

**Written Testimony by Bishop David J. Malloy, Chairman,
Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to the
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
June 9, 2021**

On behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I thank the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs for this opportunity to submit testimony on appropriations for FY 2022. Together with Catholic Relief Services, our overseas relief and development agency, we urge you to increase funding for the international poverty-reducing humanitarian, development peacebuilding accounts specified in the table below.

Agency	Appropriations Account	Amount in \$,000
USAID	Maternal Health and Child Survival	\$879,000
USAID	Nutrition	\$150,000
USAID	Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced)	\$35,000
USAID	HIV/AIDS (USAID Programs)	\$330,000
USAID	Malaria, TB, Global Health Security & other NTDs	\$2,207,500
DOS/PEPFAR	HIV/AIDS (State Funding/PEPFAR)	\$5,930,000
USAID	Development Assistance (including water, education)	\$4,075,097
USAID/OFDA	International Disaster Assistance	\$4,682,362
DOS/PRM	Migration and Refugee Assistance	\$3,981,331
DOS/PRM	Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	\$1000
USAID	Complex Crises Fund and Atrocities Prevention Board	\$65,000
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation	\$912,000
DOS/IO	Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	\$1,928,614
DOS/IO	Peacekeeping Operations and Peace	\$469,459
DOS/IO	U.S. Institute of Peace	\$45,000
DOS/IO	Green Climate Fund	\$1,2500,000
DOS/IO	Combatting Trafficking in Persons	\$99,000

In his 2020 encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, [*Fratelli Tutti*](#), Pope Francis teaches, “The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders...” (#69). Such aid is proof of our nation’s compassion and gives life to our values as a nation and as a world leader.

Our assistance cannot stop there. Pope Francis stated in his 2013 apostolic exhortation, [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#) (the Joy of the Gospel), “The need to resolve the **structural causes of poverty** cannot be delayed...Inequality is the root of social ills” (#202). He adds that the growing inequality in the world “eventually engenders a violence which recourse to arms cannot and never will be able to resolve” (#60).

At a time when the United States continues in its response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we show our compassion to a world struggling to survive this

pandemic, conflict, hunger, and massive displacement. We urge you to increase international assistance that saves lives, reduces instability, and builds prosperity.

As Congress begins deliberations on the FY2022 SFOPs appropriations, we would like to offer our **strategic recommendations** on how the United States can rebalance and refocus its international assistance to better align with the problems and threats that our world faces. As the pandemic continues with no end in sight, we strongly urge the United States to:

1. Display Global Servant Leadership to a World Confronting Existential Global Threats

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how vulnerable our world is to numerous pressing human-made global issues. Some researchers have named this time as the ‘Anthropocene’ where human activity is now the dominant force affecting nature across our entire planet. Our place in the world demands enlightened global leadership to unite countries of the world to resolve conflict and differences and act in the common good of humanity and nature. Issues like **climate change, sea, and air pollution, disappearing flora and fauna, COVID-19 and future pandemics, conflict, cyber security, autonomous weapons, migration, refugees, trafficking of people, arms, and drugs** threaten all of humanity.

The U.S., working with the United Nations needs to unite the Security Council and the G-20 and lead the world towards solutions. This will require increased resources to State Department to mount robust, visionary, and skilled diplomacy and statesmen-like leadership. USAID will need greater resources from Treasury in the Green Climate Fund to help low-income countries mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt. The United States will also need to invest more in global health programs to help the world to deal with future pandemics and funding to deal with all the cross-border migration of people and trafficking of illicit goods.

Although the United States and China have serious disagreements over international treaties, democratic norms, and China’s threats to neighboring countries, the United States will need to find ways to challenge China where we must on issues of human rights and justice, but also push towards cooperation where needed to protect humanity from the serious threats above. We are all passengers on the same boat, planet earth and need to promote sustainable prosperity and avoid a wasteful “Cold War 2.0” because in modern warfare no one wins.

