



July 5, 2016
Congressional Update
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I. Bahrain

(1) *Bahrain Human Rights Abuses*: On June 30, Senator Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut), and six Democratic colleagues sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of State Kerry urging him to press the Government of Bahrain to protect the rights of its citizens and implement provisions that promote political and social reform and reconciliation among Bahrain's diverse communities. The letter notes that the senators "are deeply alarmed by the severe deterioration of political space and human rights in Bahrain. In the last few weeks, the Bahraini government has taken a series of troubling steps targeting the country's peaceful opposition, as well as nonviolent human rights defenders and members of civil society. Without an immediate reversal of these actions, we fear that tensions in Bahrain could quickly intensify and destabilize an important United States ally." The six Democrats signing the letter were: Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), Ron Wyden (D-Oregon.), Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania), Chris Coons (D-Delaware), Marco Rubio (R-Florida) and Tim Kaine (D-Virginia).

(2) On June 21, 2016 the State Department submitted to Congress an unclassified [report](#) on the steps taken by the Government of Bahrain to implement the recommendations from the 2011 Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI). The report was submitted 141 days late, amid an escalating crackdown on dissenting voices, opposition figures, and the Shi'a religious community. The 18-page report finds that "efforts to build trust across Bahraini society and foster an environment conducive to national reconciliation have stalled, diminishing the effect of government actions to implement the BICI recommendations and minimizing popular acceptance of newly established government institutions."

(3) On June 14, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) released a [report](#) titled "Bahrain: Reform, Security and US Policy." The Report notes that "The mostly Shiite opposition has not achieved its goal of establishing a constitutional monarchy, but the unrest has compelled the ruling family to undertake some relative minor political reforms." The Report also notes that there has been some radicalization of the opposition, as underground factions have claimed responsibility for bombings and other attacks aimed primarily against security officials. "The Bahrain government's use of repression



against the dissent has presented a policy dilemma for the Obama Administration because Bahrain is a longtime ally that is pivotal to maintaining Persian Gulf Security.” The report added, “Bahrain’s opposition asserts that the United States is downplaying regime abuses in order to protect the security relationship.”

II. Iran

Reject the Decision by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

On June 30, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut) and seven other Democrats sent a [letter](#) to Secretary Treasury Jack Lew opposing the decision by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to suspend counter measures currently in place against Iran concerning its money laundering and terrorist financing activities, arguing that the decision could embolden Iran’s terrorist financing. The letter urges Lew “to address these concerns with FATF and prevent any further attempts to reintegrate Iran into the international banking international banking system, until Iran eliminates its entrenched practice of financing terrorism.” The seven Democrats signing the letter were: Senators Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey), Michael Bennett (D-Colorado), Charles Schumer (D-New York), Cory Booker (D-New Jersey), Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania) and Mark Warner (D-Virginia).

III. Trafficking in Persons Report

On June 30, the Administration submitted to Congress its annual Trafficking in Persons [Report](#). Following is an explanation of the Tier Placement, the Tier rankings for Middle Eastern countries:

Tier 1: Countries whose governments fully meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act’s (TVPA) minimum standards.

Tier 2: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards and;

- a) The **absolute number of victims** of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;



b) There is a **failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts** to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or

c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards was based on **commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.**

Tier 3: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Tier 1 Placement

Israel

Tier 2 Placement

Bahrain

Iraq

Jordan

Lebanon

Morocco

United Arab Emirates

Tier 2 Watch List

Kuwait

Oman

Qatar

Saudi Arabia

Tunisia



Tier 3

Algeria

Iran

Syria

Special Case

Libya - Libya is a destination and transit country for men and women from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking, and there are reports of children being subjected to recruitment and use by armed groups within the country. Due to widespread insecurity driven by militias, civil unrest, and increased lawlessness in Libya that continued to worsen in 2015, accurate information on human trafficking became increasingly difficult to obtain—in part due to the withdrawal of most diplomatic missions, international organizations, and NGOs in 2014.

Yemen - Yemen is classified as a Special Case for the first time in the 2016 Report. Information on human trafficking in Yemen has become increasingly difficult to obtain since March 2015 when the Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) had to leave the country and relinquished control of substantial portions of territory.

IV. Hearings

Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Hearing on the “Global Efforts to Defeat ISIS”

On June 28, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing to receive the latest update on the global campaign to defeat the Islamic State, also known as ISIL, during which testimony was heard from [Brett McGurk](#), Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. McGurk offered his assessment of the coalition’s progress toward eliminating the terrorist organization, not only as a battlefield presence but as a poisonous abstraction. On the former, the witness had some positive news to report. But in terms of combatting the ideology that continues to lure extremists to the ISIL cause, there is much work yet to be done.

