

1 NEAL R. GROSS & CO., INC.

2 RPTS MILLER

3 HFA208000

4

5

6 CHALLENGES FACING GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

7 Wednesday, July 27, 2022

8 House of Representatives,

9 Committee on Foreign Affairs,

10 Washington, D.C.

11

12

13

14 The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:11 a.m., in room

15 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gregory Meeks [chairman

16 of the committee] presiding.

17 Chairman Meeks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come
18 to order. And without objection, the chair is authorized to
19 declare a recess of the committee at any point.

20 And all members will have five days to submit statements,
21 extraneous material, and questions for the record, subject to
22 the limit limitations in the rules. To insert something into
23 the record, please have your staff email the previously mentioned
24 address or contact full committee staff.

25 As a reminder to members, please keep your video function
26 on at all times, even when you are not recognized by the chair.

27 Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves.
28 Consistent with House rules, staff will mute members, as
29 appropriate, when they are not under recognition, to eliminate
30 background noise.

31 I see that we have a quorum.

32 And I now recognize myself for opening remarks.

33 Pursuant to notice, we meet today to hear from our
34 distinguished witnesses about the challenges facing global food
35 security.

36 You know, as chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have
37 had the privilege and opportunity to travel to many parts of the
38 world -- from South America to Asia, Europe to Africa. And no
39 matter where I go, one thing has become increasingly clear:
40 Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine has had deep

41 consequences, not just for the Ukrainian people, but for people
42 all over the world. Putin's war in Ukraine has served as a manmade
43 assault on food security, compounding the damage done to global
44 food supply chains by COVID-19 and severe weather events related
45 to climate change.

46 And here to address the issues are two representatives from
47 the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, Ms. Sarah
48 Charles, an Assistant to the Administrator at the Bureau for
49 Humanitarian Assistance, and Ms. Maura Barry, Acting Assistant
50 to the Administrator at the Bureau for Resilience and Food
51 Security. And I thank you for being here this morning.

52 To put a finer point on the impact of Russia's invasion on
53 food security globally, I would like to share some statistics.

54 Russia and Ukraine are two of the world's largest producers of
55 food. They account for roughly one-third of the world wheat
56 exports. Putin's invasion has resulted in slightly over 30
57 percent of the world's wheat supply no longer being available
58 at pre-war levels.

59 Ukraine alone accounts for 15 percent of global maize
60 exports, 13 percent of global exports, 50 percent of global
61 sunflower oil exports. Much of this is no longer available to
62 be exported at the same level.

63 One might think that other countries can simply fill the
64 gap by growing additional crops to help ease the supply crunch,

65 but the war in Ukraine has so disrupted the global supply of
66 fertilizer, which countries need to increase or even maintain
67 agricultural yields. With the supply of fertilizer going down,
68 of course, the costs have gone up.

69 It is also the nutrient-rich, black soil in Ukraine which
70 has historically made Ukraine both a bread basket and a target.

71 Covering over half of Ukraine's land mass, nearly a quarterly
72 of its rare soil is located in Ukraine, contributing to its
73 agricultural capacity.

74 Russia's blockade of key ports in Ukraine has exacerbated
75 food insecurity in countries around the world. The World Food
76 Programme, for example, acquires half of its grains from Ukraine.

77 This source of food aid is now nearly completely inaccessible,
78 resulting in the deepened food insecurity for millions in need
79 around the world.

80 Additionally, the price of food has skyrocketed globally,
81 negatively impacting economic and political stability in
82 countries with high import rates, and most notably, Sri Lanka,
83 Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Egypt.

84 Though COVID and Russia have exacerbated an already fragile
85 global food supply system, the role of climate change in
86 furthering the food insecurity prices cannot be understated,
87 and it cannot be understated at all.

88 These effects will only be more pronounced and encapsulated

89 without a globally coordinated effort to reduce greenhouse gas
90 emissions, shift to clean energy, and address private change and
91 resilience with the urgency that is required.

92 So, let me thank Ms. Charles and Ms. Barry once again, and
93 thank you for appearing before this committee today. We applaud
94 your work and look forward to hearing more about the implications
95 of Russia's unprovoked war on food insecurity globally and what
96 the United States can do to help address this.

97 I will now recognize the ranking member, Mr. McCaul, for
98 his opening statement.

99 Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this
100 important hearing. We have been focused on this issue quite a
101 bit lately.

102 And I thank our witnesses for being here today.

103 COVID-19 and unprecedented droughts have already strained
104 the global food supply. Now, Putin's unprovoked and full-scale
105 invasion of Ukraine is really the nail in the coffin. Starvation
106 has already likely begun with an average of one person dying every
107 48 seconds across Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia. In Somalia
108 alone, 380,000 children are at risk of dying. Globally, 50
109 million people across 45 countries are on the brink of famine.

110 And meanwhile, Putin's invading forces in Ukraine have mined
111 fields, bombed grain silos, stolen Ukraine grain. Within 24
112 hours of it being signed, an agreement to secure grain exports

113 was violated by Russian forces firing four missiles at the Port
114 of Odessa. We had David Beasley with the World Food Programme
115 testify just last week. I met with him privately as well. And
116 within 24 hours -- I don't trust them.

117 And like Stalin, Vladimir Putin is purposely starving the
118 Ukraine people, blocking them from their access to the Black Sea,
119 not unlike Stalin did many years ago. He is also trying to
120 weaponize starvation. He should think about his legacy. Does
121 he want to cause a global famine? That is what David Beasley
122 tried to persuade, through Mr. Lavrov, that this is not your
123 legacy.

124 And now, we are going to see a rise in forced migration,
125 destabilization, and destabilization in the Sahel, which will
126 result in more ISIS and Al Qaeda terrorism. We have provided
127 \$8 billion in supplemental funding to address global humanitarian
128 needs and food security crises. So, I look forward to hearing
129 what USAID is doing to get these funds out the door and into where
130 it needs to go as soon as possible.

131 I would also urge the administration to waive the cargo
132 preference requirements for the purposes of this emergency. Our
133 priority should be paying for food, not unnecessary shipping
134 costs. Spending unnecessary resources on shipping means less
135 food for starving people. And it is not really an exaggeration
136 to say that action now will save lives. I hope greater

137 flexibility on cargo preference will be a bipartisan issue that
138 we can address together in committee through legislation.

139 The United States cannot and should not respond alone.
140 Other countries must step up to the plate and do more. The United
141 States has provided the World Food Programme with \$3.9 billion
142 this year, while China has only provided \$3 million. That is
143 unacceptable.

144 And amidst this global crisis, we cannot lose focus on
145 longer-term investments on food security and agricultural growth.

146 As someone from an agricultural state myself, I am proud to be
147 an original cosponsor of the Global Food Security Act, along with
148 Chairman Meeks, Representative McCollum, and Representative
149 Smith. Congress must reauthorize these critical programs and
150 do everything we can to advance smart investments in food
151 security, nutrition, and ultimately, the ability for families
152 and communities to provide for themselves.

153 I am pleased the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate
154 unanimously advanced my bill, the Global Malnutrition Prevention
155 and Treatment Act, out of their committee and urge the Senate
156 to pass this important bill.

157 And I was also glad to see Administrator Power announce to
158 buy additional nutrition supplies for global use. Global
159 starvation must be a priority for Congress and this
160 administration. It should be a priority for this Nation, for

161 if we do nothing, it will certainly come to our doorsteps.

162 And with that, I yield back.

163 Chairman Meeks. Mr. McCaul yields back.

164 And seeing that Chairman Castro and Ranking Member
165 Malliotakis both are not present, I will now introduce our
166 witnesses.

167 Sarah Charles is the Assistant to the Administrator of
168 USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and the lead federal
169 coordinator for international disaster response. BHA implements
170 several food assistance programs, including Food for Peace, Title
171 II emergency and non-emergency, and the Emergency Food Security
172 Program, and administers the Community Development Fund.

173 Maura Barry is the Acting Assistant to the Administrator
174 in USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security. RFS works
175 to advance inclusive agricultural-led growth, resilience,
176 nutrition, water security, sanitation, and hygiene. It leads
177 the coordination of the Feed the Future Initiative, the U.S.
178 Government Global Water Strategy, and USAID's Multi-Sectoral
179 Nutrition Strategy.

180 Witnesses, I want to thank you for being here today. You
181 will have five minutes to deliver your testimony, and without
182 objection, your prepared written statements will be made as part
183 of the record.

184 I will now recognize Ms. Charles for her statement.

185 STATEMENTS OF SARAH CHARLES, ASSISTANT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR,
186 BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
187 DEVELOPMENT, AND MAURA BARRY, ACTING ASSISTANT TO THE
188 ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR RESILIENCE AND FOOD SECURITY, U.S.
189 AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

190

191 STATEMENT OF SARAH CHARLES

192 Ms. Charles. Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul,
193 distinguished members of the committee, thank you for convening
194 this timely hearing to discuss the challenges facing global food
195 security and the U.S. Agency for International Development's
196 efforts to respond.

197 For decades, food assistance has been a cornerstone of U.S.
198 foreign aid. Thanks to your bipartisan leadership and the
199 generosity of the American people, we are able to reach the world's
200 most vulnerable with lifesaving assistance. Today, that support
201 is more vital than ever.

202 Just last night, I returned from the Horn of Africa, where
203 I witnessed the extreme hunger gripping the region. Nearly 19
204 million people across Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia require
205 humanitarian assistance after a historic fourth failed rainy
206 season and spiking food prices.

207 At a health facility in northern Kenya, I was met by mothers
208 holding tight to their severely malnourished children. I saw

209 miles and miles of drought-stricken land and families that have
210 lost their entire herds, their entire livelihoods. I met
211 families that are now fully reliant on assistance to avert death.
212 A fifth failed rainy season is forecasted for later this year,
213 which will only increase needs. The region is on the brink of
214 catastrophe.

215 But this crisis goes beyond the Horn of Africa. Around the
216 world, millions of families are fleeing the pang of hunger to
217 protracted conflict, the lingering effects of COVID-19-related
218 lockdowns, and the increasing frequency and severity of weather
219 events due to climate change.

220 Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been an accelerant on an
221 already dire situation. An additional 40 million poor people
222 -- more than the total population of New York City and Texas
223 combined -- could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity this
224 year because of Putin's needless war in Ukraine.

225 Thanks to Congress and the generosity of the American people,
226 USAID is leading the global effort to stave off the worst impacts
227 of this unprecedented global hunger crisis. Our teams have been
228 responding to dramatically increased global needs for well over
229 a year, and as the scope and severity came into focus, we made
230 bold programmatic decisions.

231 For example, this past April, USAID took the extraordinary
232 step of drawing down the full balance of the Bill Emerson

233 Humanitarian Trust, allowing us to fund a significant infusion
234 of American-grown food commodities to countries that are at
235 highest risk of famine.

236 USAID is also working at record speed and scale to move an
237 historic \$7 billion in supplemental international disaster
238 assistance funding to the people that need it most. To date,
239 we have programmed over \$4 billion, nearly 60 percent of those
240 supplemental funds.

241 Through all the BHA funding categories -- Title II,
242 International Disaster Assistance, and multiple supplemental
243 bills -- USAID is on track to obligate over \$11 billion in fiscal
244 year 2022. This is more than 40 percent than the prior fiscal
245 year, which in itself was a record year.

246 Not only are we moving funds quickly, we are moving them
247 responsibly and strategically to meet urgent needs. Just last
248 week, as Ranking Member McCaul mentioned, USAID announced an
249 unprecedented \$200 million investment in UNICEF to expand the
250 production and distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food,
251 or RUTF. With this funding, USAID will reach an additional 2.4
252 million children suffering from severe malnutrition.

253 Better still, we have worked with foundations like the
254 Eleanor Crook Foundation and Sift to mobilize an additional \$50
255 million in private financing to come behind that U.S. investment,
256 and are challenging other private sources and other donors to

257 find another \$250 million to come behind that investment.

258 U.S. leadership during this crisis could not be more evident.

259 The United States is the world's leading donor, providing over
260 40 percent of global humanitarian funding this year. At this
261 point, we are covering 86 percent of the World Food Programme's
262 current funding appeal for the Horn of Africa.

263 I heard firsthand this weekend that critical nutrition,
264 food, and cash assistance from the second Ukraine supplemental
265 is already reaching the hands of hungry people in Somalia and
266 Kenya.

267 However, the United States cannot do this alone. In
268 addition to moving record levels of funding, we are marshaling
269 our partners and allies to meet the moment. In May, the United
270 States released a Roadmap for Global Food Security at the United
271 Nations, calling on member states to take action. Already, over
272 100 countries have joined -- with notable exceptions. For
273 example, the People's Republic of China has not signed onto the
274 roadmap, is maintaining fertilizer export restrictions, and is
275 refusing to release grain reserves. These actions demonstrate
276 a stunning failure to support the world's least developed
277 economies.

278 Given the scale of global need, it is critical that we look
279 ahead for opportunities to work together and maximize the impact
280 of our programs overseas. USAID staff have moved mountains over

281 the past several months to move funding quickly and responsibly.
282 However, staffing has not kept pace with the growth in
283 humanitarian budgets. As an agency, USAID is surging contracting
284 staff to ensure that programs are funded quickly, but more
285 permanent solutions are required.

286 And as Russia's invasion of Ukraine drives fuel prices up,
287 the cost of delivering humanitarian assistance is also rising.

288 USAID welcomes congressional interest in waiving cargo
289 preference for a time-limited, case-by-case basis. Used
290 judiciously, more flexibility could save millions of dollars
291 which could be directly applied to emergency food assistance
292 programming.

293 The upcoming reauthorization of the farm bill is another
294 key opportunity to optimize the reach and efficiency of U.S. food
295 assistance programs. In previous reauthorization efforts, USAID
296 has worked closely with this committee, as well as the
297 agricultural committees, to make technical changes to Title II
298 under the Food for Peace Act. These changes resulted in greater
299 flexibility and improved programming for emergency and
300 non-emergency food assistance programs. The 2023
301 reauthorization offers similar opportunities.

302 Once again, I want to reiterate my gratitude for this
303 committee's leadership and partnership. Together, we are
304 ensuring communities have access to lifesaving assistance during

305 this crisis.

306 While in Somalia and Kenya earlier this week, although I
307 was met by a dire situation, I also saw the impact of U.S.
308 assistance and U.S. leadership.

309 I look forward to our continued partnership, as we respond
310 to this emergency, and looking ahead, I welcome the opportunity
311 to work with you to make our food security programs flexible and
312 fit for purpose in an increasingly hungry world. I look forward
313 to your questions.

314 [The statement of Ms. Charles follows:]

315

316 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

317 Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Ms. Charles.

318 I now recognize Ms. Barry for five minutes.

319 STATEMENT OF MAURA BARRY

320

321 Ms. Barry. Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul, and
322 distinguished members of this committee, I am really grateful
323 and thankful to be here today and to be able to speak to this
324 committee about such an important and such a pressing issue.

325 And I want to start off really by thanking you all for your
326 leadership and really appreciate, as was already mentioned, to
327 see that the reauthorization of the Global Food Security Act was
328 introduced, and we really appreciated the opportunity, my
329 colleagues and I, to work with all of you and your staff on that.

330 And also, you know, really appreciate that the Global
331 Malnutrition Treatment and Prevention Act was passed in the House
332 earlier this year, because it really brings much-needed attention
333 to a critical issue of food security. And, you know, it is because
334 of your commitment that America continues this legacy that it
335 has of its leadership in the fight against hunger.

336 I have worked in international development for over 30 years.

337 I started my career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, and
338 I have lived and worked in many countries. And several of those
339 are the countries that are being hit the hardest right now by
340 this crisis, including Somalia and Afghanistan, Sri Lanka.

