iran hacks the servers of the IAEA and steals the
2716 documents pertaining to their investigations.

2717 You know, if I don't -- you know, I don't know what
2718 shows more lack of trust than that. And that is a part of
2719 this deal. And, you know, I know the administration, without
2720 getting into details, are concerned about that being a part

2721 of the Iran deal. And they should because we shouldn't
2722 reward Iran for violating the current agreement with the E3
2723 with undisclosed sites of uranium and then hacking into the
2724 IAEA and stealing their investigation and shutting down the
2725 cameras.

2726 I just think this whole idea that we can negotiate this
2727 is based on a false premise. The IAEA said we are not in a
2728 position to provide assurance that Iran's nuclear program is
2729 peaceful. I agree. I don't see how anybody can think this
2730 is a peaceful nuclear program when they want this to be swept
2731 under the rug.

2732 Why in the world would they want as part of this deal to
2733 stop the IAEA's investigation into these undisclosed sites
2734 that were not reported by Iran if they didn't have a nuclear
2735 program at stake? It's not a peaceful nuclear program. We
2736 all know this.

2737 And where you and I are in agreement, as we talked about
2738 this morning, is that I believe it should be the policy of
2739 the United States of America, and I urge the President to
2740 make this case and others, that a nuclear Iran is
2741 unacceptable. And I would urge our allies to join us in that
2742 declaration against the Ayatollah because only that will make
2743 sense to someone who doesn't understand weakness but rather
2744 exploits and only understands strength. We need to project

2745 strength in this case.

2746 I believe that this is again another hot spot with
2747 Ukraine. Mr. Chairman, you returned from Taiwan. We all saw
2748 the threat that they posed to the speaker. And this is the
2749 third big threat in addition to South Korea.

2750 You know, and then the fact that Russia has got, like,
2751 their nuclear, you know, program that operates that took a
2752 nuclear facility in Ukraine. And now they are working in
2753 Iran with their nuclear program. And not only that, Mr.
2754 Chairman, but they are buying drones from Iran. Iran is
2755 providing drones to Russia. They are going directly into
2756 Ukraine. How can we trust, much less verify, when that is
2757 what we are talking about?

2758 So I just would urge -- I think we should have all
2759 documents. We have had classified briefings and that is
2760 good. But we need all the documents. And we need to know
2761 what exactly is happening, and the American people deserve no
2762 less. And with that, I yield back.

2763 Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now
2764 recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey for five
2765 minutes.

2766 Mr. Smith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I
2767 concur with our ranking member that all Americans deserve
2768 real answers and transparency. So much is at stake here with

2769 regards to our national security and the security of our good
2770 friends and allies in the region, including the special
2771 Israel. So I am in strong support of H. Res. 1266, the
2772 resolution introduced by our good friend, Virginia Foxx.

2773 Since any Iranian deal will likely be achieved through
2774 executive agreement and not a treaty, Congress has an
2775 extremely limited role therefore, and really no meaningful
2776 role, in any provision, in any new deal. Here it is, take it
2777 or leave it. We have been there before. It happened last
2778 time. And I believe that deal was catastrophic.

2779 Mr. Chairman, on February 11, 2016, when the IAEA had
2780 said yes, all the material is out of Iran, Ambassador Stephen
2781 Mull, the Obama administration's lead coordinator for Iran
2782 nuclear implementation, sat in this very room, and I asked
2783 him a very simple question. What was the location of the
2784 nuclear material that was shipped to Iran's allied Russia as
2785 part of the JCPOA deal?

2786 Ambassador Mull said, well, he confirmed that it had
2787 been put on a Russian ship. He could not even answer the
2788 simple question as to its destination, even where it was as
2789 we spoke. I asked repeatedly in follow-up, you know, days
2790 and weeks afterwards, where did it go? And he admitted at
2791 the hearing that we had no onsite, oversight capability under
2792 the terms of the JCPOA.

2793 So all of this material went to their ally, Russia. Do
2794 we trust Russia? I don't think so. One unanswered question
2795 in particular, what happened to the 25,000 pounds of enriched
2796 uranium? Again, shipped to Russia by Iran as part of the
2797 deal. Has it gone back? We don't know. Where is it? Is
2798 it, you know, waiting in a storage area, waiting to be
2799 returned to Iran?

2800 Further, I do believe, Mr. Chairman, and I mean this,
2801 and I think both sides of the aisle should be pressing for
2802 this, what is the status of negotiations by the
2803 administration with Russia and Iran to create a new deal?

2804 And as reported in March, should we be allowing Russia
2805 to buy Iran's excess enriched uranium? Again, so much is at
2806 stake. We need answers. This is a modest, and I think a
2807 very reasonable, request for information. The American
2808 people have a right to know not to all of a sudden wake up
2809 one morning and say we have a deal. We need to know now so
2810 we can try to influence in a positive way if there is going
2811 to be a deal what the particulars are of the nuclear deal
2812 with Iran.

2813 Frankly, I don't think there should be one, but at least
2814 we should know what is in it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I
2815 urge support for the resolution.

2816 Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. And I now

2817 recognize Representative Brian Mast of Florida for five
2818 minutes.

2819 Mr. Mast. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The word was used
2820 dark, kept people in the dark, keeping Americans in the dark.
2821 And I think it is important to understand the gravity, or for
2822 Americans to be able to understand the gravity, of this
2823 situation with Iran. What is the potential of what could
2824 happen here?

2825 There could be American service members in Tehran or
2826 jets or drones or ordnance. And were something like that to
2827 take place, the American people absolutely deserve the
2828 clarity and the justification on why that would take place or
2829 would not. What are the risks that are posed?