2. Move Towards a More Just Balance Between Defense, Diplomacy, and Development

After 20 years of war in Afghanistan and 18 in Iraq it is self-evident that the U.S. is not moving towards military victory, but only forestalling defeat. Yet some observers argue that a withdraw would be precipitous because democratic rule and human rights would end. How long can we ask our service men and women to fight the same people over the same ground in an endless attempt to stave off military defeat, if we are not making every effort to **win the peace** that will allow our forces to return home satisfied to have left peace in their wake?

The only pathway to guarantee peace and prosperity in Afghanistan and Iraq and eventually in Syria and Yemen must come from **sustained, open, and inclusive dialogue and negotiations between legitimate political leaders from all sides of the conflicts in these**

countries. As a party to these conflicts, the United States needs to shift significant resources to its diplomats, regional strategists, and civil society builders to facilitate and support these negotiations. The leaders and stakeholders to these conflicts must come to realize that a just peace can only come from a new shared social contract that creates a legitimate, democratic, accountable government, and public administration, military, police and promotes a free and vibrant populace living in a society that guarantees their full civil and human rights.

Despite this, State Department’s budget is historically low in comparison to that of defense. In 1950, State’s budget was around half the size of defense. Today State receives only 10% of what the Defense Department is allocated. Since 9/11 most of the increases to State’s budget went to improve physical security at overseas posts. More recently, many observers argue that State Department’s role, its staff, and resources have been diminished leaving many seasoned diplomats disempowered while others have left. One plan taking shape in the Senate is to increase funding to State Department by \$12 billion, or a 21% increase.

We live in a multi-polar universe dominated by an increasing number of conflicts, large flows of refugees escaping those conflicts, threats from terrorist groups, and challenges to the existing world order from Russia, China and a rise of nationalism that proposes walls on borders instead of bridges. We also face an unimagined future of cyber warfare, autonomous drones and artificial intelligence that represent new destabilizing threats. James Stavridis, a retired U.S. Navy admiral and former NATO supreme commander, argues that in such a world the United States urgently needs to deploy skilled diplomats, thinkers, and strategists who can see into the unknown, imagine the future of conflict and reverse engineer its causes to avoid it. He quotes Sun Tsu, “The greatest victory is that which requires no battle.” The Church has understood this imperative for years. In *Fratelli Tutti* Pope Francis says, “... it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”. Never again war! (#258).

3. Address State Fragility and Conflict in the Most Vulnerable Countries

After the 9/11 attacks our Bishops’ conference warned, “Our nation must join with others in addressing policies and problems that provide fertile ground in which terrorism can thrive.” We urge our political leaders to look beyond a focus on counterterrorism to address the poverty and powerlessness that make some people easy recruits for violence and terror.

Over the last few years, the U.S. Congress and successive Administrations have begun to act on this wisdom. With USCCB support the 115th Congress passed the **Elie Wiesel Global Atrocities Prevention Act**. It affirmed the Atrocities Prevention Board (now called the Atrocities Early Warning Task Force) efforts to coordinate all relevant Federal Government agencies to address fragility and prevent conflict. The act also called for resources. The Obama Administration created the Complex Crisis Fund to finance short term efforts to head off conflict before it breaks out. The USCCB also supported the **Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act** passed in December 2019 to develop and adopt best practices and strategies in six pilot countries. These bills elevated the mandate for U.S. policy to strengthen fragile states—to help them build resilience against the alarming growth of violent extremism, rebel insurgencies, social violence, and repression in their own societies.

The bills were designed to prioritize **non ‘strategic’ countries** like Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and, Mozambique where terrorist groups have found ungoverned spaces to set up shop. Of the 30 most fragile countries in the 2020 Fragile State Index created by the Fund for Peace, 20 are in Africa. Of the 54 conflicts in the world the 2019 Upsala Conflict Data Program estimates that 25 are in Africa. If Africa is the center of conflict in the world, it is also ground zero in terms of extreme poverty. The Brookings Institution estimates that in 2030 31 countries will be home to 80% of people living in extreme poverty. Africa now accounts for two-thirds of the world’s extreme poor and could reach nine-tenths by 2030. (WB-9 Oct 2020)

In these countries, the presence of terror groups is really the last symptom of a massive failure of the state to govern with justice towards the common good, allowing a fragile state to become a failed state. Concentrating only on armed responses to the terrorist presence in such a country is equivalent to giving an aspirin to a man dying of malaria to treat the headache.