McGurk largely focused on the areas in which the US-backed coalition has made significant strides against ISIL. Two years ago, ISIL’s relatively vast number of fighters enjoyed free range of movement across much of Iraq and Syria, the organization was rich in finances and weaponry, and regional



military and police forces showed little if any resolve in confronting the extremists. In his testimony, however, McGurk painted a much different picture. In large part due to increased cooperation from Turkey, almost all of the borders across which extremists used to pour in and out of Syria have now been secured, limiting ISIL's ability to both resupply and reinforce its fighting ranks. In addition, with ISIL continuing to suffer defeats on the battlefield, its numbers have dwindled to the lowest assessed range (approximately 18-22,000 overall) since reviews of its manpower first began. In fact, ISIL's leaders are now executing their own fighters in response to growing disobedience and insubordination, a manifestation of the flagging morale sweeping through its core membership. All of this points to a significantly downgraded ISIL.

However, McGurk was quick to qualify these gains. He characterized the counter-ISIL campaign as an "unprecedented challenge" that is likely to be with us for years. This is particularly true as it relates to the ideology that sustains the group's call to violence, a threat that promises to endure beyond its inevitable defeat on the battlefield. Indeed, ISIL leaders have begun to alter their messaging. Now willing to admit the unlikelihood of a historical caliphate, they are encouraging would-be fighters to join the fray in Libya instead, or to carry out attacks on Western targets from their respective homelands. Moreover, as we continue to see – at an alarming rate-, the recapturing of ISIL-held territory has done little to sway extremists from obeying this call against the West. Inspiring violence from afar merely requires a pervading idea, and herein lies the coalition's most difficult battle.

This last point seemed to register less with the committee. As politicians so often do when faced with a long-term problem, members chose to spend the morning pressing for a near-term solution – that is, a military solution. Invoking the grim public statement from CIA Director John Brennan two weeks ago – wherein he asserted the global threat of ISIL-inspired attacks will only grow in response to territorial losses in Iraq and Syria – Senators Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin) and Bob Corker (R-Tennessee) made sure to take a few shots at the White House, questioning both the administration's timetable and strategy for victory. Republican Senators were less than subtle about their desires for a different approach in Syria, one that would involve a ramped-up US military effort. Although McGurk agreed that the removal of President Assad is a precondition for the ultimate defeat of ISIL, he reminded the committee that international consensus remains in favor of a political transition negotiated through peace talks. This, too, continues to be the official policy of the administration, however remote the odds of success, for the US can only do so much militarily.



Yet again, Senator Corker was unconvinced, and concluded the hearing by citing Assad's brutal attacks against more recent humanitarian efforts, ostensibly to justify his preference for Assad's forced removal by the US military. This view is undoubtedly shared by a majority of his Republican colleagues, but less so among those with intimate knowledge of American vital interests and the risks that would be involved with such an undertaking.

V. At the Think Tanks

On June 30, the Stimson Center held a [forum](#) with former Representative and Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee Mike Rogers (R-Michigan), who after 15 years in Congress now serves as a CNN national security commentator and host of his own nationally-syndicated radio program. In his hour-long conversation with the center's Ambassador Lincoln Bloomfield Jr., Rogers touched on a broad range of today's hot-button policy issues. He disparaged the rampant dysfunction in Congress – which he credits for his decision not to seek re-election – before launching into what he considers failed policies in the wars against al Qai'da and the Islamic State (ISIL). In his view, excessive bureaucracy has hampered the US's drone campaign in the Middle East. While on the counter-ISIL front, the US has bungled efforts to remove the Assad regime in Syria and eliminate the vacuum of power in which ISIL continues to incubate. Defeating the extremists, according to Rogers, must be preceded by an enhanced US-backed ground campaign in Raqqah - ISIL's nerve center and from whence attacks against the West are planned and organized. Considerable time was also spent discussing the ever-increasing international cyber threat posed by certain meddlesome governments (e.g. Russia, China and Iran), as well as the race to militarize outer space that is currently underway.

Of particular note, however, was Rogers' insistence that the Saudi government played no part in the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Given his role on the House Intelligence Committee, Rogers was privy to the now-infamous – and still classified - 28 pages of the 9/11 Commission report that allegedly implicate the Saudis as a complicit partner in the attacks that claimed the lives of almost 3,000 Americans. And though he acknowledged that the classified pages contain “some strong information,” he cautioned against coming to a conclusion solely based on what amounts to a very small piece of the puzzle. Instead, the 28 pages must be collectively weighed against the entire body of intelligence, and it is within this context that Rogers refuses to believe that the Saudi government participated in the 9/11 attacks.