341 While we are living in what I would say are unprecedented
342 times, the seeds of the current food security crisis have been

343 growing for the last half-decade. But now, as we have all been
344 saying, the situation is much worse because of Russia's invasion
345 of Ukraine. And Russia's war on Ukraine has contributed to
346 dramatic increases in extreme humanitarian needs, as Sarah was
347 highlighting, and also has contributed to increases in global
348 food, fuel, and fertilizer prices.

349 The impact of rising prices, as we see here in the United
350 States and all across the globe, it immediately changes household
351 budgets. And so, parents are struggling to feed their children
352 at the table, and we know that rising fuel and fertilizer prices
353 are having an impact on agricultural production and really limit
354 dietary diversity.

355 At the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, we are very
356 much concerned about the high prices for fertilizer and fuel.

357 And a recent analysis by the International Food Policy Research
358 Institute, IFPRI, suggests that 74 percent of the expected
359 increase in poverty and 63 percent of expected increase in hunger
360 this year will be due to the high fuel and fertilizer costs.

361 And even if prices do go down over the year, farmers are
362 already suffering from a lack of access to fertilizer. We know
363 that farmers are buying less, and in many cases they are not buying
364 fertilizer at all because they can't afford it. So, we expect
365 that there will be greatly reduced agricultural production which
366 could continue throughout 2023 and perhaps beyond.

367 But I would say that, despite this very bleak outlook, I
368 am optimistic. You know, I am optimistic because I think we know
369 what we need to do. And Feed the Future as an initiative is a
370 really effective tool for lifting families out of poverty and
371 helping communities bounce back from disaster. And I have seen
372 the results myself numerous times on the ground, and I wanted
373 to share one recent story.

374 Actually, it was last year before the worst of the drought
375 hit the Horn. But I took a trip to northeastern Kenya and I met
376 with a woman who was a herder, like many people in that region.

377 And she was sharing with me how U.S. assistance through the Feed
378 the Future Initiative really transformed her life. She was able
379 to shift and start producing food. She was able to use irrigation
380 and tap into a local stream. She started, also, poultry rearing.

381 And I could see with my own eyes her sort of greenfield in what
382 was otherwise a very stark landscape. And, you know, she was
383 able to put healthy food on the table for her children. She was
384 able to sell vegetables and eggs in the market and send her kids
385 to school. And so, I think that she also was a great model in
386 her community.

387 And I think it is examples like those and so many others
388 that really demonstrate how Feed the Future is able to provide
389 a boon to farmers in the face of outstanding odds. And so, I
390 look forward to this opportunity today to focus on this important

391 issue and look forward to your questions.

392 Thank you.

393 [The statement of Ms. Barry follows:]

394

395 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

396 Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Ms. Barry.

397 I will now recognize members of five minutes each.

398 And pursuant to House rules, all time yielded is for the
399 purpose of questioning our witnesses.

400 I will recognize members by committee seniority, alternating
401 between Democrats and Republicans.

402 Please note that I will be strict in enforcing the 5-minute
403 rule on time limitation for questioning because of the limited
404 amount of time, and I know we have votes coming up sometime soon.

405 I will start by recognizing myself for five minutes.

406 Mr. Putin's most recent attack on the Port of Odessa, in
407 violation of an agreement to unblock the port and release grain
408 shipments, underscores both his depraved indifference towards
409 millions of people, including in Africa and beyond, who rely on
410 Ukrainian grain, and his willingness to use food insecurity as
411 a weapon of war. While the World Food Programme has announced
412 reductions in food rations across the board, Russia appears poised
413 to sell stolen grain to some countries in greatest need.

414 So, I ask, Ms. Charles, I guess first, what is your assessment
415 of Putin's reported attempts to use food as a bargaining chip
416 and in some cases a weapon?

417 Ms. Charles. Thank you, Chairman Meeks, for that question.

418 I, first, want to say there is no question, and I think this
419 committee has been united, that Putin is conducting not just a

420 war on Ukraine, but a war on the world's poor and the world's
421 most food insecure. As you said, Ukraine is the bread basket
422 of the world and a major supplier of wheat, vegetable oil, and
423 corn to, among others, the World Food Programme for their use
424 in places of extreme food insecurity around the world.

425 We strongly condemn the Russian missile attack on the
426 Ukrainian port. Clearly, it is necessary to get grain out of
427 Ukraine, and whether or not this deal is successful will depend
428 on Russia's compliance with the terms of the deal.

429 Maura, do you want to add anything to that?

430 Ms. Barry. I would just say that I think we know whether
431 or not grain starts to move, I mean, the damage already inflicted
432 upon Ukrainian farmers and the agricultural production, not just
433 in Ukraine, but globally, is already there.

434 And so, I know USAID is providing support to Ukrainian
435 farmers to help them have access to finance, to better have access
436 to inputs like fertilizer, and helping them repair some of their
437 farm equipment that has been damaged. So, we have quite an effort
438 going on to support Ukrainian farmers, and then, also, addressing
439 the impact of this crisis globally.

440 Chairman Meeks. So, are there other locations or sources
441 of grain that could be used to fill the gap caused by Putin's
442 bombing at the Odessa port? Either one of you.

443 Ms. Barry. Are you asking if the Ukrainian wheat could be

444 replaced? I think already we know that the production is going
445 to be significantly less this year for Ukrainian farmers of wheat.

446 So, even if they are able to move wheat now out of Ukraine, we
447 know that there will be probably a 50 percent reduction in what
448 they are able to move this year.

449 Chairman Meeks. I realize that, but I am more asking, is
450 there other places or other locations or other sources where we
451 also could find some grain that can be used to help fill the gap
452 because of what Putin is doing?

453 Can you hear me?

454 Ms. Charles. Sorry. We have seen some countries increase
455 their production, but there is no substitute for what was coming
456 out of Ukraine, and that is, in part, why we are seeing spiking
457 prices continue around the world. And that is exacerbating the
458 already dire situation caused by the shortage of the wheat, corn,
459 and vegetable oil.

460 Chairman Meeks. So, we see, for example, because I have
461 real concerns about a looming possible starvation. In Yemen,
462 according to the WFP, nearly 21 million people are in need of
463 humanitarian assistance; 19 million are food insecure, and nearly
464 4 million children under five require urgent treatment for acute
465 malnutrition due to the ongoing conflict.

466 So, how is the USAID working with other multilateral
467 organizations and other donors to address the humanitarian

468 catastrophe that is further worsened? And we had it even before
469 the Russian invasion, but it is worsened by the Russian invasion
470 of Ukraine.

471 Ms. Charles. I think Yemen is one of the most tragic cases
472 of where we are seeing Putin's senseless war on Ukraine play out.

473 Because, even in light of a historic ceasefire in Yemen that
474 should bring relief to the Yemeni people, they are at the same
475 time faced with skyrocketing costs of fuel, of grain, and of food
476 prices, more generally.

477 So, we have been able to scale up our assistance
478 significantly due to the supplemental, both supplementals, in
479 Yemen, but, clearly, more is needed and we are putting a tremendous
480 amount of effort into getting, in particular, the Gulf to step
481 up in a way that they really haven't in the last year or two,
482 in response to increasing needs in Yemen.

483 Chairman Meeks. All right. And just real quickly, I want
484 to get this in because I think there was a communication gap that
485 we had.

486 But is the USAID looking or building inclusive resilience
487 and strengthening local institutions to protect against similar
488 food insecure situations for the future, so we don't get back
489 into this type of bind that we are in now?

490 Ms. Barry. Yes, certainly, through the Feed the Future
491 Initiative, USAID is making a lot of investments to work with

492 partner institutions in many countries to strengthen the capacity
493 and the resilience. I think we have a lot of good examples of
494 investments in resilience, working in partnership with our
495 colleagues in the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, where we
496 are making investments, so that communities can bounce back faster
497 and be more resilient in the face of recurrent humanitarian
498 crises.

499 Chairman Meeks. All right. Thank you. My time has
500 expired.

501 I now will recognize Ranking Member McCaul. The floor is
502 yours for five minutes.

503 Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

504 I would like to follow up on the chairman's question. Again,
505 as I said in my statement, I was very disappointed, but not
506 surprised, because I was very skeptical we can trust Putin with
507 any sort of agreement. And I know this is a little bit out of
508 your bailiwick, but the U.N. and Turkey had negotiated this
509 agreement to get a third of the global wheat supply and the
510 fertilizer out of the port. And within 24 hours, the Russians
511 meet that with a bombing campaign on Odessa, which that shows
512 a complete lack of trust and lack of good faith, as they bomb
513 grain silos in Ukraine.

514 If we can't get it out of the port -- and we tried other
515 ways, too. Like when I was in Romania, we talked about a railcar

516 bridge, and the Russians blew it up, but we were there. I know
517 there has been talk of taking it west out to some of maybe the
518 Baltic states.

519 And I know logistics is not your deal in this area, but what
520 is going to be the impact if Ukraine can't get any of this wheat
521 out? Because I do think Putin's strategy is to eventually go
522 to Odessa, cut the Black Sea off, and then starve the Ukraine
523 people. I mean, what impact will that have on Africa and, you
524 know, the world?

525 Ms. Charles. So, maybe first, we are working closely, not
526 just our two bureaus, but across the U.S. Government, with
527 European Union partners and others, to maximize storage options
528 inside of Ukraine and, also, as you mentioned, rail and other
529 methods of getting Ukrainian wheat out through Europe. But there
530 is no substitute. It is going to take years to grow kind of rail
531 capacity to move wheat out through Ukraine. There is no
532 substitute for what is stuck in the Odessa ports right now, for
533 what can continue to be moved through those ports, if there is
534 compliance with this deal.

535 So, I know a number of our partners, UNOCHA and WFP, in
536 particular, are very involved in building the communication and
537 technical dialog to move wheat aggressively out, but, of course,
538 that depends on Russian compliance with the deal and cooperation
539 with the deal.

540 I understand there is going to be a classified Member
541 briefing later today where I think our State Department colleagues
542 can go into a few more details about assessments of that
543 compliance.

544 Mr. McCaul. Yes, and what is the status -- I mean, this
545 is the last harvest that is sitting there, and they have another
546 one, but, I mean, as they get bombed. I mean, I just find it
547 very tragic. And it is why the world should care about Ukraine.

548 We always get this back home, "Why is Ukraine so important?"

549 Because this is going to cause migration problems; it is
550 going to cause destabilization problems; it is going to cause
551 terrorism that we are seeing on the rise in the Sahel.
552 Afghanistan you talked about. We are seeing ISIS and Al Qaeda
553 on the rise again. And we are going to see millions of children
554 dying. It could be one of the worst I have seen in my lifetime.

555 So, I commend your job. It is certainly heroic, but a very,
556 very difficult job.

557 If I could ask you about these cargo shipment containers?

558 I know that you have to go with certain cargo ships, but isn't
559 this such a big deal right now that we could waive that requirement
560 in the name of emergency?

561 Ms. Charles. So, we definitely welcome efforts by Congress
562 to work with us on the cargo preference. We are in compliance
563 with the cargo preference requirements. The reality is there

564 is limited capacity among U.S. flag vessels to move the bulk of
565 the assistance that we are moving around the world. And so, we
566 try to use that U.S. flagged fleet when it is available, but there
567 are times when we have to go beyond that.

568 Mr. McCaul. And you do have metrics that you are using to
569 prioritize the countries? And what are the top countries?

570 Ms. Charles. That are receiving U.S.-sourced in-kind food?

571 The top countries right now are certainly Yemen and the Horn
572 of Africa. We have smaller programs in other places, but the
573 bulk of our U.S.-sourced in-kind commodities go to Ethiopia,
574 Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, a small amount to Kenya, but Somalia,
575 and Yemen.

576 Mr. McCaul. Okay. And the destabilization is going to be
577 a real impact on the world.

578 So, anyway, thank you two for what you do.

579 And, Mr. Chairman, I see my time has expired.

580 Chairman Meeks. Thank you.

581 The gentleman yields back.

582 I now recognize Representative Brad Sherman of California
583 for five minutes.

584 Mr. Sherman. Thank you.

585 Thank you for, I believe, sharing with us that you have the
586 authority to use non-U.S.-flagged vessels when the U.S.-flagged
587 vessels are not available.

588 I know we were all shocked by the Russian attack on the Odessa
589 port, but I should point out that that port has a lot of facilities
590 -- some naval, some commercial -- unrelated to food and medicine,
591 and some related to food. So, I don't regard that as the end
592 of the deal.

593 You are in the business of providing food. In order to get
594 the food there, you need fuel. Fuel and food are at a very high
595 price these days. Do you need more money than you asked for when
596 you didn't know that food and fuel would be as expensive as they
597 are today?

598 Ms. Charles. We are certainly seeing spiking prices across
599 the world of food and fuel that is making the delivery of
600 assistance much, much more expensive. The same amount of funding
601 reaches fewer people than it did two years ago, certainly, and
602 I certainly look forward to working with the appropriators as
603 we look forward to, in particular, the year 2023.

604 Mr. Sherman. The appropriators' bills in a good year would
605 become law in December. People are hungry now. I don't know
606 how much you have in the pipeline. Do you need an emergency
607 supplemental or are you in a position to deal with your current
608 budget -- you know, with a Continuing Resolution, so no increase
609 -- through the end of the year?

610 Ms. Charles. We are trying to manage, particularly, the
611 second Ukraine supplemental in such a way that we are still able

612 to make investments in the first quarter of next year, as we
613 anticipate the worst of this food crisis hitting much of the world.

614 Mr. Sherman. Okay. Turning to Tigray, I think many of us
615 here in Congress and in the administration were quite loud in
616 our demands that Ethiopia allow food in. And now that is
617 happening to a decent degree, except you have got to be able to
618 move the food around. The Ethiopian government isn't allowing
619 the fuel trucks in in the quantities necessary to provide the
620 fuel. Do we have the documentation that shows that fuel that
621 the Ethiopian government does allow in Tigray is being used for
622 food distribution and not being diverted for military purposes?

623 Ms. Charles. Sir, I am not often in the position to deliver
624 good news, but we have actually had a small breakthrough in
625 northern Ethiopia just in the last few days. We have long been
626 working to negotiate a fuel waiver with the government of Ethiopia
627 that would allow WFP to directly import fuel from Djibouti into
628 northern Ethiopia. And I understand, as of yesterday, 10 fuel
629 tankers have crossed the border and are on their way to Tigray
630 right now. We think this will be quite significant in allowing
631 us to continuously move assistance through the --

632 Mr. Sherman. That is good news. And I will point out, the
633 Ethiopian government was intent, and especially the Eritrean
634 government was intent, on starving the people of Tigray as a weapon
635 of war. The pressure that came from the United States I think

636 was decisive in them partially abandoning that tactic.

637 The Rohingya are running out of food, particularly in one
638 camp. But, in general, the amount raised is less than the World
639 Food Programme needs. We are providing 50 percent. What can
640 we do to provide more? What can we do to provide others more?

641 And are those wealthy Muslim countries contributing to feeding
642 the hungriest Muslims in the world?

643 Ms. Charles. So, Bangladesh is certainly one of the 23
644 countries that we are prioritizing, particularly for the Rohingya
645 right now, with supplemental funding in order to increase
646 assistance, not just in Cox's Bazar, but also particularly --

647 Mr. Sherman. Are the Saudis contributing?

648 Ms. Charles. None of our fellow donor partners have stepped
649 up in the way that they need to. And in particular, we would
650 like to see the Gulf do significantly more in Bangladesh, but
651 also in the Horn of Africa, in Yemen, and elsewhere.

652 Mr. Sherman. Thank you. I yield back.

653 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

654 I now recognize Representative Chris Smith of New Jersey,
655 who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global
656 Health, and Global Human Rights, for five minutes.

657 Mr. Smith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

658 And thank you to our two very distinguished witnesses for
659 your leadership and for your testimony today. Thank you so much.

660 Two questions. First, on the Global Food Security Act
661 reauthorization. You know, just for the record, it was Dr. Shah,
662 USAID Administrator, who came, testified, met with me, met with
663 Betty McCollum, and a few of us, back in 2014. He helped us write
664 a bill, with the NGOs providing a tremendous amount of input.

