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**GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS
APPROPRIATIONS HEARING ON POLICY AND ASSISTANCE REVIEW OF ARAB
SPRING COUNTRIES**

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

I would like to welcome the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Jeff Feltman and the Special Coordinator for Middle East Transitions, Ambassador Bill Taylor. Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee today to discuss U.S. policies and our assistance strategy in the Middle East and North Africa, especially those countries affected by the Arab Spring.

In the last year we have seen rapid change in the region -- from extraordinary political transitions to violent crackdowns. We find ourselves in unfamiliar territory in one of the most critical regions of the world for U.S. national security. I trust this classified hearing will allow for a full discussion of U.S. strategic interests and how U.S. foreign assistance is being used to further those interests. We also would like to hear your view on the perception of American assistance. As we are seeing in Egypt, the generosity of the American people may not be welcomed. This is of great concern.

This Subcommittee wants to be thoughtful about our investments during these changing times. I hope you will be able to address several topics, including how we can best use our assistance as an effective policy tool.

We need to know what we are funding, who we are supporting, and how we are executing the programs.

What we are funding is critically important. There must be a balance between strengthening government institutions and helping promote civil society. During these transitions, it will be equally important to ensure organizations outside of government institutions are supported so that people can express their opinions freely, advocate for their freedoms, and hold their governments accountable.

In addition to what we are investing in, I would like to hear more about who is involved in these transitions. We must know who we are working with before providing assistance. We want to hear how you decide who to engage with and what considerations are in place, since in many cases we have no prior relationships with these individuals and movements.

Finally, we want to understand how we are engaging. The President's fiscal year 2013 request includes \$770 million for the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund. While some of the proposals make sense, like "incentivizing" certain behaviors, it is not clear why those principles could not simply be applied to existing authorities. The State Foreign Operations bill already includes accounts for contingencies as well as long-term economic development and security assistance. We will need more information to justify the need for a new fund.

I want to close by thanking each of you for your service during this challenging time. We know you are both dedicated to this very difficult region and we appreciate what you do.

Assistant Secretary Feltman, I understand that you will provide a statement and will defer to Ambassador Taylor to respond to specific questions about funding and assistance programs. Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee today. I look forward to your testimony.

I will now yield to Mrs. Lowey.