VI. FY 2017 Senate and House State, Foreign Operations Bills

(a) Senate Appropriations Action on State, Foreign Operations Bill. On June 29, the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved the FY2017 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill (**S3117**), by a vote of 30-0. The bill includes a significant increase in assistance for Israel. The bill also includes the text of the Combating BDS Act of 2016. The bill was offered as an amendment by Senator Mark Kirk (R-Illinois) and adopted by a vote of 21-9.

Highlights of the Bill

Counter-Extremism: Creates a new Near East and Africa Relief and Recovery Fund to address needs in areas liberated from extremists, and requires the US Institute of Peace to develop a comprehensive plan to counter extremism in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Near East region. \$28 million for a new program to assist women and girls at risk from extremism in predominantly Muslim and other countries.

Democracy: \$2.58 billion for democracy programs, and an additional \$170 million for the National Endowment for Democracy and \$150.5 million for the Democracy Fund account.

Egypt: \$1.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and \$75 million in economic assistance. (Note: The Senate bill would provide the FMF in the same manner as in FY2016; the House bill would provide the FMF by placing it in a US-based bank account).

Iraq: Fully funds the President's request for \$332.5 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF), \$150 million in FMF; and \$1 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET), all from the Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) funds.

Israel: \$3.4 billion in FMF, an increase of \$300 million above the President's budget request. The House bill provides \$3.1 billion. The legislation also continues restrictions on the UN Human Rights Council while Israel remains a permanent agenda item.

Jordan: \$1 billion in assistance, fully funding the President's request. While the Senate bill is a decrease from funding provided in FY 2016, the House bill maintains the FY 2016 level of \$1.275 billion.

Palestinian Authority: Retains restrictions on assistance for the West Bank and Gaza in current law, as well as restrictions on assistance for the Palestinian Authority. The bill includes the Palestine



Liberation Organization along with the Palestinian Authority, and any successor or affiliated organizations, in the assistance reductions required by amounts such entities provide as payments for acts of terrorism.

Peacekeeping: \$44.5 million for the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai, \$10 million above the request.

Refugees: \$3.06 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance, which is equal to FY2016 enacted level and exceeds the President's request by \$697.6 million.

Religious Freedom: \$26 million for programs to promote international religious freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, with a focus on Christians, and \$25 million for a new Atrocities Prevention Fund. The bill also provides \$6 million for the Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom and \$2 million for the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom in the Near East and Central Asia, amounts above the President's request.

Syria: Fully funds the President's request for \$175 million in ESF, of which \$2.5 million is for Religious Freedom Transitional Justice, Reconciliation, and Reintegration Programs, and \$1 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement-all from the OCO fund.

Tunisia: \$79 million in ESF; \$13 million in INCLE; \$2.3 million in IMET; and \$45 million in FMF for a total of \$139.3 million-all from the OCO fund.

Amendments Considered during Markup

Anti-BDS: Offered by Senators Mark Kirk (R-Illinois) and Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia), the amendment is the text of S.2531, the Combatting BDS, introduced last February with 36 bipartisan cosponsors. The amendment authorizes state and local authorities to divest from entities engaging in Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel. **Approved by a vote of 21-9.**

To address concerns expressed by some Democrats, that the amendment would treat Israeli settlements as part of Israel, the amendment contains language requested by Senators Ben Cardin (D-Maryland) and Charles Schumer (D-New York) specifying that the amendment does not affect US policy for final status negotiations. Not surprisingly, the amendment was promoted and supported by AIPAC.



Restrict Saudi IMET Rejected: Offered by Senator Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut), the amendment would place “common sense” condition on the \$10,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) for Saudi Arabia, requiring the President to certify that the Saudi-led coalition:

- complies with all international agreements to limit civilian casualties,
- investigates credible reports of civilian casualties, and
- prioritizes targeting of al Qai'da and ISIL within coalitions operations in Yemen.

The amendment included a presidential waiver. **The amendment was narrowly rejected by a vote of 14-16 that fell along party lines.**

During debate on the amendment, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) expressed support for it while Senator Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) strongly opposed it. Graham underscored the benefits of the military training relationship with Saudi Arabia in sustaining the partnership, and argued that cutting the “token” IMET funding would be “the worst possible signal to send to an ally” given the Iranian threat in Yemen. Graham pointed out that it is in the US national security interest to stop Iranian expansion in the Middle East region, including in Yemen.