665 It passed the House that year, and then, two years later, under
666 the reauthorization of 2016 and 2018. And it has made, I think,
667 a difference.

668 One of the provisions in it, as you know, was the First 1,000
669 Days. And I am always concerned that when we are dealing with
670 such an acute crisis, that food supplementation which mitigates
671 stunting, and it is very good for maternal health, as well as
672 the health of the child from conception to the second birthday,
673 somehow we don't lose focus on that. So, if you could speak to
674 that?

675 And secondly, in your testimony, Ms. Barry, you pointed out,
676 rightfully, the need to defend against a variety of challenges,
677 including, quote, "pests." Well, last July, with the strong
678 support of Chairman Meeks, Chairwoman Bass, and Michael McCaul,
679 the House passed my bill, H.R. 1079, the Desert Locust Control
680 Act, to create an interagency working group to devise a strategic
681 plan to mitigate the threat to crops and food security that is
682 posed by locusts.

683 As you recall, we were going through a horrible crisis then.

684 And as WFP and others will say now, because of the drought, that
685 has been largely mitigated -- but droughts go away, hopefully,
686 sooner rather than later -- we could be right back into a locust
687 problem, as you know.

688 It passed a full year ago. Any help you can give us on trying
689 to get the Senate to get that legislation passed -- it is a modest
690 bill; it is a bipartisan bill, and I think it will make a
691 difference. If you are forewarned, if you preplan, then you are
692 more prepared -- we are all more prepared -- for a challenge such
693 as the locusts reemerging in large numbers.

694 So, those two issues. Ms. Charles?

695 Ms. Charles. First of all, I want to thank you for your
696 leadership on the locust issue. As I mentioned, I just came back
697 from Kenya and Somalia. And while I don't want to do anything
698 to minimize the crisis that the region is facing right now, one
699 thing I heard from partner after partner was it could be worse,
700 and really highlighting how strategic investments, not the least
701 of which since 2019 in addressing the locust issue, and building
702 the capacity to more aggressively and quickly respond when we
703 do have locusts outbreaks, has been critical in helping mitigate
704 the crisis there, which is not to say we are not facing a crisis.

705 And I also want to highlight, you know, there is a lot of
706 attention in a food crisis to the food, but we are doing a number
707 of interventions, including that \$200 million investment in the

708 RUTF pipeline, as well as wraparound nutrition and health services
709 to ensure, again, that children are spared from the worst of this
710 crisis.

711 Mr. Smith. Ms. Barry?

712 Ms. Barry. Representative Smith, really a great
713 opportunity to thank you for your commitment to this issue and
714 your bringing up that you were there when the first act came out,
715 you know, and --

716 Mr. Smith. And it was Dr. Shah's idea, a great idea.

717 Ms. Barry. And it was Dr. Shah's idea. And I recall it
718 well. I was working in Kenya at the time, yes.

719 I think in this, we recently, last October, came up with
720 -- we revised the strategy for the Global Food Security Act, and
721 we were able to take into consideration some of the most pressing
722 challenges of the day -- you know, at that time, looking at COVID;
723 at increased conflict around the world, as well as climate change.

724 One of the things we did in that strategy was really elevate
725 and recognize the need to elevate nutrition. I think that has
726 been really important. So, a lot of work that we are doing under
727 the new strategy is strengthening our coordination on not just
728 emergency response to nutrition, but taking into consideration
729 the needs around food fortification, and right now, in terms of
730 with the supp that we have, looking at food fortification, looking
731 at how we can help countries with food loss and waste, as an

732 important issue.

733 And, of course, the issue around locusts, just like Sarah
734 said, thank you for your work on that. And we have certainly
735 worked together on the humanitarian development side with experts
736 across our agency to address that issue. And we know that it
737 remains a threat.

738 Mr. Smith. Again, a nice word from you guys to the Foreign
739 Relations Committee could help get that bill out of the committee.

740 Let me just, finally say -- I have only got 26 seconds --
741 I have authored three major laws on combating autism. The most
742 recent is called the Autism Cares Act. It came out of case work
743 in my district back in 1997, when we realized we had a really
744 huge, unmet need on autism.

745 One of the findings that the Autism IMEC has found through
746 its research is that folic acid can help mitigate the incidence
747 and the prevalence of autism. I just hope supplementation, in
748 addition to food, continues to be as robust as humanly possible.

749 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Ted Deutch
750 of Florida, chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North
751 Africa and Global Counterterrorism, for five minutes.

752 Mr. Deutch. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

753 Ms. Charles and Ms. Barry, thanks for joining us today.
754 This is a really important hearing and a really timely one.

755 And I thank Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul for

756 continuing to make global food and the security a bipartisan
757 issue, and a significant part of the committee's agenda.

758 I want to talk about combating food insecurity as a national
759 security issue. At a moment when we are talking about Ukraine
760 -- and I think, Ms. Charles, you described Putin's war on the
761 world's poor, which I think is powerful and appropriate -- but
762 also COVID, climate change, economic constraints. It is a
763 really, really challenging time, and the potential for mass
764 disruptions has never been greater.

765 And so, I would like to try to make this more -- I want to
766 do two things. One, I want to make this more personal. Beyond
767 the numbers, which are staggering, from your travels, can you
768 give us just some perspective on what it means when millions of
769 people are food insecure?

770 Ms. Charles. I just came back from Somalia and northern
771 Kenya. And being in northern Kenya, speaking with mothers who
772 kind of one by one down the line were holding children that looked
773 like they were nine months, 12 months, but were actually
774 three-four years old, but had been ravaged by food insecurity,
775 severely malnourished; and also, mothers that were with children
776 that were recovering from severe malnutrition.

777 We have the tools. We really do have the tools to address
778 what we are seeing. It is devastating. And, in particular, when
779 you hear them say they have lost hundreds and hundreds of

780 livestock, so their prospects for recovery are also -- longer-term
781 recovery -- are also impacted, and made all the more devastating
782 by, in a place like northern Kenya, it actually had strived since
783 the last drought, since the last food crisis in terms of the
784 government's capacity to respond. But because they are faced
785 with spiking fuel and food prices throughout the country, their
786 fiscal space -- because they are so indebted, including indebted
787 to China -- their fiscal space to use the tools that they have
788 in place, to increase social safety nets, to do more drilling
789 in the north, to help these individuals and these families ride
790 out this climate shock, are limited because of what Putin has
791 done in Ukraine.

792 Mr. Deutch. Ms. Barry, Ukraine feeds 400 million people
793 around the world, I think a conservative estimate. What does
794 it mean when Putin launches this war, which is so unjustified
795 and illegal and horrific in so many other areas, but in this area,
796 in particular, what does that mean?

797 Ms. Barry. I think your questions around what it means are
798 important and talking about, you know, sort of the personal
799 experience. We know what it means right now. We see the
800 catastrophe that is happening in terms of food security.

801 I am reminded, I worked in Somalia back in the early 1990s
802 when they had a famine. That was manmade. It was caused by war.

803 And I think that country has suffered generations from that.

804 So, when a country's food systems are destroyed like that,
805 the recovery period is not quick. And so, I think right now what
806 it means is that many farmers and many food systems are being
807 disrupted, and families are really suffering. And we see that
808 this year alone we may have 40 million more people slipping into
809 extreme poverty, which is really devastating.

810 Mr. Deutch. But tell me, tell us what that means.

811 Ms. Barry. To live in extreme poverty?

812 Mr. Deutch. Yes.

813 Ms. Barry. I think the numbers of -- I might look to a
814 colleague of what it is --

815 Mr. Deutch. Don't worry about the number.

816 Ms. Barry. Okay.

817 Mr. Deutch. What does it mean for the families?

818 Ms. Barry. What it means for those families is they lose
819 a livelihood. They become homeless. They usually end up in a
820 displaced camp. They lose their livestock, their livelihood.

821 Mr. Deutch. And I appreciate that.

822 In the less than a minute I have left, we talked a lot about
823 Yemen. The situation in Syria is still dire. You talked about
824 other places in Africa. You said that getting our Gulf, getting
825 the Gulf to step up in ways that they haven't. Can you just tell
826 us what that means? And can we stop talking about this in terms
827 of just meeting, doing enough or not doing enough, and talk about

828 what it means when some of the wealthiest countries in the world,
829 who are our important partners in so many ways, are not doing
830 what they need to to help?

831 Ms. Charles. And I would even say, it is not even in ways
832 that they haven't. They have in the past. You know, in 2016
833 and 2017, we did see the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Emiratis put
834 resources into humanitarian response in Syria and Yemen. But
835 they haven't done that in significant numbers in the last couple
836 of years. You know, a pledge from Saudi Arabia is something like
837 \$180 million for Yemen. Not all of that has arrived yet. It
838 means cutting rations in a place like Yemen. It means families
839 doing with 50 percent less than they would if Saudi Arabia put
840 in what they did just two or three years ago.

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

842 I now recognize Representative Steve Chabot of Ohio, who
843 is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,
844 Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, for five minutes.

845 Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

846 I would, first, note that both witnesses referred to
847 skyrocketing energy costs as being an important aggravating
848 factor in increased food costs, and the scarcity of available
849 food for those across the globe who so desperately need that food,
850 who are literally starving.

851 Well, it is the Biden Administration's own policies,

852 self-inflicted policies, that have directly led to cost really,
853 those very high energy costs. Cancelling the Keystone XL
854 Pipeline right out of the box, it was almost the very first day,
855 if not the first day, of the administration taking office they
856 cancelled that, killed thousands of jobs -- discouraging oil and
857 gas exploration and drilling; crushing regulations, and on and
858 on.

859 You don't have to respond to those questions. So, let me
860 get to a couple of other questions. But I think that was something
861 that really needed to be said.

862 As the chairman mentioned, I am the ranking member of the
863 Asia-Pacific Subcommittee. And so, I would like to focus my first
864 couple of questions on the Indo-Pacific.

865 Ms. Charles, the situation in Sri Lanka remains dire. Could
866 you describe USAID's efforts, and the efforts of our partners
867 also, to help alleviate the acute crisis there in Sri Lanka?

868 Ms. Charles. Sir, in the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance,
869 we have provided approximately \$5 million to --

870 Mr. Chabot. Could you pull the microphone just a little
871 closer?

872 Ms. Charles. Yes. Sorry.

873 Mr. Chabot. That is all right. Thank you.

874 Ms. Charles. In the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, we
875 provided approximately \$5 million just in the last month or so

876 to reach the most vulnerable families impacted by the current
877 crisis. We have also deployed a humanitarian advisor to work
878 with partners in the ground to identify what further action might
879 need to be required in Sri Lanka.

880 Mr. Chabot. All right. Thank you.

881 Ms. Charles. But today, Sri Lanka is one of those countries,
882 like Kenya and like Lebanon, two-three years ago, we wouldn't
883 have had Sri Lankans receiving humanitarian assistance.

884 Mr. Chabot. Right. Right, right. And we, too, also note
885 that the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative, and the debt that so
886 many countries have taken on that can't afford that, has had a
887 very big impact on them. So, that is something that the rest
888 of the world I think recognizes for the most part, but it is
889 something that the PRC deserves a lot of criticism for.

890 Let me ask you another question, Ms. Charles. Could you
891 speak to how Russia's invasion of Ukraine is impacting vulnerable
892 populations in the Indo-Pacific; specifically, Bangladesh? I
893 am co-chair of the Bangladesh Caucus. So, maybe you could start
894 there, and also discuss any impacts that you are seeing on the
895 Rohingya -- and I know Mr. Sherman referred to the Rohingya --
896 and the Burmese people, in general.

897 Ms. Charles. I think Bangladesh, and particularly, the
898 Rohingya population, are one of those where we see the world's
899 most vulnerable are paying the price for Putin's war in Ukraine

900 and facing again both skyrocketing prices, but also attention
901 and resources from other donors, not from the United States --
902 we have managed to scale up our assistance, thanks to the
903 generosity of Congress -- but other partners are cutting back.
904 So, at a time when needs are increasing, we are seeing other
905 partners step back, as resources have been diverted to respond
906 to Putin's unprovoked war in Ukraine.

907 Mr. Chabot. Thank you.

908 And, Ms. Barry, moving beyond the Indo-Pacific generally,
909 while support for Ukraine is pretty solid in at least the developed
910 world, support is not so uniform in the so-called Global South.

911 As a matter of public diplomacy, could you describe how the United
912 States is making Russia pay a reputational cost, at least, for
913 driving up food and energy prices in countries that are lukewarm
914 in their condemnations of Russia?

915 Ms. Barry. I think that is a good question that I will
916 respond to. And Sarah might want to add to it.

917 But I think, through our investments in the Feed the Future
918 Initiative, and with the supp, we are really doubling down on
919 our support to countries that are being impacted the most by
920 Russia's war in Ukraine. We are being very explicit in our
921 messaging around that. We are working closely with our folks
922 on the ground at the embassies and getting out that message, as
923 the supp goes. And we are using every opportunity through local

924 media to ensure that we are getting that message across.

925 Mr. Chabot. All right. Thank you.

926 Ms. Barry. So, I think that gets to your question. I don't
927 know if, Sarah, you want to add to it.

928 Ms. Charles. I was traveling over the last few days with
929 Administrator Power to the Horn of Africa. She had just also
930 come from Zambia and Malawi. And one of the top messages in those
931 travels is not just what the United States is doing, but what
932 Russia is doing as well to fuel this crisis, and what partners
933 -- not partners -- but other countries like China aren't doing
934 in the face of this global crisis.

935 Secretary Blinken, similarly, Ambassador
936 Thomas-Greenfield, all across the administration, really trying
937 to drive that message home, that this is Russia's war and the
938 world's war.

939 Mr. Chabot. Thank you. My time is expired, Mr. Chairman.

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

941 I now recognize Representative Bill Keating of
942 Massachusetts, who is the chair of the Subcommittee on Europe,
943 Energy, Environment and Cyber, for five minutes.

944 Mr. Keating. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for our
945 witnesses.

946 You know, we spend a lot of time -- rightfully so -- on the
947 effects of Russia and Russia's war on the food supply and targeting

948 Ukrainian agriculture, seizing agricultural assets, blocking the
949 Black Sea. We all know that and they should be condemned in that,
950 among so many other reactions, that they do have.

951 But I want to look at, since that has been covered, other
952 areas where we should really look at our food supply issues in
953 the instant sense, but also down the road, and deal with those
954 issues. You know, there have been increases in metric tons of
955 wheat, for instance, even in 2021 and 2020. So, we have a lot
956 of grain out there. We have a lot of wheat out there.

957 And there are other reasons for this. I want to dwell on
958 three things. And I certainly want to dispel the idea that the
959 Keystone Pipeline has anything to do with the food supply, which
960 is, to me, frankly, a ridiculous statement, with all due respect
961 to my friend.

962 The three issues are the global stockpiling effect that
963 occurs. We have seen it in India, Egypt, other countries as well,
964 and the protectionist type of policy around grain hoarding that
965 is there.

966 Secondly, the shipping and supply chain issues. Are there
967 ways we can look at improving that situation, because it is just
968 not a crop problem; it is a supply problem.

969 And certainly, the effect of market, the market effect of
970 panicking, the panicking market effect which I think we have seen
971 as well.

972 And the need for better forecasting. The last
973 administration, frankly, cut --

974 Chairman Meeks. Hold. Someone, please, someone mute your
975 phones.

976 Mr. Keating. I would like to reclaim my time because of
977 that interruption, if I could, Mr. Chairman.

978 Chairman Meeks. Give the gentleman back 10 seconds.

979 Mr. Keating. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

980 The third point was the panic market situation that happens,
981 and the necessary forecasting science to be improved. So, we
982 move away from the glut situation to lower production and can
983 forecast that better, and the need to improve our agricultural
984 statistics department that exists, where the cuts were made in
985 the last administration, and the importance of that.

