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**FY27 Appropriations Testimony**  
**Prepared for the Subcommittee on Subcommittee on National Security, Department of**  
**State, and Related Programs**  
**United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations**  
**Regarding the International Affairs Budget and U.S. Foreign Service Workforce Funding**

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 bill, AFSA respectfully requests robust funding for the International Affairs Budget (IAB) and the National Security and State Department Appropriations bill in general. As such, we ask that, at a minimum, Congress sustain funding for the FY27 International Affairs Budget at no less than the FY26 enacted level of \$51.3 billion – including at least \$50 billion for the FY27 National Security and State Department Appropriations bill. Specifically, AFSA asks the subcommittee to support the U.S. Foreign Service and its workforce with a strong allocation.

The FY26 International Affairs Budget received a total of \$51.3 billion, a \$9.8 billion (-16%) cut compared to the FY25 enacted level of \$61.1 billion. However, the final FY26 amount approved by Congress was \$20.4 billion (+66%) above the Administration’s initial request. In the FY27 President’s Budget Request, the International Affairs Budget received \$35.6 billion, or a 30% reduction from last year’s \$51.3 billion total. The State Department’s budget request asks \$9.3 billion for Diplomatic programs, nearly identical to the FY26 enacted level for personnel. Considering the 9% cut proposed in FY26 to this account, this is welcome recognition of the workforce needed to implement our nation’s foreign policy priorities. AFSA asks Congress to not allow further retreat of our global leadership role and diplomatic prowess at a time when it is needed more than ever.

The Foreign Service has a high return on investment for a tiny percentage of the overall budget. Its members build the relationships that enable Americans to conduct business around the world, keeping threats at bay and reducing the need for military action. Our nation needs embassies with fully staffed teams of diplomats and development professionals in the field keeping threats at bay and safeguarding America’s safety and prosperity—combating the conditions that enable terrorism to take root, protecting against pandemics, opening foreign markets for American crops and products, and promoting the rule of law and international rules and norms that level the playing field for U.S. companies to compete and thrive. Maintaining a robust diplomatic capability and workforce is vital to preserving America’s global leadership role.

Additionally, AFSA requests restoring needed funding to continue operations at the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which employs a few members of the Foreign Service, at no less

than the FY26 level. Truthful independent news helps audiences understand America and our policies. Please restore language programming to as many regions as possible. This subcommittee's thorough oversight is also needed to safeguard the employment and work of those at USAGM and the Voice of America. For example, please ensure taxpayer dollars are used wisely and in accordance with the law to restore broadcasting. Per court order, staff are supposed to return from administrative leave or layoffs to their active roles. When the Voice of America is silent or diminished, U.S. adversaries aggressively fill the vacuum.

If the United States retreats diplomatically, given the reduction in funding, we leave a vacuum that *will* be filled by our rivals. State Department reporting has made clear that susceptibility to People's Republic of China (PRC) influence is high in countries without Senate-confirmed ambassadors. In late 2025 and early 2026, the Trump administration initiated an unprecedented recall of more than 30 career ambassadors from different posts around the world. This move has yielded an erosion of influence, loss of experience, and plummeted workforce morale. As of April 13, 2026, there were 115 U.S. ambassadorial vacancies around the world. There is no announced plan or timeline for filling these vacancies. In the face of aggressive competition, the opportunity costs of leaving American embassies short staffed and without confirmed, empowered ambassadors, including our experienced career ambassadors, are rapidly increasing. This retreat erodes our nation's diplomatic power at our own peril.

In summary, AFSA asks Congress to sustain funding for the FY27 International Affairs Budget at no less than the FY26 enacted level of \$51.3 billion. Furthermore, please support the U.S. Foreign Service workforce by at least maintaining FY26 funding levels across the foreign affairs agencies under the jurisdiction of this subcommittee.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.