Increase Assistance to Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon: During committee debate, Graham offered and then **withdrew** an amendment that would provide emergency funding of approximately \$4 billion to:

- Solidify anti-ISIL gains by providing funding to make liberated cities livable, allowing displaced resident to return home. Graham said he was told by Secretary of State Kerry that the State Department needs an additional \$1 billion to meet these needs in Syria, Iraq and Libya.
- Increase assistance to Jordan.
- Increase assistance to Israel by \$450 million.

Graham’s amendment does not indicate how to achieve the increased funding given the current budgetary restrictions and other urgent needs. Graham is unlikely to gain support for the entire package. He most likely will try to offer the amendment when the bill is considered on the floor by the full Senate. If there is no support, he may offer an amendment to increase aid for Israel only.

Iran: Offered by Senator James Lankford (R-Oklahoma), the amendment requires the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress on the \$1.7 billion payment to Iran, including a description of



name and location of the financial institutions involved and the currency denomination used in the transfer. **Approved by voice vote.**

Bill Summary and Approved Manager's Amendments

The Senate bill would provide a total of \$52.08 billion — \$37.19 billion for enduring costs and \$14.89 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding, consistent with the numbers in the House bill. The total is \$591 million below the FY2016 enacted level, and \$687.4 million below the President's budget request. Notably, all the funding cuts were made to enduring funds, and the OCO funding provided by the bill equals both the President's budget request and the FY16 enacted level.

The bill provides a total of \$8.32 billion for International Security Assistance, of which \$6.46 billion is base funding and \$1.86 billion is OCO funding. Like the House bill, the Senate bill cuts funding for multilateral assistance through international financial institutions, providing \$2.34 billion which is \$276.7 million below the FY2016 enacted level and \$275.4 million below the President's request.

During the markup, the Committee ***approved by voice vote a managers' package of amendments***, including the following provisions relevant to the Middle East:

Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012: Within 180 days of enactment, requires the Secretary of State to update the report on steps to implement provisions in the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012, which state that it shall be US policy to identify and support the release and resettlement of political prisoners in Iran.

Internet Freedom: Directs the Department of State, the US Agency for International Development, and the Broadcasting Board of Governors to prioritize Internet freedom programs to countries which obstruct Internet access through legislation, regulation, and firewalls.

Kurdistan: Stipulates that a portion of Economic Support Fund money to Iraq should go to the Kurdistan Region.

Limitation on Foreign Military Financing (FMF): Limits Foreign Military Financing for countries that have not endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative Statement of Interdiction Principles. (This provision would apply to Egypt and Lebanon).



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(b) House Appropriations Committee House Appropriations Committee released the fiscal year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. A planned State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee markup of the measure was delayed on June 23 by political controversy over the appropriate response to the Orlando mass shootings. The Subcommittee will convene on Wednesday, July 6 to amend and approve the draft committee bill for full Committee action.

The House bill provides a total of \$52 billion in regular discretionary and Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding. A bill [summary](#) released by the Appropriations Committee notes that this figure is \$595 million below the FY2016 enacted level and \$691 million below the President’s request. The bill differs substantially from the President’s funding request in several areas, reflecting the policy priorities of congressional Republicans. In terms of the Middle East, the allocation of funds reaffirms the strong commitment to partnerships with Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Tunisia.

The bill provides a total of \$9.1 billion in funding for International Security Assistance, significantly more than the President’s request, including \$3.1 billion to Israel. Note: The Senate bill provides \$3.4 billion to Israel. It also maintains Foreign Military Financing (FMF) levels for Jordan and Tunisia even though the Administration requested a reduction from FY 2016 funding levels. Along with NATO members and major non-NATO allies, Israel and Egypt are given special permission to lease rather than buy US military equipment. The bill includes a total of \$24.2 billion in base and OCO funding for bilateral assistance to foreign countries, \$149 million above the President’s request. Programs that support development assistance, global health, and humanitarian assistance are prioritized.

The bill provides significant security and economic assistance to Egypt despite concerns about political space in the country. A prohibition on “directly” financing assistance to a country whose elected leader was deposed by the military “or, after the date of enactment of this Act, a coup d’état or decree in which the military plays a decisive role”, is very carefully written to still allow assistance to Egypt. However, the bill states that assistance to Egypt can only be made available if the Secretary of State certifies that the country is sustaining its strategic relationship with the US and meeting its obligations under the 1979 treaty with Israel. The bill also creates a quarterly reporting requirement from the Secretary of State on Egypt’s efforts to advance democracy and accountability for security forces.



The bill provides a total of \$3.1 billion for refugee assistance, with most of the total coming from OCO funding for the anti-ISIL fight. However, it seeks to restrict efforts to resettle refugees in the United States, limiting funds for that program at FY2015 levels and specifically prohibiting the use of OCO funding for resettlement to the US.