986 So, those three things, if you could comment? Then, I will
987 just yield back my time after you through with that.

988 Ms. Barry. Maybe I will chime in on the third one first,
989 just on better forecasting. You know, we have the opportunity
990 to do some great work in the interagency working with NASA on
991 forecasting, working on a program we call SERVIR, which has been
992 a fantastic tool we have been able to use to help small farmers
993 in many different countries have better information on the impact
994 of incremental weather, and have better information for when they
995 should plant; when they should harvest. So, that has been a

996 fantastic partnership.

997 And also, in partnership with NASA, we are helping Ukraine
998 better understand what is going on in terms of their fields.
999 Like we were able to see the occupied farmland that Russia has
1000 taken over. It is 22 percent of Ukraine right now.

1001 So, I think those investments in being able to help farmers
1002 around the globe to have better forecasting are so important,
1003 as well as work that we do with organizations like IFPRI -- and
1004 I know BHA does with FEWS NET -- on forecasting are really
1005 important investments.

1006 In terms of global stockpiling and hoarding, yes, an issue
1007 that we are all concerned with. We have been, through Feed the
1008 Future, making investments to work with government counterparts
1009 on their policymaking to ensure that the information is out there.

1010 We can't stop the hoarding, but, certainly, giving the guidance
1011 and the tools to explain why that is not a good investment for
1012 their own economies --

1013 Mr. Keating. It would be a sin to have people starving while
1014 grain is just sitting in silos. And that is why forecasting is
1015 so important. And that is why it relates to the growth production
1016 as well.

1017 So, continue, please.

1018 Ms. Charles. I will add on that, getting countries to lift
1019 their export bans has been a key priority of the entire

1020 administration. In fact, traveling on from Somalia and Kenya,
1021 Administrator Power was going to India. One of the things on
1022 her list, in addition to highlighting the important Global
1023 Development Partnership there, is to really focus on trying to
1024 get them to lift some of their export bans, particularly those
1025 that are impacting the countries that are most hit by this.

1026 We have seen some countries, like Indonesia, walk back from
1027 their export bans that they put in place on the wake of Russia's
1028 invasion of Ukraine, and we will continue to use all of the
1029 diplomatic tools across the government to try and get markets
1030 to function as they should.

1031 Mr. Keating. Good. We did touch on supply chain, but if
1032 you could do that, perhaps, in writing afterwards, because my
1033 time has expired?

1034 And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

1035 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
1036 recognize Representative Joe Wilson of South Carolina, the
1037 ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North
1038 Africa, and Global Counterterrorism, for five minutes.

1039 Mr. Wilson. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I am
1040 glad to see onscreen a few minutes ago, to see the black belt
1041 karate champion, Lee Zeldin. And so New York is well represented
1042 today.

1043 And with that in mind, I really do appreciate the witnesses

1044 today.

1045 And I have actually seen the success of the U.S. Agency for
1046 International Development, the generosity of the American people,
1047 the humanitarian aid. I've seen firsthand the earthquake
1048 recovery that occurred at Muzaffarabad, Pakistan; typhoon
1049 assistance to the Philippines; agricultural development in
1050 Guatemala, and famine relief at the refugee camps in Sudan, along
1051 with the schools for boys and girls in Afghanistan.

1052 With that in mind, as the war criminal Putin continues his
1053 genocidal invasion of sovereign Ukraine, the world continues to
1054 pay the price. Global hunger has risen at a staggering rate;
1055 threatening famine conditions affecting hundreds of millions of
1056 people. Putin alone is responsible for the grain and fertilizer
1057 shortage, as his thugs have set fire to fields, looted silos,
1058 attacked merchant ships in the Black Sea, and destroyed
1059 infrastructure to export agricultural goods.

1060 For each of our witnesses today, Congress recently provided
1061 another \$8 billion in emergency funding, over two Ukraine
1062 supplementals for humanitarian response to Putin's war and the
1063 global food aid. Since then, there have been concerns raised
1064 that the United States Government has not been expedient as
1065 possible in getting these funds out to help the vulnerable people
1066 who are suffering from hunger in many countries around the globe.

1067 Can you tell us how the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance

1068 and the Bureau of Resilience and Food Security are working to
1069 get this emergency funding out the door? Are there any
1070 roadblocks/impediments that have delayed implementation? What
1071 can we do in a bipartisan manner to assist you in your efforts?

1072 Ms. Charles. First of all, Representative Wilson, I am so
1073 glad that you have been able to see the importance of U.S. foreign
1074 assistance in response to disasters around the world.

1075 We are moving aggressively and urgently to program the
1076 supplemental funding, the nearly \$6.95 billion that was
1077 appropriated in international disaster assistance. We have
1078 already programmed over \$2 billion from the first Ukraine
1079 supplemental, over \$2.2 billion from the second supplemental.

1080 So, that is nearly 60 percent of the combined supplemental
1081 funding has been programmed already, and we are moving
1082 aggressively to program the balance.

1083 We have done this in a way that is responsible, that is
1084 targeted, that is strategic. We have really reprioritized within
1085 the agency. We have had a surge of Contracting Officers in order
1086 to move this assistance quickly and responsibly.

1087 There are longer-term challenges with support for
1088 contracting throughout the agency and, in particular, for the
1089 Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. And we look forward to
1090 working with this committee to address those longer-term needs,
1091 even as we have reprioritized to put a number of additional surge

1092 resources on programming this funding.

1093 Ms. Barry. And if I may just add, I am very thankful for
1094 this committee's support to address the more medium- and
1095 longer-term issues of this crisis. And so, in the supp, we
1096 received \$763 million. The notifications for all of those
1097 resources to address the development needs are currently at
1098 Congress, and we have got plans to move them as soon as they are
1099 cleared through Congress.

1100 Thank you.

1101 Mr. Wilson. And for each of you, it is very legitimate to
1102 have a concern about the accountability of the funding that is
1103 going, and that we know that kleptocracy occurs around the world.

1104 But we also know that in the legislation there is provision for
1105 Inspector General reports and monitoring of the funds.

1106 How can we assure the taxpayers of America that, indeed,
1107 the funding that they are providing is not being wasted; that
1108 it is going for the purposes that we all want it to go for? And
1109 it is just so critical to reassure the American people.

1110 Ms. Charles. Thank you, Representative Wilson. You are
1111 absolutely right, and one of the reasons why we have put such
1112 an emphasis on not just responding quickly, but responding
1113 responsibly.

1114 We are working with very experienced partners, partners that
1115 are experienced in working in some of the hardest environments

1116 in the world. We work with them on risk mitigation plans. We
1117 have third-party monitoring contracts in place in almost all of
1118 these countries in order to have eyes and ears, separate eyes
1119 and ears, on where this programming is going. And we insist that
1120 all of our partners report immediately and investigate any
1121 instances of fraud, waste, and abuse.

1122 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

1123 I now recognize Representative Ami Bera of California, the
1124 chair of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia,
1125 and Nonproliferation, for five minutes.

1126 Mr. Bera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again, thank you
1127 to the chairman and ranking member for their diligent interest
1128 in food and water insecurity around the world and the impact that
1129 it is having.

1130 Congressman Deutch touched a little bit on what the future
1131 might look like. You have global instability; food and water
1132 insecurity with climate change. You know, it is not going to
1133 last, but, unfortunately, it is going to increase. We have seen
1134 those disruptions, certainly, most prominently, in the African
1135 continent, but certainly in other parts of Asia, South America,
1136 Central America, as well. And we understand that that is going
1137 cause displacements.

1138 One of the programs that I am most proud about in the Global
1139 Food Security Act is the university-led Feed the Future Innovation

1140 Labs, and there is currently 21 Innovation Labs across 14 U.S.
1141 universities, including my home institution, UC Davis, where I
1142 really do think important work is being done to help us address
1143 some of these challenges. I will use, you know, some of the
1144 technology that is coming out with better seeds that will require
1145 less fertilizer and less water.

1146 And maybe if the witnesses could talk a little bit about
1147 the importance of these Innovation Labs to help us address some
1148 of these challenges?

1149 The other area that I have been working with UC Davis and
1150 others on is the area of alternative protein use, and so forth.

1151 The technology looks very promising. Obviously, it is not at
1152 a commercial scale. But if we can get some of these breakthrough
1153 innovations, that is also another tool that we might be able to
1154 deploy around the world to help address food/protein insecurity
1155 and water insecurity.

1156 So, if either one of the witnesses want to talk about the
1157 Innovation Labs, and then how we best can support R&D to help
1158 tackle some of these 21st century challenges around food and water
1159 insecurity?

1160 Ms. Barry. Nice to see you again, Representative, and thank
1161 you for those questions.

1162 And, of course, the investments in research and development,
1163 particularly through the Innovation Labs, as you mentioned, we

1164 partner with 21 U.S. universities, which, in turn, partner with
1165 an additional 70 U.S. universities and colleges working from 40
1166 different states here in the United States.

1167 And also noting that we partner with international research
1168 institutions; I think over 170. We know that investments in
1169 agricultural research have a huge impact, as we know that
1170 investments in agricultural economic-led growth have the
1171 strongest impact of lifting lower-income countries out of
1172 poverty. An important piece of that, of course, is investments
1173 in research.

1174 And we saw a recent economic analysis that looked at our
1175 investments over the past 40 years in agricultural research and
1176 development. And they showed that, for every dollar invested,
1177 it provided a return of \$8.52 in economic impact. And I think
1178 that tells a really strong story.

1179 So, we are grateful that we have the support to continue
1180 those investments. And like you said, you know, some of the
1181 research that is coming out of that now that we are taking to
1182 scale to respond to this crisis include drought-resistant seeds,
1183 innovations around food loss and waste, which are just so critical
1184 and important for the work that we are doing.

1185 In terms of alternative protein sources, that is also
1186 something really important. We talked earlier in this hearing
1187 about the importance of nutrition. And while perhaps in the

1188 countries that we work, looking for alternative meat may not look
1189 like the same as it does here in the United States -- I don't
1190 think folks are looking for veggie burgers -- it is important
1191 to find ways to get protein into diets. So, a lot of the work
1192 that we do is promoting the growth of pulses and legumes, and
1193 integrating those into other crops, which provides a source of
1194 protein, not just for diets that is affordable, but it also helps
1195 improve the health of soil in many of the places that we work
1196 around the world.

1197 Mr. Bera. And, yes, if I think about my lifetime, in my
1198 younger days in the 1970s we thought about Bangladesh as this
1199 place that had real famines due to flooding and that would kill
1200 their rice crops. Through innovation, we were able to come up
1201 with flood-resistant rice seeds, and so forth, and get Bangladesh
1202 to a place where it can feed itself. And so, I think technology
1203 is going to be a huge component of how we address this 21st century
1204 challenge.

1205 And with that, Mr. Chairman, let me go ahead and yield back.

1206 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

1207 I know we have a limited time before votes. I will have
1208 Representative Wagner give her questions, and then we will recess
1209 until after votes. And so we will come back immediately after
1210 votes. So, other members can leave to go vote now. I understand
1211 there is two votes. But Representative Wagner will ask the last

1212 set of questions before we recess.

1213 Representative Wagner from Missouri, vice ranking member
1214 of the full committee, is now recognized for five minutes.

1215 Mrs. Wagner. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

1216 And I thank our witnesses for their incredible service.

1217 I recently had the privilege of traveling with a bipartisan
1218 delegation, led by the chairman and ranking member, to Moldova,
1219 to Switzerland, Prague, and Vienna. Again and again, our
1220 counterparts raised serious concerns regarding food security in
1221 Eastern Europe and across the developing world.

1222 In the two months since we returned from Europe, the global
1223 food crisis has only become more acute. Inflation is driving
1224 up food and energy prices everywhere, and Russia has sought to
1225 use hunger as a weapon of war, even attacking the Ukrainian Port
1226 of Odessa, a key conduit of the global grain trade, just a few
1227 days ago. And at the time of the strike, Russia had just committed
1228 not to attack Odessa because of its importance in alleviating
1229 food insecurity.

1230 The global food crisis is a tragedy, and in deliberately
1231 disrupting food supply chains, Russia has again displayed its
1232 utter disregard for human rights and human dignity. The United
1233 States must redouble its efforts to ensure food aid is delivered
1234 swiftly and efficiently, and push our partners to set up their
1235 own donation programs also.

1236 Ms. Charles, do the United States and our global partners
1237 have access to conflict-affected areas in the east and the south
1238 of Ukraine? To what degree is Russia hindering humanitarian
1239 convoys and corridors? And I guess, what are the biggest
1240 operational constraints that you see?

1241 Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question.

1242 And I couldn't agree with you more about the impact of Putin's
1243 war, not just on Ukraine, but on the immediate region and beyond,
1244 as we have been talking about today.

1245 We have seen a massive scale-up in humanitarian assistance
1246 as a result of increased need inside of Ukraine. The United
1247 States alone has provided over a billion dollars of assistance
1248 inside of Ukraine.

1249 But there is no question that there are access constraints
1250 that Russia is absolutely responsible for. We see, even in areas
1251 of the east, where we had partners that had access after the first
1252 Russian invasion of Ukraine, de facto authorities in those areas
1253 have denied them registration and approval to operate in those
1254 areas, even as we hear from people in those areas of spiking need,
1255 growing food insecurity, increased communicable diseases. There
1256 is no question that Russia and the de facto authorities could
1257 be doing much, much more to facilitate access to people that are
1258 caught in the east, in particular.

1259 Mrs. Wagner. Thank you.

1260 Also, I think it is worth pointing out that the chaotic
1261 withdrawal from Afghanistan has created a humanitarian crisis
1262 and, in particular, skyrocketing levels of malnutrition in
1263 children.

1264 Ms. Charles, how is USAID addressing needs in Afghanistan?

1265 Recent reports illuminate concerning trends regarding the
1266 Taliban's increasingly brazen actions to disrupt impartial
1267 humanitarian aid delivery. What is the United States doing to
1268 address this issue, ma'am?

1269 Ms. Charles. The U.S.-supported partners reached a record
1270 18 million Afghans this past year, 11 million of those reached
1271 with U.S.-supported food assistance. We have actually seen, even
1272 while the conditions in Afghanistan continue to deteriorate, we
1273 have actually seen the food security situation for Afghans, we
1274 have seen slight improvements over the last 9 to 12 months,
1275 directly attributable to the assistance provided by the United
1276 States through our partners there.

1277 But that is being threatened by increasing obstruction and
1278 attempts by the Taliban, and other armed actors in Afghanistan,
1279 to meddle with the delivery of impartial humanitarian assistance.

1280 So, even as we have scaled up assistance, we have to engage,
1281 both directly and indirectly, to really push back on attempts
1282 of the Taliban to --

1283 Mrs. Wagner. Ms. Charles, real quickly, and you may have

1284 to submit this for the record, but to Ms. Barry and Ms. Charles,
1285 how have your Bureaus coordinated on implementing
1286 congressionally-directed emergency food aid, and what challenges
1287 or impediments have you faced during coordination?

1288 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady's time has expired. And
1289 I don't know if you are in danger of missing votes or not.

1290 Mrs. Wagner. I am actually in the cloakroom, Mr. Chairman.
1291 But I am pleased to either have them submit, the witnesses there,
1292 in writing, or whatever you prefer, sir.

1293 Chairman Meeks. All right. In fairness to all, then let
1294 the witnesses respond in writing.

1295 Mrs. Wagner. Right. Thank you. I thank you very much,
1296 and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

1297 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back. And the
1298 committee will stand in recess until we do the two votes.

1299 But I see -- wait a minute -- let's see, who do I see? Oh,
1300 Representative Titus, have you voted already?

1301 Ms. Titus. No, sir. I was thinking there is 183 people
1302 still haven't voted. I don't know if we have time to do questions
1303 now. But I can come back, if you would prefer.

