

**Statement of the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Before the Committee on House Administration  
11:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 2, 2010**

Thank you Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you.

If we are to provide for our nation's security, we must be able to effectively address, not just immediate threats, but also learn from such developments as the recent turmoil in the broader Middle East, and prioritize our efforts toward preventing the emergence of future threats.

As our Oversight Plan denotes, we have a robust agenda planned for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress to properly assess, develop, and implement legislative strategies that will help achieve the desired objectives.

We believe, given the sizeable surplus the Committee had last year, that we can accomplish this ambitious agenda despite the reduced budget for this Congress.

The budget of the Committee on Foreign Affairs reflects the 5% cut in spending from the combined two-year total budget from last Congress.

It reflects the high esteem I hold for Ranking Member Berman and respect for Minority rights, through a majority/minority distribution that better guarantees Minority access to 1/3 of the Committee's resources and provides the Minority with an enhanced personnel budget allocation, over which they have full control.

The Committee's budget clearly illustrates a renewed emphasis on oversight, transparency, and accountability by allocating greater resources for:

- new media,
- investigative travel, and
- field hearings.

The field hearings are also aimed at involving the American people more directly in the discussions over foreign policy priorities and the international affairs budget.

In furtherance of a more responsive approach to the work we perform, the main Committee website now includes a new interactive feature called: “Your Seat on the Dais” (although, due to initial response, we are changing to “Ask the Question.”)

This feature is allowing members of the public to submit questions that they would like to have answered by witnesses testifying before our Committee.

The Committee will review submissions and some of the questions will be selected by our Members, who will then ask the questions on behalf of the submitter during the hearing.

The Majority staff now boasts an Oversight and Investigations team comprised of a Chief Counsel and two other Full Committee staff members, in addition to the staff of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

We also have instituted an oversight referral process similar to the legislative referral mechanism and have added an interactive feature on the main Committee website for “whistleblowers” to help us identify waste, fraud, and abuse in the programs and operations under the Committee’s areas of responsibility.

With respect to the House Democracy Partnership and the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission which fall under the Committee’s structure, the travel and hearings of these two Commissions are now more closely coordinated with and integrated into the Committee’s activities.

The Committee budget reflects administrative costs for the two entities.

Salary for two dedicated staff members for the House Democracy Partnership are paid in full from the Republican Majority salary allotment.

Honoring the memory and legacy of our dear colleague and deceased past Chairman of the Committee, Tom Lantos, the Republican Majority funds a designated staff position for Chairman Wolf on the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

Further, with respect to inter-parliamentary groups, we are undertaking a rigorous review of the accounts for these IPGs and identifying excess funds toward returning them immediately to the Treasury.

The American people are being forced to make difficult choices to keep their fiscal house in order.

We, in turn, need to focus on how to do more with less in the running of our respective committees and approach our review of programs, agencies, and budgets under our jurisdiction with the same mindset.

I believe our funding resolution reflects this commitment.

Thank you for your time.