Egypt: Provides up to \$150 million in ESF. (The Senate bill provides \$75 million). Of this amount the US may withhold amounts equal to bail and legal costs for NGO representatives facing democracy related trials.

-- \$1.3 billion in FMF, which will be available until September 30, 2018. Under a new procedure, the money will be deposited in an interest-gathering bank account in the United States. Allows the government of Egypt to lease or lease-to-own defense articles. Prior year restrictions and limitations apply.

Gender Equality: \$50 million to increase leadership opportunities for women in countries where they face discrimination.

International Organizations:

- Prohibits funding for UN organizations headed by countries that support terrorism.
- No funding for the UNHRC unless the Secretary of State determines that it is in the national security interest and the UNHRC drops Israel as a permanent agenda item.
- No funding to UNRWA unless the Secretary of State certifies it is working to maintain neutrality, including by ensuring that its facilities are only used for humanitarian purposes.
- Funding to the IAEA can be held up if the Secretary of State determines that Israel is being denied its right to participate in the body.
- Expressing the Sense of Congress that the Arab League boycott of Israel is “an impediment to peace in the region and to United States investment and trade in the Middle East and North Africa,” and calls for all Arab countries to normalize relations with Israel.

Iran: Requires the Secretary of State to inform Congress of any separate inspection arrangements between the IAEA and Iran (i.e. the “secret side deals” criticized by Republicans during last summer’s debate on the nuclear deal).

- Requires the Secretaries of State and Treasury to report to Congress within 180 days of enactment of the bill on the enforcement of remaining sanctions on Iran. The report should



include information on any entities involved in the development of a ballistic missile by Iran after October 1, 2015.

- Calls for funds to be used to swiftly resolve disputes on the terms of the nuclear deal, and to support the enforcement of remaining sanctions on Iran for terrorism and human rights violations.
- Prohibits USAID programming, bilateral economic assistance, International Security Assistance, or multilateral assistance without prior notification of the Appropriations Committee.
- Prohibits funding for direct assistance or reparations to the Iranian government.

Iraq and Counterterrorism: Provides up to \$2.7 billion in FMF loans.

- Provides \$17 million for the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, including at least \$905 million for non-lethal assistance to the KRG security forces.
- Provides \$420 million for antiterrorism programs globally, with emphasis on the anti-ISIL campaign.
- Seventeen percent of ESF funds and FMF funds must go to the Kurdistan Regional Government.
- Prohibits USAID programming, bilateral economic assistance, international security assistance or multilateral assistance without prior notification to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Israel: Provides \$3.1 billion in FMF assistance to Israel to be disbursed within 30 days of enactment of the bill. Allows the Israeli government to lease or lease-to-own defense articles.

Jordan: Provides at least \$1.275 billion, including at least \$37 million in budget support.

Lebanon: Restrictions and Limitations continue:

- No funds can be made available to the Lebanese Armed Forces and Lebanese Internal Security Forces if they are “controlled” by a terrorist organization (i.e. Hizballah).
- Funding to the LAF can only be used within fairly narrow parameters — to build capacity and counter spillover from the Syrian conflict — and only after the Secretary of State



submits a detailed plan to Congress to ensure they will be used exclusively for those purposes.

- Prohibits USAID programming, bilateral economic assistance, International Security Assistance, or multilateral assistance without prior notification of the Appropriations Committee.

Libya: Restrictions and limitations apply.

- Prohibits funds to the Libyan central government unless the Secretary of State reports it is cooperating with US efforts to investigate the September 2012 Benghazi attack.
- Prohibits USAID programming, bilateral economic assistance, International Security Assistance, or multilateral assistance without prior notification of the Appropriations Committee.

Morocco: Clarifies that US assistance to Morocco may be used in the Western Sahara (i.e. recognizing Morocco's claim of sovereignty over the area).

Palestine: Like the Senate bill, continues the restrictions and limitations on assistance. Like the Senate version, the bill maintains restrictions on the Palestinians, and seeks to deter the Palestinians from pursuing statehood via the UN or supporting an International Criminal Court investigation against Israel. It also expresses a non-binding Sense of Congress that the President should work to persuade all Arab states to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel.

Syria: Provides non-lethal aid, including programs to strengthen civil society, promote economic development and the rule of law, document human rights violations, and counter extremist ideologies. Restrictions and limitations continue, e.g., prohibits direct assistance or reparations to the Syrian government.

Tunisia: At least \$160.4 million in assistance.

Yemen: Prohibits USAID programming, bilateral economic assistance, International Security Assistance, or multilateral assistance without prior notification of the Appropriations Committee.