1304 Chairman Meeks. Well, it is your choice.

1305 Ms. Titus. Well, I could go ahead right now, if that is
1306 all right.

1307 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady is recognized for five

1308 minutes.

1309 Ms. Titus. Thank you, sir. I would like to go back to the
1310 question Mr. Chabot introduced about Sri Lanka. You talked
1311 generally about it, but I want to be more specific and get these
1312 figures on the record because they are pretty drastic.

1313 Three in 10 households, or approximately 6.25 million Sri
1314 Lankans, are unsure where they are going to get their next meal.

1315 And if the situation, both politically and economically doesn't
1316 improve soon, some people have speculated that that number is
1317 going to increase to 22 million, or one-third of the population,
1318 in the next year or so.

1319 Last month, USAID introduced \$11.75 million for new
1320 assistance to Sri Lanka, and that included \$5.75 million to
1321 address food insecurity and \$6 million to support the agriculture
1322 industry. That is all great for down the road, that agriculture
1323 investment, but I wonder what we are doing right now to provide
1324 relief to those 60 percent of the people who don't know where
1325 the next meal is coming from.

1326 Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question. And I think,
1327 as was mentioned previously, in Sri Lanka, we are seeing this
1328 perfect storm of spiking prices, but also how the debt crisis,
1329 in many ways fueled by debt from China, is driving hunger across
1330 the world, but also constraining the fiscal space for countries
1331 to deal with these longer-term food security challenges.

1332 We have responded with approximately \$5 million in emergency
1333 assistance for Sri Lanka, and we have also deployed a humanitarian
1334 advisor to Sri Lanka to work with the team on the ground to identify
1335 what further assistance might be needed for the most vulnerable
1336 families in Sri Lanka. But, clearly, a more systematic response
1337 is needed.

1338 Ms. Titus. Well, how do you know who to work with, when
1339 the government is in such turmoil?

1340 Ms. Charles. So, in this case, we are working with
1341 humanitarian partners, including the World Food Programme, to
1342 deliver that emergency assistance.

1343 Ms. Titus. Okay. All right. Well, you didn't tell me much
1344 more than what I really knew, but okay.

1345 One other thing I would ask quickly is, all of these programs
1346 are great and you do a lot with few resources, but they are all
1347 reactive. We seldom get ahead of the problem. And I just wonder
1348 how you are using data to kind of plan and do programmatic
1349 analysis, so we can anticipate some of these problems and try
1350 to get ahead of them, instead of just having to respond after
1351 the fact, which sometimes takes a long time, and in the meantime,
1352 people are starving.

1353 Ms. Barry. If I could just chime in on that question? It
1354 is an excellent question. You know, the Feed the Future
1355 Initiative has been implemented for over a decade now, and that

1356 is designed exactly for what you are talking about. So, we are
1357 able to make investments in medium- and longer-term needs.

1358 And in terms of what we are doing right now, in terms of
1359 the supplemental, and maybe to talk a little bit about Sri Lanka,
1360 with your question, you know, we are looking to support
1361 smallholder farmers who are impacted by the crisis right now to
1362 help them from slipping further into poverty. But we are also
1363 providing some short-term assistance there on the nutrition side
1364 for children that have need.

1365 But, in terms of the long-term investments, I think we are
1366 working in areas of recurring humanitarian crisis, in partnership
1367 with BHA, to help families be more resilient for the next shock.

1368 We have seen, during COVID, we were able to look at some
1369 of the evidence out there in Uganda and Malawi, where we saw that
1370 investments we made in zones of influence, where the U.S. future
1371 investments were going, families were able to be more resilient
1372 to the impacts of the COVID crisis than in neighboring areas.

1373 It wasn't to say that they weren't impacted by the crisis, but
1374 they certainly were more resilient than other families.

1375 Ms. Charles. And even within the humanitarian portfolio,
1376 where we talk a lot about our response investments, we also invest
1377 in early warning systems across the world, including working very
1378 closely with partners at NOAA and U.S. Geological Survey, NASA,
1379 and other science agencies across the government on, among other

1380 things, the Famine Early Warning System that helps us use limited
1381 U.S. foreign assistance in order to target areas that are most
1382 in need, in order to act early, in order to avert the worst
1383 outcomes. They are not just doing assistance everywhere in a
1384 country, but really honing-in on places where needs are most acute
1385 and using that early warning to target assistance.

1386 Ms. Titus. Thank you. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
1387 letting me go ahead. And I yield back.

1388 Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

1389 The committee will stand in recess, and we will resume after
1390 the second vote. The committee is now in recess.

1391 [Recess.]

1392 Chairman Meeks. The House will now reconvene, and I will
1393 start by recognizing Representative Perry of Pennsylvania for
1394 five minutes.

1395 Mr. Perry. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1396 Ladies, I appreciate you being here and for your testimony.
1397 We have heard a lot about the various, what I would call, supposed
1398 causes of global food insecurity. I come from a farming
1399 community, and in the fall, in October, we have thing called the
1400 farmers' fair. We know how to farm. I can talk to you about,
1401 you know, million-dollar pieces of iron pulling into the field
1402 and doing acres upon acres in minutes of time. We know how to
1403 farm and make farming practices effective and productive, not

1404 only in the United States, but worldwide.

1405 I mean, Norman Borlaug, whose statue sits not far from us,
1406 likely credited for the salvation of hundreds of millions of
1407 people, I think would be -- he would be rolling over in his grave
1408 if he saw the policies that global elites are demanding in the
1409 name of what I am going to start characterizing as so-called
1410 sustainable agricultural practices.

1411 I am glad both of you, as witnesses, understand the
1412 importance of fertilizer in a global agricultural system. The
1413 increased cost of fertilizer and fuel, or the inability to obtain
1414 fertilizer, have wreaked havoc on farmers across the globe.

1415 I think it is important to mention the impact of the Green
1416 New Deal policies on the global food shortage. And I would just
1417 refer to -- I know there has been a lot of discussion about it
1418 today -- Sri Lanka, where, in 2021, synthetic fertilizers and
1419 pesticides were banned -- were banned. Now, they have got a great
1420 ESG score, but they can't eat. Predictably, at least to me, this
1421 policy change has wreaked havoc in that country, and other than
1422 overturning the government and forcing people into poverty and
1423 potential starvation, the government has spent nearly half a
1424 billion on rice imports.

1425 This is going to fall on deaf ears, some folks on this
1426 committee. But I would just urge you to please do not impose
1427 these nonsensical policies from your vantage point. Synthetic

1428 fertilizer and many of technologies pioneered since Norman
1429 Borlaug's time helped lift these very countries out of poverty,
1430 and now, we're headed back there to try and help them, to demand
1431 these policies at multilateral and bilateral settings that would
1432 prohibit them from utilizing the innovations that we have come
1433 up with, which is, frankly, insulting and in the long term
1434 potentially deadly.

1435 I would like to start out with Ms. Charles. In your written
1436 testimony, you mentioned the difficulty posed to USAID by
1437 statutory requirements imposed by the Cargo Preference Act;
1438 specifically, the requirement that at least half of all tonnage
1439 -- all tonnage -- is shipped on U.S.-flagged vessels. I would
1440 love for that to be the case. Do you know how many U.S.-flagged
1441 bulk vessels there are in the fleet? I am just asking. It is
1442 not like a "gotcha" question. I am just asking if you know.

1443 Ms. Charles. Three.

1444 Mr. Perry. Three, right? Yes, we both know that,
1445 apparently. That is good that we know that. It just
1446 artificially inflates the shipping costs and makes it difficult,
1447 and you see it firsthand.

1448 I would ask you this question, and then I will turn to Ms.
1449 Barry for a secondary question. But what policy changes would
1450 you support in reducing the burdens that you face? Would you
1451 support a modification to the requirement in the Cargo Preference

1452 Act or some sort of waiver exemption?

1453 And then, for Ms. Barry, based on what is occurring in Sri
1454 Lanka -- and quite honestly, to echo the questions of the
1455 gentlelady, my colleague from Nevada, Ms. Titus, to get ahead
1456 of the problem -- is USAID considering denouncing publicly the
1457 consequences of ESG and the pursuit of sustainability?

1458 So, the first question is for Ms. Charles.

1459 Ms. Charles. So, thank you. I think you have highlighted
1460 the challenges with supply of U.S.-flagged vessels. And
1461 certainly, we would be eager to work with the committee on some
1462 relief in that space as well.

1463 I will say we estimate that waiving or notwithstanding cargo
1464 preference requirements in 2021 would have amounted to a \$31
1465 million cost savings and could have fed 16 million more people.

1466 Mr. Perry. How many more? A million people?

1467 Ms. Charles. Sixteen million more people.

1468 Mr. Perry. That is a lot of people. That is a lot of money.

1469 Just waiving the requirement -- I would like to go further, but
1470 at least you are advocating for that.

1471 Ms. Charles. Having said that, we do stay in compliance
1472 with the --

1473 Mr. Perry. I understand, as you should, as you must.

1474 All right. Ms. Barry, my question regarding getting in
1475 front of the problem and identifying it. It is not just issues

1476 of climate. I mean, Sri Lanka, it could have been predicted,
1477 once they banned fertilizer and pesticides used in the modern
1478 world effectively and safely. So, is there any appetite to really
1479 get to the root of the problem that we are having right now?

1480 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I think
1481 investments through Feed the Future are really taking advantage
1482 of what you mentioned earlier, you know, about the great
1483 innovations here in the United States and helping smallholder
1484 farmers look at what are all the tools in the toolbox.

1485 So, I think Sri Lanka is a good cautionary tale for us to
1486 look at. And right now, in response to this current crisis, and
1487 when it comes to fertilizers, we are helping farmers make the
1488 right decisions and look at what is available, and how they can
1489 use fertilizers --

1490 Mr. Perry. But if a country bans them --

1491 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

1492 Mr. Perry. -- I am hoping that you will sound the alarm.

1493 Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance.

1494 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Dean
1495 Phillips of Minnesota for five minutes.

1496 Mr. Phillips. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1497 My first question for both of you is relative to Port Odessa
1498 and, of course, Friday's announcement of an important deal to
1499 open the port for exports. Twenty-four hours later, two Russian

1500 missiles attack the port. What is the current status as of right
1501 now, most updated as to the circumstance at the port? And what
1502 is the prospective likelihood of it opening for exports?

1503 Ms. Charles. Sir, I think afternoon there will be a
1504 classified briefing, where I think our colleagues from the State
1505 Department can give additional details.

1506 But, as of today, we understand the Joint Coordinating
1507 Committee, the JCC, will stand up for the first time. They are
1508 working on communication and deconfliction protocols.

1509 I think success or failure of this deal will land in the
1510 lap of Putin and the Russian forces in terms of whether they are
1511 going to allow the wheat to get out Odessa.

1512 Mr. Phillips. And to that end, what are the implications?

1513 It will land in his lap, certainly, but what are the implications
1514 if it opens and, of course, the consequences if it doesn't?

1515 Ms. Charles. I mean, I think we have already seen the
1516 devastating impact of having that port offline. Just in the food
1517 assistance space, the Black Sea region provided 50 percent of
1518 WFP's food aid that they used around the world. We have seen
1519 prices spike as a result of that coming offline, and even as we
1520 have worked with the European Union and other partners to increase
1521 storage inside of Ukraine, and try and get out through other means,
1522 it can't be replaced by taking the Port of Odessa offline.

1523 Mr. Phillips. Okay. And my second question is more micro,

1524 but, of course, around the world, small farms and small producers
1525 are kind of the backbone of food supply. And perhaps you can
1526 speak to the challenges that you are facing in ramping up those
1527 small operations? I know fertilizer is a challenge. Climate
1528 change is affecting. But what role do small producers, small
1529 farmers play in trying to mitigate these great challenges, and
1530 what could we do better?

1531 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question.

1532 I think, you know, as you said, smallholder farmers are the
1533 backbone of the economies of so many countries where we work.

1534 And so, through the Feed the Future Initiative, our focus is
1535 on working with smallholder farmers to help lift them up out of
1536 their situation, and rolling out and scaling innovations that
1537 we know do work; promoting drought-resistant seed, for example,
1538 and other technologies related to food loss and waste. We working
1539 on a lot of those technologies.

1540 I hope that gets at your question.

1541 Mr. Phillips. But what are the challenges? What are the
1542 great challenges right now that you are facing relative to
1543 supporting them, ramping up those producers, and inspiring more
1544 entrepreneurship, you know, more farms?

1545 Ms. Barry. Yes. I think some of the big challenges are
1546 access to finance for smallholder farmers, of course, and then
1547 just access to fertilizer and other inputs, because of the

1548 disruption to supply chains. So, we are -- yes.

1549 Mr. Phillips. And how are you handling the access to
1550 fertilizer? Is there any way to mitigate that at all?

1551 Ms. Barry. What we are doing right now is we are looking
1552 for partnerships with the private sector. We are working on
1553 helping farmers get access to finance for fertilizer, and then
1554 we are helping them with more efficient use of fertilizers, so
1555 that they can use less fertilizer or use a fertilizer, I should
1556 say, more efficiently for production, and look at blending
1557 fertilizers. So, just getting information out there, getting
1558 access to fertilizer out there, when it is possible; looking at
1559 local productions of fertilizer.

1560 Mr. Phillips. And relative to financing, that seems to me
1561 the easiest challenge to solve. But what are the impediments
1562 to doing so, and how might we be helpful?

1563 Ms. Barry. I think some of the impediments are just, you
1564 know, when it comes to finance for smallholder farmers, full stop.

1565 And the risk that is involved can be challenging, but we are
1566 working closely with other partners in the U.S. Government, like
1567 the DFC. We are working with AFDB to see what innovative
1568 solutions we can come up with.

1569 Mr. Phillips. Okay. Is it a lack of resources, a lack of
1570 intention? I want to understand what prevents more
1571 entrepreneurship in developing nations relative to food supply.

1572 So, I am trying to probe a little bit. Can you share any more?
1573 Ms. Barry. I think lack of resources, you know --
1574 Mr. Phillips. So, it is a lack of resources?
1575 Ms. Barry. A lack of resources is part of, is definitely
1576 part of the problem, and the risk that is involved is part of
1577 the problem. Yes.
1578 Mr. Phillips. Okay. All right. Well, thank you.
1579 I yield back.
1580 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now
1581 recognize Representative Darrell Issa of California for five
1582 minutes.
1583 Mr. Issa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to follow
1584 right behind that, Ms. Barry. You mentioned small farms. Isn't
1585 one of the problems particularly in some of the countries that
1586 are most impacted that they are farm--small farms because, purely
1587 from a standpoint of sort of their socialist past, they have
1588 divided large acreage into small acreage? Even though you don't
1589 operate there, we will take Zimbabwe for example. They were once
1590 the breadbasket of Africa; today they don't feed themselves and
1591 yet they have the same amount of arable land.
1592 Isn't one of the challenges that we face making sure that
1593 efficient farming is a practice in many of these countries in
1594 which aid is most needed?
1595 Ms. Barry. I think, you know, we recognize smallholder

1596 farmers are so important to the backbone of the economy, and we
1597 are working with small and medium --

1598 Mr. Issa. That didn't answer my question. I am not trying
1599 to do a "gotcha."

1600 Ms. Barry. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

1601 Mr. Issa. Smallholder farming, in most cases, particularly
1602 wheat production, and to a certain extent corn and other
1603 commodities, in fact is adverse to efficiency. Isn't that
1604 correct?

1605 Ms. Barry. I'm not sure I would answer that question, so
1606 maybe I can get back to you on the record.

1607 Mr. Issa. If you would, please. I think you could fly over
1608 the so-called flyovers of America and find out that we don't do
1609 small farming and we do it more efficiently, and that in fact
1610 socialism, dividing up into five-acre lots, destroyed Zimbabwe
1611 from a standpoint of being able to feed itself.