2830 It is as gravely serious as anything that we deal with
2831 in the whole of Congress by a country and a despot leadership
2832 that is as serious about threatening our government, our way
2833 of life, and our people as they are that of Israel and so
2834 many others throughout the region through their proxies.

2835 In this moment in history, Americans find themselves in
2836 the dark on a host of policies. Why is our border open? Why
2837 do we have no red lines as it relates to our domestic border?
2838 What are the red lines that we have with Russia as it relates
2839 to Ukraine and what Russia does to Ukrainians or what type of
2840 ordnance they use? There are no red lines that any American

2841 could discern.

2842 What red lines do we have for China as it relates to
2843 Taiwan? What red lines do we have for North Korea as it
2844 relates to any nuclear program or ballistic missile program
2845 that they might have? There are no discernible answers for
2846 Americans in this administration.

2847 And to put a point on how the majority has felt about
2848 this previously, I am going to read a quote as it relates to
2849 how you felt -- the majority felt about President Trump. By
2850 choosing to report the resolution adversely, our colleagues
2851 in the majority, that was when we were in the majority, are
2852 keeping Congress and the American people in the dark. That
2853 is what our colleagues on the other side -- that is how our
2854 colleagues on the other side were arguing about executive
2855 privilege. Exactly what we are speaking about right here,
2856 not letting the American people be in the dark.

2857 So in that, I think this, this issue, the gravity that
2858 it carries and the potential foreign policy, kinetic policy,
2859 nuclear policy, implications that this has, warrants every
2860 bit of transparency that we can muster out of this process
2861 for the good of the American people. And in that, I yield
2862 the remaining of my time.

2863 Chairman Meeks. The Chairman yields back. I now
2864 recognize Representative Claudia Tenney of New York for five

2865 minutes.

2866 Ms. Tenney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
2867 Ranking Member. And I just want to say thank you to
2868 Representative Virginia Foxx for bringing this initiative
2869 forward and demanding the transparency that the American
2870 people deserve.

2871 I feel, and I think a lot of us are expressing, that
2872 Congress has been completely left behind by this
2873 administration as it accelerates these nuclear negotiations
2874 with Iran. Congress and the nation deserve to know what this
2875 administration is allowing to be negotiated away in Vienna
2876 without us at the table.

2877 As we speak, the regime the Tehran is rapidly advancing
2878 its nuclear program while at the same time refusing to
2879 cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency
2880 inspectors. We have heard this from Rafael Grossi and others
2881 that we couldn't get in.

2882 And let's be specific. On the issue of the probe, the
2883 IAEA probe, this independent investigation into Iran's
2884 safeguard violations is fundamentally a technical question.
2885 It is really not a political one. It is a technical question
2886 so it shouldn't be politically charged.

2887 Accordingly, this probe should be terminated only when
2888 all of the outstanding technical issues and concerns have

2889 been addressed and resolved. They have not. And we have not
2890 received that information.

2891 Just last week, the IAEA determined that it still cannot
2892 verify the peaceful, or maybe not so peaceful, nature of
2893 Iran's nuclear program. Yet still, the Biden administration
2894 remains intent on forging ahead with these negotiations.
2895 Having a deal, any deal, no matter what, good or bad, we have
2896 got to have a deal, maybe for a hollow political victory lap
2897 or something. But it is critically important that we make
2898 sure if we are ever going to have a deal that the deal is
2899 good for the United States and the American people and keeps
2900 our allies safe and secure.

2901 And the American people have the right to know what our
2902 diplomats are agreeing to in Vienna, what alternatives the
2903 administration is considering, and how they intend to address
2904 the wide range of threats from Iran, primarily its dangerous
2905 nuclear missile program that we know that is going on that we
2906 are removed from.

2907 The resolution by Virginia Foxx, I think, is vital.
2908 This information should be provided to Congress so that we
2909 could effectively execute our critical oversight powers.

2910 A technical issue really should not be a political
2911 issue. This is a technical issue. Are they complying?
2912 Aren't they complying? If they are not, we should not engage

2913 and get in the middle of this deal. It is too dangerous and
2914 too much of a risk.

2915 And the American people have a right to know exactly
2916 what the deal is, what we are engaging in, what risks the
2917 United States is being put at, and the American people are
2918 facing.

2919 And so I say let's go back to the drawing board and make
2920 sure that we know what every technical aspect of this is, not
2921 for political purposes, but for the sake of our nation's
2922 security and the security of our allies around the world,
2923 particularly in the Middle East.

2924 With that, Mr. Chairman, I encourage my colleagues to
2925 support this initiative, and I yield back.

2926 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back. Mr.
2927 McCaul?

2928 Mr. McCaul. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I first ask unanimous
2929 consent to insert a statement into the record from
2930 Representative Virginia Foxx.

2931 Chairman Meeks. Without objection. Mr. McCaul.
2932 Thank you. And also pursuant to House Rules, I request that
2933 members have the opportunity to submit views for any
2934 committee report that may be produced on any of today's
2935 measures. Chairman Meeks. Without objection. Mr. McCaul.
2936 Thank you. I yield back. Chairman Meeks. At this time,

2937 the Committee will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow
2938 morning, at which time we will take votes on all recorded
2939 vote requests.

2940 Before we do that, we're going to take a vote by voice.
2941 All members please unmute you microphones.

2942 And all those in favor say aye.

2943 All those members opposed?

2944 The ayes have it.

2945 Mr. McCaul. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

2946 Chairman Meeks. A recorded vote is requested. And
2947 pursuant to Committee Rule 4(a)(2), further proceedings of
2948 this amendment shall be postponed until tomorrow morning at
2949 9:00 a.m. This hearing is now in recess until that time.

2950 [Whereupon, at 6:29 p.m., the committee recessed, to
2951 reconvene at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, September 15, 2022.]