Fragility and conflict also exist **in the absence of terrorists** in the Central African Republic, Cameroon, South Sudan, and Burundi where insurgents operate causing enormous suffering. Here conflict is the result of poor governance, group grievances, mismanagement of latent conflict, repression, human rights violations, and crushing poverty. Still other countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, Chad, Togo, Congo, Brazzaville, and Zimbabwe live under similar conditions of repression and corruption where the seeds of violence have been planted, but violent conflict is still latent. It is in these countries where **conflict prevention** is urgent if people are to escape the ravages of violence.

In addition, we are deeply concerned about the early warning signs of new violence resulting from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has devastated economies and fractured societies, exacerbating the drivers of violence and fragility around the world. We know that society-wide crises too often become a trigger or justification for mass violence and atrocities. Already [data modeling](#) shows that as a result of the pandemic, 13 more countries will likely experience conflict over the next two years, nearly doubling the pre-pandemic prediction.

While fragile countries in Africa currently account for two thirds of the world’s people living in extreme poverty and the world’s conflicts, they receive less than one quarter of total programmable aid from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries.

We urge Congress and the Administration to focus on and invest more State and USAID resources in reducing fragility and preventing violent conflict in the most vulnerable countries in our world. The U.S. should increase the capacity of the State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and increase funding to the Atrocities Prevention Fund. We urge not less than \$200 million for the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, and that such funds be dedicated to support the Global Fragility Strategy. We ask that you expand programs by the USAID Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization to support peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion efforts and integrate them into humanitarian and development programs in agriculture and livelihood promotion.

4. Place a Greater Priority on Empowering Civil Society and Faith-Based Groups

One commonality in all the fragile and conflict afflicted countries listed above is the absence of a strong, organized, and disciplined civil society. All societies consist of **government** institutions at the federal and local levels, **private, for-profit corporations** that drive economic activity and a **vast and varied array of private, independent civil society associations** where citizens can gather to further their private, family, economic and social interests. Such civil society groups include labor unions, think tanks, professional associations, human rights defenders, and faith-based groups who defend people living in poverty and vulnerability. The hallmarks of fragile societies are a repressive, or at best a negligent government, that is rife with corruption that favors private corporations' interests over the common good especially those living in poverty. In these countries government and corporate elites protect their interests by stifling civil society organizations with heavy regulations and fees, through threats, physical harm, unwarranted imprisonment and even resorting at times to kidnappings, or summary executions.

Often **faith-based institutions** are some of the few civil society institutions that are left standing with enough credibility, authority, and institutional cohesiveness to stand up to corrupt and repressive governments. Across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia, the Catholic Church, along with other Christian and Muslim denominations have echoed the prophets of old and publicly denounced modern-day corruption, repression, defrauded elections, state violence and insurgencies, often at the risk of their own personal and institutional peril. They have made valiant attempts to turn their words of prophecy into action by organizing peace and justice institutions, electoral monitoring teams, political mediation efforts, and negotiations between armed groups and the government. Their efforts are courageous, but often too small and underfunded and thus unable to change government policies, compel armed groups to lay down their arms, or to mobilize nonviolent mass movements to bring about positive change.

Peacebuilding experts know it requires a generation or more to transform conflict into peace based on justice and reconciliation. The United States has been willing to spend a generation and hundreds of billions of dollars on military responses to conflict and terrorism, yet only spends \$600 million/year to prevent and stop conflict. We urge you to make a generational commitment to increase radically funding to local civil society organizations' efforts to defend the human and civil rights of people struggling to survive repression and violence. This funding must be long-term, flexible, nimble while ensuring accountability and impact. This can be done through three-way strategic partnerships between USAID, American civil society institutions like Catholic Relief Services and their local civil society and faith-based partners.

In closing we must also be clear that the USCCB strongly opposes any expansion of taxpayer funding of abortion as part of this appropriations legislation. The longstanding, bipartisan, and life-saving Helms Amendment policy must be included before this bill moves forward. Legislation that fails to include this longstanding bipartisan policy directly threatens human life and dignity and should be opposed until this fundamental problem is remedied.