1612 Moving on, I want to go to Ms. Charles. Historically USAID
1613 has had a role in Lebanon, but the role has been both through
1614 the U.N. and separately for refugees, first the Palestinians,
1615 then others, including the Syrians. With the collapse of the
1616 Lebanese pound and the absence of ability even to gain funds that
1617 are available many, many Lebanese now live in adverse poverty
1618 who were just two years ago globally considered middle class.

1619 What changes are you making to respond to that?

1620 Ms. Charles. So we made the extraordinary decision, about
1621 18 months, ago to start providing humanitarian assistance to
1622 vulnerable Lebanese citizens. We have--

1623 Mr. Issa. And how large is that?

1624 Ms. Charles. About \$58 million since 2021, as part of an
1625 overall assistance package of about 210 million. About
1626 three-quarters of that was for Syrian refugees that were in
1627 Lebanon. And historically that's where our support has gone,
1628 but because of the adverse economic conditions, we did decide
1629 to start providing assistance to vulnerable Lebanese.

1630 That was a very difficult decision, because it wasn't as
1631 a result of war or natural disaster; it was because of this
1632 economic collapse, and it's not a sustainable way to address
1633 Lebanon's economic challenges.

1634 Mr. Issa. No question at all. I might disagree only in
1635 that Lebanon has been at war for decades. The war simply was
1636 its own form of cold war were Iran, through Hizballah, has
1637 continued to destabilize the country, kill leaders, and so on.

1638 One of the areas historically that is the poorest, of course,
1639 is the Shi'a in the south. That is also the area in which
1640 Hizballah gets a lot of credit for their so-called humanitarian
1641 work. How do you de-conflict areas that are essentially
1642 sympathetic and part of a base of the problem versus other areas?

1643 How do you make those decisions? We know you don't make it based

1644 on religion, but how do you make it based on areas under control
1645 of other outside funds, including funds from Iran?

1646 Ms. Charles. So, we make the decisions really at the level
1647 of household. So we're not targeting assistance based on
1648 specific geographies, but looking at particularly vulnerable
1649 households--

1650 Mr. Issa. So the poorest could be those most in the pocket
1651 of Hizballah or they could be the least. It is just a matter
1652 of poverty?

1653 Ms. Charles. We provide assistance impartially. And in
1654 particular, you know, in a place like Lebanon, it's really again
1655 targeted at the most vulnerable households: female head of
1656 households, households particularly elderly. Yes.

1657 Mr. Issa. For either one of you, but probably for Ms. Barry,
1658 the United States is the--probably the largest producer of
1659 corn-based ethanol in the world by far. Every pound, every bushel
1660 of corn that gets turned into ethanol or other uses is the
1661 alternate feedstock to wheat that is not available. Is it time
1662 to at least consider doing a surge of corn production or others
1663 even if that means a backing off of ethanol?

1664 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired, so that
1665 would have to be answered in writing.

1666 I now recognize Representative Tom Malinowski of New Jersey,
1667 the Vice Chair of the Full Committee, for five minutes.

1668 Hearing not from Mr. Malinowski, I will now go to
1669 Representative Levin from Michigan for five minutes.

1670 Mr. Levin. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I really want to thank
1671 you for holding this vital hearing. What an important topic.

1672 I will let the witnesses and members of this committee know
1673 that I am in the middle of a markup in the Education and Labor
1674 Committee and we are taking up a bill focused on domestic food
1675 security, and specifically ensuring our kids can access healthy
1676 meals in schools. Access to one of our basic needs, food,
1677 shouldn't be a question in 2022. Yet in fact far too many people
1678 across our globe are facing food insecurity, enduring extreme
1679 hunger, and succumbing to famine.

1680 I would like to start by asking about the Global Fragility
1681 Act and food insecurity. In 2019, in December of that year I
1682 believe, Congress passed the bipartisan GFA which requires the
1683 development of a whole-of-government, multi-sectoral, and
1684 integrated approach to prevent and mitigate conflict and build
1685 sustainable peace.

1686 In April, the Biden Administration announced the law's four
1687 priority countries and one region: Haiti, Libya, Mozambique,
1688 Papua New Guinea, and coastal West Africa. Successful
1689 implementation of the GFA is more urgent than ever.

1690 So Assistant Administrator Barry, how will the
1691 administration address food insecurity caused by the war in

1692 Ukraine in the priority GFA context, particularly in Haiti, Libya,
1693 and coastal West Africa?

1694 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. It was great to
1695 see the Global Food--the Global Fragility Act pass, and certainly
1696 some of those countries are the same countries where the global
1697 food security strategy are--is focused. They're Feed the Future
1698 focus countries; that is in Haiti and Mozambique and some of the
1699 places in coastal West Africa, which creates great opportunities
1700 for us to make sure that we're bringing to bear all the best of
1701 U.S. ingenuity to address what are extremely complex problems.

1702 And we know that certainly food security can be a compounding
1703 issue when it comes to security in a country, something that we
1704 talked about earlier in this hearing.

1705 Mr. Levin. All right. Turning to the nexus between hunger
1706 and conflict, there are far too many conflicts and wars today,
1707 from Yemen, to Ethiopia, to Ukraine, where hunger is used as a
1708 weapon of war to devastating effect. Conflict-sensitive
1709 approaches to food assistance can create more effective, more
1710 sustainable humanitarian interventions while ensuring that food
1711 aid will not be co-opted by bad actors or contribute to the
1712 conflict by failing to account for the local political, social,
1713 and economic conditions.

1714 Assistant Administrator Charles, as you seek to provide food
1715 aid to countries in conflict how does the Bureau for Humanitarian

1716 Assistance ensure that its food assistance is not making the
1717 situation worse and increasing the possibility of violence and
1718 conflict?

1719 Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question. I think it's
1720 been a major area of focus and development, even the last decade
1721 of providing humanitarian assistance and in particular food
1722 assistance, to do it in a conflict-sensitive way, everything from
1723 deep engagement around issues of access to ensure that partners
1724 are able to deliver assistance in an impartial way, using our
1725 diplomatic tools around that in places like northern Ethiopia
1726 and elsewhere, to even at the community level working with our
1727 partners on issues of targeting in a way that supports
1728 peace-building and doesn't exacerbate conflict even at the very
1729 local level.

1730 Mr. Levin. Is USAID actively focused on ways it can better
1731 equip humanitarian organizations and actors providing food aid
1732 to ensure that their approach aligns with conflict sensitivity
1733 principles and doesn't further exacerbate conflict dynamics or
1734 increase social tensions or marginalize vulnerable groups? It
1735 is hard work. I mean how is that coming?

1736 Ms. Charles. Yes, in addition to working with partners at
1737 the kind of individual program level on conflict dynamics. We
1738 also support research and development of best practice,
1739 proliferation of that best practice in the humanitarian community

1740 around these issues of conflict-sensitive delivery of assistance.

1741 Mr. Levin. So can you give me a specific examples of working
1742 with such groups where we were really able to change or improve
1743 things?

1744 Ms. Charles. So, you know, it's everything from--I just
1745 got back from a trip to northern Kenya and Somalia, and in northern
1746 Kenya it's working again with our partners at a very, very local
1747 level on identifying beneficiaries in a way that's transparent
1748 and constructive, that takes into account dynamics between
1749 individual communities and tries to minimize conflict that way.
1750 It's also investing in--

1751 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired. The
1752 gentleman's time has expired.

1753 Mr. Levin. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

1754 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Mark Green
1755 of Tennessee, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the
1756 Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, Migration, and
1757 International Economic Policy, for five minutes.

1758 Mr. Green. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member
1759 McCaul. And I want to thank our witnesses for being here today.

1760 You have a tough challenging job and a long day today, so thanks
1761 for being here.

1762 As the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee
1763 I would like to focus my time on the region under my purview first

1764 and then make one quick comment.

1765 Latin America has sometimes been referred to as the world's
1766 breadbasket also as it is the largest net food exporting region
1767 in the world. Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil are among the world's
1768 top 10 exporters of agricultural products and many other countries
1769 in the region are major food producers. Chances are your morning
1770 cup of joe comes from Latin America. According to the USDA
1771 Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, and Central America produce 86 percent
1772 of America's coffee. Additionally, Brazil is the world's largest
1773 beef exporter. America's Brazilian beef imports have surged 500
1774 percent earlier this year, and 93 percent of our fresh fruits
1775 come from just nine Latin American countries.

1776 Yet despite the region's remarkable agricultural
1777 productivity the Inter-American Development Bank reports that
1778 there are still 42.5 million under-nourished people in Latin
1779 America and the Caribbean. That is a tragedy. Food insecurity
1780 and malnourishment are undoubtedly part of the root causes of
1781 our border crisis. Combined with the pull factors such as the
1782 open border that the Biden Administration has, the migration
1783 crisis is no surprise. Both the push and pull factors must be
1784 addressed if we are to reduce migration and the often dangerous
1785 border crossings which hit an all-time record in May of this year.

1786 We have to secure our border and we need to do that by a
1787 myriad of things: First, not repealing Title 42, re-implementing

1788 migrant protection protocols, and may other things. But that
1789 is not what we are here to talk about today.

1790 Today there is an area where Democrats and Republicans agree,
1791 and that is on the push factors and creating opportunities in
1792 Latin America. And myself and Chairman Sires have a bill, the
1793 Western Hemisphere Nearshoring Act. I am hopeful that bill
1794 will be calendared, Mr. Chairman, and in a markup soon. And any
1795 of my colleagues who want to provide input on that, I would love
1796 to hear it.

1797 I would also like to take a stab before I go to my questions
1798 at Chairman's Meeks' question that he asked you earlier about
1799 are there substitutes to the loss of Ukraine--Ukrainian wheat
1800 and corn? And Tennessee is one of the nation's biggest ag
1801 producers. It is our number one export. And we are making cars,
1802 we are making all these--but ag is still our number one export.

1803 And I will tell you that across the country, because of fertilizer
1804 prices, our farmers are using less fertilizer. So we expect
1805 yields are going to be significantly down relative to our normal
1806 production. So answer in one respect Chairman Meeks' question,
1807 no, the substitutes are not going to be there.

1808 Further, our President's assault on the energy sector which
1809 significantly increased the price of diesel way before the war
1810 started has. Every plow that drags across--or a combine that
1811 crosses a field and pulls in grain is going to actually cost a

1812 ton more because of the increase in diesel price. That is going
1813 to have an impact on production.

1814 And there are two other reasons that are specific to
1815 Tennessee that I would like to mention: We are going to decrease
1816 production for two reasons, too, because one, we are turning our
1817 farmland into solar fields; and two, people fleeing California
1818 and New York looking for freedom in Tennessee and Texas and Florida
1819 are turning the farmland into housing developments. We are
1820 losing our farmland.

1821 So, no, there are no substitutes, Mr. Chairman. We are going
1822 to have some significant world problems with this decrease in
1823 production.

1824 My question: does the administration consider hunger in
1825 Central America a driver of migration? And if so, what is the
1826 administration doing to address that hunger issue? Either of
1827 you can hit that.

1828 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question, and I think, you
1829 know, hunger is--certainly can be one of many drivers. So Feed
1830 the Future initiative is working in some parts of Latin America
1831 to help smallholder farmers, particularly coffee farmers and
1832 whatnot, to help improve their livelihoods. So absolutely, we
1833 are doing some work there. And I know through the supp; thank
1834 you very much, we're also looking at a larger set of countries
1835 including in the Caribbean to help support issues around hunger.

1836

1837 And just to mention also I know that during the Summit of
1838 Americas there was a number of agricultural producing countries
1839 that came together and made some commitments to try and work
1840 together to solve some of the hunger problems.

1841 Mr. Green. And I will take this question in writing since
1842 I am about to run out of time. Your thoughts on the fertilizer
1843 price's impact in Latin America. If you all could send me a letter
1844 or note on that, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

1845 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1846 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Colin
1847 Allred of Texas for five minutes.

1848 Mr. Allred. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this
1849 important hearing. And thanks to our witnesses for appearing
1850 before the committee to answer our questions. As you all have
1851 discussed throughout the day in this hearing the world is
1852 currently beset by a confluence of major crises: the war in
1853 Ukraine, climate shocks causing extreme weather, and the
1854 continued fallout from COVID-19, all combining and resulting in
1855 unseen hunger levels in modern times.

1856 According to the World Food Programme as many as 828 million
1857 people go to bed hungry every night. The number of those facing
1858 hunger and acute food insecurity has soared from 135 million to
1859 345 million just since 2019. We have seen that such major shocks,

1860 particularly in fragile states already suffering from weak
1861 institutions, can leave these places more susceptible to
1862 political instability forced migration, and at greater risk of
1863 conflict and violence. According to the data collected by the
1864 World Food Programme 60 percent of the world's hungry people are
1865 currently living in areas afflicted by violence. USAID has a
1866 strategy focused on countering violent extremism, or CVE, to
1867 foster the self-reliance of communities in partner countries to
1868 prevent violent extremist challenges that threaten to derail
1869 their development. Democracies and global stability have never
1870 been more at risk, something that has been a focus of mine in
1871 my time in Congress.

1872 Can you explain how your work to combat food insecurity
1873 incorporates the USAID's CVE programming to reduce the risk of
1874 recruitment, and two, and support for violent extremism and build
1875 the capacity and commitment of our partners in government, civil
1876 society, and the private sector to prevent and counter the violent
1877 extremist threats that we face?

1878 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I think, you know,
1879 broadly speaking just to, you know, iterate that, the Feed the
1880 Future initiative is focused on ending hunger, malnutrition, and
1881 poverty. And I think those are key--can be key drivers behind
1882 violent extremism.

1883 Mr. Allred. Yes.

1884 Ms. Barry. So where we're working in countries--in fact
1885 all the countries that we work in right now with the supplemental
1886 are being impacted in one way another by internal conflict,
1887 conflict, or by extreme violence like you mentioned. So it's
1888 certainly top of mind for us. And we work closely across our
1889 agency and with the interagency to see--to work on our approaches
1890 so that they can be integrated and we can better pool our funding
1891 in those communities that are being impacted the greatest.

1892 Mr. Allred. Sure.

1893 Ms. Charles. So our delivery of humanitarian assistance
1894 is prioritized according to need, but there's no question that
1895 there's an intersection between areas where extremists tend to
1896 operate and increased humanitarian need. And so as I was
1897 discussing with your colleague Representative Levin, we've really
1898 worked over particularly the last decade, but in recent years
1899 to ensure that our humanitarian assistance is delivered in a
1900 conflict-sensitive way and that it's not fueling extremist
1901 groups.

1902 Mr. Allred. Well, I appreciate that work. And if you could
1903 also explain how you are investing in long-term agricultural
1904 growth and resilience-oriented programming such as Feed the
1905 Future in order to help build resilience in those communities
1906 to future shocks and stresses. If you could just discuss that
1907 a little more.

1908 Ms. Barry. Yes. No, thank you very much. Again, the
1909 initiative is very much focused on exactly that: on investing
1910 in long-term sustainable food systems. So we work in a number
1911 of areas where communities are particularly vulnerable to
1912 recurrent crises, whether it's conflict or climate, and partner
1913 closely with our colleagues in BHA to make sure that we're able
1914 to layer and synchronize some of that assistance. But we're
1915 providing alternative livelihoods and also helping communities
1916 with inputs and access to information so they can produce more
1917 food with less input on less land and prepare them to be better
1918 prepared for the next shock that--that comes their way.

1919 Mr. Allred. Well, for my constituents in Dallas I just think
1920 it is important to discuss how their tax dollars are being put
1921 at use to help us increase stability and decrease instability
1922 around the world and that hunger is not just a moral issue, it
1923 is not just an issue of humanitarian rights and values. It is
1924 also a driver of political instability that will ultimately put
1925 us at greater risk as well here in the United States. And that
1926 is why it is so important that we have these investments.

1927 And I appreciate your work. And with that, I yield back.

1928 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

1929 I now recognize Representative Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania
1930 for five minutes.

1931 Mr. Meuser. I thank my friend the chairman very, very much

1932 for holding this hearing. And I thank our witnesses. Thank you.

1933 I was on a congressional trip to Europe seven or eight weeks
1934 ago, and I am sure this was discussed earlier, but if you wouldn't
1935 mind, they had great concerns about just overall food shortages,
1936 not just in the border countries to the Ukraine, but as well as
1937 Egypt and various countries in Africa. Can you address what we
1938 are doing, and relatively quickly, if you wouldn't mind; I know
1939 it is a big question, what we are doing to help that situation?

1940 Ms. Charles. We're certainly seeing the impact of Ukrainian
1941 wheat, corn, and vegetable oil coming off of--largely coming off
1942 the market in the region and beyond. The administration is
1943 focused on; not just with congressional support, ramping up
1944 humanitarian assistance to places that are most vulnerable to
1945 price shocks and shortages, but also these longer-term
1946 investments in smallholder farmers and productivity and in
1947 resilience around the world, but also working diplomatically to
1948 really press on countries that have put in place export bans that
1949 are disrupting markets and driving prices higher.

1950 Mr. Meuser. So we are concerned intensely on it? Okay.

1951 Next, the energy issue in Africa, which of course
1952 particularly natural gas relates to cost of fertilizer and relates
1953 to cost of food. Here in the United States fertilizers costs
1954 are up over 300 percent primarily because the administration is
1955 handling our domestic energy in ways that I think would be far

1956 better for everyone.

1957 But in Africa are we reversing--I did speak with Secretary
1958 or Administrator Samantha Power about it and really wasn't
1959 completely satisfied with the direction we were going as far as
1960 assisting in the development of natural gas as opposed to solely
1961 or more so renewable energies, which I think is not the
1962 transitional plan that they should have. Could you comment on
1963 that? No?

1964 Ms. Charles. I think we'd probably have to defer to other
1965 colleagues in the administration, but we can get back to you in
1966 writing.

1967 Mr. Meuser. Okay. I want to ask you--something has come
1968 to my attention related to Central America and the Caribbean.

1969 There are many cigar manufacturers throughout the Caribbean and
1970 Nicaragua and elsewhere, and thousands, tens of thousands of jobs
1971 are dependent upon that industry. There are billions of dollars
1972 in revenue created. It is a very important product and industry
1973 for that area. And here we are focusing on root causes to our
1974 disaster at our southern border, yet the administration seems
1975 to be interested in raising taxes in an extreme sense on premium
1976 cigars as well as banning--the FDA is looking to ban flavored
1977 cigars, which will be incredibly disruptive.

1978 I had the Minister of the Dominican Republic in my office.

1979 I have had the ambassadors of the D.R. as well as other countries.

1980 Clearly that will create problems, to say the least, for
1981 the--those that are dependent upon this industry and related to
1982 shortages of housing, food, health. So is that anything that
1983 is on your radar?

1984 Ms. Barry. I would say what is on our radar is certainly
1985 the--Russia's war on Ukraine is impacting the whole world, right?

1986 And the impact on the Caribbean I think is also being felt.
1987 I know that, you know, there were discussions at the Summit of
1988 America where folks came together. And through the supp we are
1989 providing some support and working closely with CARICOM to really
1990 come up with a strategy to help work in that area to address food
1991 insecurity. So that's how I would answer your question. Thank
1992 you.

1993 Mr. Meuser. Okay. All right. I have limited time. I
1994 just wanted to ask: we contribute, the United States, 3.9 billion
1995 to the World Food Programme. We understand the PRC contributes
1996 \$3 million. Many other countries are in a very weak category
1997 as well, far less than us. Are we working with them to try to
1998 get them to participate in a more meaningful way?

1999 Ms. Charles. I mean, I think the contrast with the PRC is
2000 particularly egregious. And even since Ambassador Power used
2001 that statistic our contribution to the World Food Programme has
2002 even gone up and will hit the \$5.5 billion mark this year, so
2003 an even greater contract--contrast. But it has been a priority

2004 of this administration to really target particularly
2005 non-traditional donors in the Gulf to be doing more, particularly
2006 as energy prices have gone--

2007 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

2008 Mr. Meuser. Thank you. Thank you, and I yield back.

2009 Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

2010 I now recognize Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia
2011 for five minutes.

2012 Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome.

2013 Russia and Ukraine have been described as Europe's
2014 breadbasket. They account for 30 percent of the world's wheat
2015 exports, 20 percent of the corn exports, and 80 percent of the
2016 world's sunflower oil. So when anything happens that disrupts
2017 the export of those products from those two countries, it has
2018 worldwide ripple effect both in inflation, food inflation, but
2019 also in supply. And some countries of course are more dependent
2020 on those exports than others, like Egypt. Big country, largest
2021 Arab country in the world, 82 percent of its wheat imports come
2022 from those two countries. Eighty percent. So some countries
2023 are disproportionately affected and that is why we are worried;
2024 correct me if I am wrong, about the African continent and Egypt
2025 in particular. Is that correct?

2026 Ms. Barry. Yes, we're--yes, I agree with you. We're very
2027 concerned about the impact of exactly--

2028 Mr. Connolly. Yes. So sometimes hearing about people rail
2029 on about inflation kind of conveniently overlooks the fact that
2030 while it is actually where stuff comes from and that if that is
2031 disruptive and that supply is not available, that means--unless
2032 demand changes, that means few--less supply, same demand, prices
2033 go up. Is that how economics work kind of basically? Ms. Barry
2034 or Ms. Charles?

2035 We like verbal answers in this committee.

2036 Ms. Charles. Yes.

2037 Mr. Connolly. So we have a record. Thank you. And would
2038 that be true about gas and oil as well?

2039 Ms. Barry. Yes, I would agree that the impact of rising
2040 food, fuel, and fertilizer prices are having a tremendous impact
2041 on the global economy.

2042 Mr. Connolly. Right. Well, Ukraine's not so much a big
2043 producer, but Russia is the second largest producer and exporter
2044 in the world, is that correct, after Saudi Arabia?

2045 Trust me. Here we go. So obviously, if we are trying to
2046 limit the ability of Russia to sell its gas and oil because that
2047 revenue finances its war effort in Ukraine, so we are trying to
2048 cut that off, that means, again, less supply, same demand, prices
2049 go up. Would that be a fair statement, Mr. Charles?

2050 Was that a yes?

2051 Ms. Charles. Yes.

2052 Mr. Connolly. Yes. So let me ask a question about food
2053 security: We talk a lot about food security. It seems to me
2054 that sometimes that might be vaguely defined. So food security
2055 is kind of--would it be fair to say it is on a spectrum? So food
2056 security, total supply available, easy distribution, lots of
2057 access, plenty of storage, and everybody is happy and eating well.

2058 That is one end of the spectrum. But the other end of the
2059 spectrum in extremists would be actually we don't have enough
2060 food. And that means there are people going hungry, that means
2061 malnutrition, that could even mean in extremis cases starvation.

2062 So when we are talking about food insecurity in the current
2063 situation on that spectrum where are we and how do you measure
2064 it? How does USAID determine we are at a point that we need to
2065 be sounding alarm bells?

2066 Ms. Charles. Yes, we tend to talk about the Integrated Phase
2067 Classification System. So one, relatively food-secure; five in
2068 a catastrophic situation. We're seeing in 2021 193 million
2069 people were in need of food assistance. That was a 24-percent
2070 increase over the year before.

2071 Mr. Connolly. Yes, but where on the one to five scale is
2072 that? Because that doesn't necessarily mean there is imminent
2073 starvation threatening. It may mean the distribution system is
2074 collapsed.

2075 Ms. Charles. It really is place-specific, but we're seeing

2076 more places in what we call IPC 4 and IPC 5, really emergency
2077 and catastrophic levels of food insecurity than we have at any
2078 point in our--

2079 Mr. Connolly. And you attribute that to?

2080 Ms. Charles. It's a combination of conflict, crisis,
2081 economic shocks from COVID, and the impact of climate change,
2082 and the accelerant of Russia's war on Ukraine which has disrupted
2083 supply chains, driven prices higher, and impacted supply.

2084 Mr. Connolly. Great. And final point: and when we have
2085 that kind of scale what gets triggered? Does the World Food
2086 Programme immediately step in? Do you start adding to our food
2087 aid?

2088 Ms. Charles. We certainly--according to available
2089 resources, but we certainly look to that scale of kind of one
2090 through five and have been prioritizing our assistance in places
2091 where there's either emergency or catastrophic levels of food
2092 insecurity to prevent death.

2093 Mr. Connolly. Thank you. My time has expired.

2094 Chairman Meeks. That is correct. The gentleman's time has
2095 expired.

2096 I now recognize Representative Young Kim of California for
2097 five minutes.

2098 Mrs. Kim of California. Thank you, Chairman, for holding
2099 this very important hearing.

2100 And I want to thank our witnesses for appearing before our
2101 committee and answering all of our questions.

2102 Recently I helped launch a woman's foreign policy group and
2103 the last speaker that we hosted was Paula Dobrinsky, who is the
2104 Undersecretary for Global Affairs. And this was very issue,
2105 challenges facing global food security is what we just discussed.

2106 So I am really glad that our hearing is focused on that.

2107 Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not only taking a devastating
2108 toll on people of Ukraine, but is creating food--global food
2109 security crisis that is hurting especially the low-income
2110 countries throughout the Middle East and Africa that rely heavily
2111 on the importation of every cultural products, and especially
2112 in the years of a severe drought.

2113 So we are addressing that.

2114 But the last--I believe it was last week in the Senate Foreign
2115 Relations Committee several witnesses including Samantha Power,
2116 the administrator Samantha Power, stated that--she mentioned
2117 there as a U.S.--I think my colleague Dan Meuser just talked
2118 about--United States contributes \$3.9 billion to the World Food
2119 Programme where China is only doing just millions.

2120 So I just wanted some clarification. In one of your
2121 responses you said they ramped up their contribution to about
2122 5 million. Is that right?

2123 Ms. Barry. We have.

2124 Ms. Charles. We will provide before the end of this fiscal
2125 year \$5.5 billion to the World Food Programme. So that contrast
2126 between us and China--

2127 Mrs. Kim of California. Even more?

2128 Ms. Charles. --is even more.

2129 Mrs. Kim of California. Even more. So obviously we need
2130 to do more to ensure that other countries around the world
2131 understand this severity of crisis and contribute more and do
2132 their part. So in that regard I hope that we can collectively
2133 pray for them to do so.

2134 But, Ms. Charles, is BHA facing a staff shortage? If so,
2135 how is that complicating efforts to get humanitarian aid to the
2136 Horn of Africa, because I want to get into that next.

2137 Ms. Charles. So, there is no question that USAID staffing,
2138 and in particular the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance staffing,
2139 has not kept up with the pace of increased humanitarian need and
2140 humanitarian budgets. In order to rapidly and responsibly
2141 program the supplemental funding, we've shifted a lot of human
2142 resources towards this. Contracting officers from other parts
2143 of the agency are supporting our efforts to surge assistance.

2144 We've also put on hold really critical investments in
2145 readiness, training, and policy work in order to focus on delivery
2146 assistance. We announced just last week the provision of nearly
2147 \$1.3 billion in assistance. That's assistance that's already

2148 with our partners in the Horn of Africa. We've prioritized the
2149 Horn of Africa assistance above all other activities that we're
2150 doing. So it's not delaying delivery to the Horn, but we'll
2151 certainly need longer-term solutions in order to address our
2152 staffing.

2153 Mrs. Kim of California. So you mentioned the Horn of Africa,
2154 of course, is one of the direst food insecurity situation in the
2155 world, and they have like 20 million people across Ethiopia,
2156 Kenya, Somalia. They are experiencing the worst kind of levels
2157 of food insecurity, among them being more than 200,000 people
2158 in Somalia, they are already facing like catastrophic hunger.

2159 So what immediate actions can United States do to commit and
2160 transfer additional humanitarian funding to those
2161 drought-affected countries in the Horn of Africa, especially in
2162 the swift delivery of those humanitarian actors?

2163 Ms. Charles. I just actually returned last night from Kenya
2164 and Somalia. And like I said, we have announced an additional
2165 \$1.3 billion in assistance to address drought-affected areas of
2166 Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. As of last week we're providing
2167 86 percent of the World Food Programme's appeal to respond to
2168 immediate needs in the Horn of Africa. We really need other
2169 donors to step in and do more.

2170 We also need countries like India and elsewhere who have
2171 export bans on critical commodities to lift those in order to

2172 help bring prices down because our assistance dollars aren't going
2173 as far as they would have even a year ago because of Russia's
2174 war in Ukraine and the export bans that countries have put in
2175 place as a result of that war.

2176 Mrs. Kim of California. Sure. Do you think USAID
2177 adequately responded to early warnings about the depth and
2178 duration of the current drought and the impact the drought and
2179 other factors would have had on the food insecurity in the region?

2180 Ms. Charles. What we're seeing now is an unprecedented
2181 fourth failed rain. So even when we saw two failed rains back
2182 last year, we started to scale up our assistance to the Horn
2183 of--Horn of Africa. When we saw the third failed rain earlier
2184 this year we used funds from the first Ukraine supplemental in
2185 order to scale up assistance in Somalia. We took the
2186 extraordinary measure back in April of drawing down the full
2187 amount of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust with most of that
2188 assistance targeting Yemen and the Horn of Africa.

2189 Mrs. Kim of California. Thank you, Chairman. I think my
2190 time is way over.

2191 Chairman Meeks. Time has expired.

2192 Mrs. Kim of California. I yield back.

2193 Chairman Meeks. I will now recognize Representative Susan
2194 Wild of Pennsylvania.

2195 Unfortunately, I have another meeting that I have to go to,

2196 so I would ask Representative Wild also to chair the rest of the
2197 hearing unless I get the opportunity to come back. She is
2198 now recognized for five minutes.

2199 Ms. Wild. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for Ms.
2200 Charles. As members on both sides of the aisle on this committee
2201 have said, the Saudi blockade is a key driver of the hunger and
2202 humanitarian suffering in Yemen. Despite recent diplomatic
2203 progress the Saudis have only allowed 24 out of 36 fuel ships
2204 agreed to as part of the Yemen truce into Hodeida's port so far.

2205 According to United Nations' assessment U.N. inspected vessels
2206 are still subject to significant delays in the coalition holding
2207 area offshore causing further price increases in Yemen.

2208 What additional leverage is the administration preparing
2209 to use to ensure that enough ships containing food, fuel, and
2210 medicine are entering Hodeida port unimpeded?

2211 Ms. Charles. Thank you, Representative, for that question.

2212 There's no question that the ceasefire in Yemen has provided
2213 a much-needed respite for the people of Yemen, but as you said,
2214 they're still facing extreme increases in prices due to Russia's
2215 war on Ukraine and the particular vulnerability that Yemen has
2216 to imports from Ukraine and Russia, but also like you said, to
2217 continued disruption over regular commercial supply to Yemen.

2218 And so this is certainly an issue that we are regularly
2219 raising with the Saudis to ensure regular commercial supply to

2220 Yemen.

2221 Ms. Wild. Thank you. And as you note in your testimony
2222 food prices in Yemen have skyrocketed and this year, as you say,
2223 19 million people in Yemen are expected to face crisis or worse
2224 levels of food insecurity, which is really just unfathomable,
2225 an 18-percent increase over 2021. What is the administration's
2226 approach on this issue specifically?

2227 Ms. Charles. First and foremost, we're working
2228 diplomatically again in order to address supply chain disruptions
2229 including export bans that a number of suppliers have put in--a
2230 number of countries have put in place that are impacting overall
2231 supply worldwide and driving prices higher. We're also
2232 increasing our humanitarian assistance to Yemen and we're
2233 critically calling on and really pressing other donors,
2234 particularly donors in the Gulf: the Saudis, the Emiratis, the
2235 Kuwaitis, to provide more and sustained humanitarian assistance
2236 to Yemen.

2237 Ms. Wild. All right. Thank you. And I am going to follow
2238 up with a question about the importance of--and this is still
2239 for you, Ms. Charles--of the importance of cash transfer policies
2240 as a mechanism for reducing hunger, not just as provided by
2241 organizations like the World Food Programme in the aftermath of
2242 humanitarian disasters, but also as government policy.

2243 We know that it worked in Brazil between 2002 and 2016 when

2244 they implemented a highly successful cash transfer policy for
2245 low-income families. And that resulted in the country being
2246 removed from the global Hunger Map. Unfortunately and
2247 tragically, Brazil returned to the Hunger Map starting in 2018
2248 as a result of cuts in those same social programs, which I
2249 certainly hope we in the United States are able to avoid, and
2250 now more than half of the population of Brazil is facing some
2251 degree of food insecurity.

2252 Given our country's own highly successful Child Tax Credit
2253 Program, does the administration share the assessment that cash
2254 transfer programs can have a transformative impact in reducing
2255 hunger around the world?

2256 Ms. Charles. As you mentioned, multipurpose cash, cash for
2257 food security purposes has become an important tool in the
2258 humanitarian tool kit. It allows people to access in a very
2259 efficient manner assistance and meet their needs in that way.

2260

2261 We've also been advocating as part of this crisis, and even
2262 before, that the World Bank and others support social safety net
2263 programs that we know help communities and families withstand
2264 climate-related, conflict-related, and now price-related shocks
2265 that are driving this global food security crisis.

2266 Do you want to add anything?

2267 Ms. Wild. [Presiding] The chair now calls upon

2268 Representative Houlahan for her questions.

2269 Ms. Houlahan. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just making
2270 sure that you can hear me okay. Terrific.

2271 Ms. Wild. I can hear you. It was my fault to be on mute.

2272 Ms. Houlahan. No worries. Thank you very much to you all
2273 for putting up with a very long course of many, many questions.

2274 And I am actually going to follow up on a similar line of question
2275 that Mr. Levin and Mr. Allred asked you as well.

2276 According to the World Food Programme conflict is the main
2277 driver of food insecurity. And we have talked a lot about that
2278 today. A hundred and thirty-nine people around the world, as
2279 we have talked about today, are at food crisis levels. Conflict
2280 and food insecurity are also something that compound one another.

2281 They are sort of the opposite of having a symbiotic relationship.
2282 Conflict disrupts food distribution systems and food deprivation
2283 is often used as a weapon of war, while food insecurity can trigger
2284 and exacerbate violent conflict.

2285 So you guys have talked a little bit about conflict-sensitive
2286 approaches to food assistance and that they can create a more
2287 effective and long-term humanitarian intervention strategy while
2288 ensuring that food aid will not be co-opted by bad actors in a
2289 country and therefore contribute to the conflict itself by
2290 political, social, and economic conditions contributing.

2291 So I guess with all of that being said and with the several

2292 of my colleagues having asked that question, why did we not
2293 necessarily have somebody here speaking to us today and testifying
2294 to us today from USAID's Bureau on Conflict Prevention and
2295 Stabilization? And perhaps I could maybe ask Ms. Barry to start
2296 with that and then Ms. Charles.

2297 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I think it's a
2298 good question, and, you know, perhaps--I'd have to say, honestly,
2299 in hindsight, perhaps we should have had one of our colleagues
2300 that--we certainly work very closely with our colleagues in the
2301 Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Stabilization.

2302 Ms. Houlahan. Excellent. I mean, that is a terrific and
2303 fine answer. I mean, perhaps next time we can make sure that
2304 that happens. And to that end one of our jobs in terms of
2305 oversight is obviously to ask the questions, but also to say what
2306 is it that the Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs and the Bureau
2307 for Resilience and Food Security are doing to coordinate and is
2308 there--with the Conflict group and is there anything that we can
2309 do in Congress to help that coordination better?

2310 Ms. Charles. So I would just add that Maura, myself, and
2311 my colleague Rob Jenkins, the head of the Bureau for Conflict
2312 Prevention and Stability, together we make up, our bureaus make
2313 up what we call the R3 family. And I think it's really a
2314 recognition by USAID of the intersection between the longer-term
2315 food security work, humanitarian assistance, and our conflict

2316 prevention and security work. And so we've coordinated based
2317 on how we've been prioritizing the supplemental resources that
2318 you've all provided, but also how we work together in specific
2319 conflicts in specific countries.

2320 Ms. Houlahan. Thank you. And if it is okay with what is
2321 left of my time I am going to transition over to the center
2322 of--CGIAR, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural
2323 Research, which is the world's largest international research
2324 system that develops and improves seed varieties that are more
2325 productive, more nutritious, and more resilient to drought. In
2326 fact the CGIAR wheat technology is used in a majority of wheat
2327 areas that are cultivated in the U.S. and we know that this
2328 technology and innovation allows U.S. farmers to adapt to extreme
2329 weather so that even in bad years we have a decent harvest.

2330 I was wondering if you all could comment a little on how
2331 Feed the Future is working with scientists with the CGIAR system
2332 to develop and disseminate these same kind of drought-tolerant
2333 seed technologies to help farmers other places adapt to local
2334 conditions. And I likely believe that that also would be first
2335 for Ms. Barry.

2336 Ms. Barry. Yes, thank you. Thank you for that question
2337 and recognition of the very important work that CGIAR does in
2338 the area of research and innovation, not just with wheat seed,
2339 but so many seeds. We work with a host of the research institutes.

2340 I think there's 15 in total that make up the CGIAR. And I believe
2341 the U.S. is probably the largest donor to the CGIAR. Of course
2342 we work in close partnership with other big donors: Bill & Melinda
2343 Gates Foundation and the U.K. and the Germans being some of the
2344 other large donors to the CGIAR. And, yes, they are incredible
2345 in terms of the research that they're doing.

2346 And also right now we're looking at how we can work with
2347 them in the current crisis. We've been having conversations in
2348 particular with CIMMYT in how we can get more seed out there that
2349 is resistant to drought, that can survive better without
2350 fertilizer, just to mention a few things that we're doing with
2351 CGIAR. Thank you.

2352 Ms. Houlahan. And, Madam Chair, I can't see the timer, so
2353 am I --

2354 Ms. Wild. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

2355 Ms. Houlahan. Thank you. I yield back.

2356 Ms. Wild. I now call upon Representative Omar. And I
2357 apologize. I think I skipped over you before. I recognize you
2358 for your questions.

2359 Ms. Omar. It is quite all right, Chairwoman. Thank you.

2360 Ms. Charles, I wanted to first start by saying just how
2361 pleased and thankful that I am that the administrator Power
2362 recently visited Kenya and Somalia. The drought that is being
2363 experienced by the Horn has been on my mind. I have been

2364 communicating with the administration to take urgent action in
2365 helping us address that. So I am thankful to see USAID take it
2366 seriously in addressing that. And the funding that was announced
2367 over the weekend I know will save countless lives.

2368 According to recent calculation over half of Somalia's
2369 population is food insecure with 1.5 million children being
2370 malnourished. There is no question that we need a global response
2371 to combat the effects of this drought. I think we would agree
2372 that for this to be most effective it needs to be multilateral.

2373 What have the conversations been with our partners on
2374 addressing the drought and what still needs to be done?

2375 Ms. Charles. Thank you for that question. I was actually
2376 traveling with the administrator in northern Kenya and Mogadishu.

2377 Just arrived back last night for this hearing. And it was really
2378 important, one, that we make that announcement in the region and
2379 also that we meet with the new president in Somalia as well as
2380 his Special Envoy for Famine. And I will say it's been a
2381 marked change with the appointment of the Special Envoy for
2382 Famine, with his Special Envoy for Famine in terms of the
2383 government of Somalia's own leadership in raising the profile
2384 of this crisis, not just with media and others, but also in other
2385 capitals.

2386 While we were there Administrator Power convened a meeting
2387 of other donor representatives, including what we might consider

2388 non-traditional donor representatives, the Turks, the Emiratis,
2389 the Saudis, the Qataris, and others, to try and again raise the
2390 profile and motivate greater investment in the humanitarian
2391 response in Somalia. This has also been a feature of
2392 conversations with G7 counterparts as well.

2393 Ms. Omar. I am glad to hear to that. I had recently also
2394 had conversation with the envoy that was appointed as well as
2395 the new president and the new prime minister. And I am curious
2396 to know what USAID's plans are for using this money to build
2397 sustainable and resilient solutions for food security in Somalia.

2398 And if you can also maybe make some recommendations or
2399 suggestions for things that we here in Congress can do to assist
2400 you all in that work.

2401 Ms. Charles. So in the face of what the people of Somalia
2402 are facing now with a fourth failed rain and potentially even
2403 likely a fifth failed rain in this upcoming season, even potential
2404 for a sixth failed rain, I'm loath to highlight kind of a silver
2405 lining, but I will say I heard from partner after partner when
2406 I was in Mogadishu that the resilience investments that had been
2407 made following the 2011 and then 2017-2018 droughts had been
2408 paying dividends. And in fact, you know, we would have seen
2409 unfortunately much more excess death by now had those investments
2410 not been made.

2411 I'm very worried that in responding to the immediate crisis

2412 and saving those that are closest to death right now, that we
2413 are going to have to move resources from those critical resilience
2414 investments that are needed to help folks sustain future shocks
2415 in order to address lifesaving needs now. So when we're talking
2416 about our own assistance but also other donors we're really
2417 encouraging not just increased humanitarian assistance, which
2418 is absolutely needed, but also longer-term investments in
2419 resilience in Somalia and climate adaptation as well.

2420 Ms. Omar. And do you have any recommendations of things
2421 that Congress can be doing to help assist further?

2422 Ms. Charles. I certainly think support for those
2423 resilience, for the Feed the Future type of investments are
2424 critical. I also think--you know, I met with--the Administrator
2425 and I met with a number of Senators before the trip, and I will
2426 give this message here, but when you meet with your counterparts
2427 in other countries we've really seen the devastating impact of
2428 the U.K. in particular step back from investments in the Horn
2429 of Africa and critical resilience investments in the Horn. We
2430 need other donors to step up and in your engagement with your
2431 counterparts in other parliaments, raising this issue with them.

2432 Ms. Omar. Yes, I appreciate that. And I know, Madam Chair,
2433 I am out of time. But I was recently in London meeting with MPs
2434 there and raising this issue and I do agree with you that that
2435 is important.

2436 With that I yield back, Madam Chairwoman.

2437 Ms. Wild. Thank you. The chair recognizes Representative
2438 Jacobs for questions.

2439 Ms. Jacobs. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you,
2440 Ms. Charles and Ms. Barry, for testifying before the committee
2441 today on this incredibly important issue.

2442 Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine we have seen
2443 the effects of climate change, the pandemic, and conflict-fueled
2444 food crises around the world, in Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, South
2445 Sudan. And now Russia's invasion has made all of these situations
2446 worse. Oxfam and Save the Children estimate that more than 23
2447 million people in the Horn of Africa are facing extreme hunger
2448 because of the effects of Russia's invasion. And we have
2449 seen Putin repeatedly weaponize food during this war including
2450 as we have seen in the blockade of Odessa and Russia's recent
2451 strikes on the port even after the landmark grain deal was reached.

2452 So together with Representative Meijer I introduced a
2453 bipartisan resolution that the committee is marking up tomorrow
2454 on condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war. And for either
2455 of you, could you please describe in detail the ways in which
2456 Putin has weaponized hunger as a result of its invasion and why
2457 it is important for the global community to condemn and respond
2458 to these actions, not just in Ukraine, but all over the world?

2459 Ms. Charles. I don't know that I can say it better than

2460 you. There's no question that--that Putin has unleashed a
2461 senseless war on Ukraine that is being felt most acutely by the
2462 world's poorest, the world's most vulnerable. We've seen in
2463 places like Yemen the price of wheat skyrocket 30 percent, upwards
2464 of 30 percent.

2465 We've seen in the region, in Ukraine itself, Russian forces
2466 encircle and blockade critical cities, and we've seen again the
2467 impact of a Russian ban on--export ban on fertilizer. And their
2468 blockading, and stealing in some cases, Ukrainian wheat is driving
2469 prices up around the world, disrupting supply and leaving people
2470 around the world hungry.

2471 Ms. Jacobs. Thank you. As we are working to address hot
2472 spots around the world I think one of the things we have heard
2473 today is how important making long-term investments is in addition
2474 to rapid response. I was just in South Sudan where we saw the
2475 need for both very acutely.

2476 So I was wondering if you could talk about how you are working
2477 together to layer humanitarian and development funding in
2478 high-priority environments.

2479 Ms. Barry. Thank you for that question. I'm glad you got
2480 to see some of our work in South Sudan where I think that's a
2481 good place to look at that where through the Feed the Future
2482 initiative we have a focus on resilience, where we're working
2483 in areas that are experiencing recurrent humanitarian crises.

2484 And in those situations we work very closely with colleagues
2485 on the ground who are addressing the humanitarian side of that
2486 crises.

2487 So what that means is layering in, using--providing
2488 life-saving assistance, but then stepping in with support that
2489 can help families recover from crisis and disaster and really
2490 boost their ability to bounce back through providing support to
2491 their livelihoods and--yes. I don't know, Sarah, if you want
2492 to add to that.

2493 Ms. Charles. Maybe I'd just add, you know, we're facing
2494 a historic crisis in terms of both prices and the climate shocks,
2495 the COVID--impact of COVID-related disruptions. But we do have
2496 a strong evidence base, including in places like Karamoja in
2497 Uganda, where that layering, that targeting of resilience
2498 investments, longer-term investments in places that have been
2499 chronically reliant on humanitarian assistance that actually
2500 allowed people to graduate out of humanitarian assistance and
2501 become self-sufficient in part because of the investments that
2502 we've all made, that Congress has supported, and those resilience
2503 activities.

2504 Ms. Jacobs. Well, thank you. And in the last minute
2505 unfortunately this is not the first global food crisis we have
2506 had. We have seen ones in 2008, 2011, 2016.

2507 Ms. Charles, I was wondering in our brief time left if you

2508 could please explain how USAID is using lessons learned from those
2509 food crises, in particular to inform country prioritization,
2510 program modality prioritization, and how you are obligating funds
2511 in the areas of greatest need.

2512 Ms. Charles. Yes. We've certainly made investments even
2513 starting after the 1984 famine in the Horn of Africa in early
2514 warning and much better science around vulnerability and building
2515 the research base for what works. And we still to this day have
2516 innovated and improved our forecasting and early warning
2517 capabilities and used that to really target at the local level
2518 where interventions are most needed.

2519 So with our limited food assistance dollars, even though
2520 they're quite significant over the last couple of years, they're
2521 never going to be enough. And so this kind of data, this kind
2522 of early warning allows us to target assistance on those that
2523 are most vulnerable in order to prevent excess death.

2524 Ms. Jacobs. Thank you.

2525 And, Madam Chair, I yield back.

2526 Ms. Wild. Okay. Thank you. Are there any other
2527 Representatives who wish to ask questions?

2528 It appearing not, in closing I would like to again thank
2529 our esteemed witnesses for appearing before this committee and
2530 providing their insight into these important questions.

2531 The challenges we faced in overcoming threats to global food

2532 security only highlight how susceptible the global supply chain
2533 really is, whether to conflict or instability, disease or drought.

2534 It is imperative that the United States again lead on issues
2535 of global responses to the upstream causes of food insecurity
2536 and provide relief wherever it is needed.

2537 Thank you to Chairman Meeks for holding this hearing and
2538 I look forward to having this committee continue engaging with
2539 USAID on finding solutions to the growing food security crisis.

2540 Thank you. This hearing is now adjourned.

2541 [Whereupon, at 1:21 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]