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**GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS
APPROPRIATIONS HEARING ON FY 2013 UNITED NATIONS BUDGET REQUEST**

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related programs will come to order. I want to welcome everyone to today's hearing. Ambassador Rice, thank you for being with us today to give testimony and answer our questions on the Administration's budget request for the United Nations and international organizations.

I know it has been a challenging year since you last testified before this Committee. We commend you for your efforts to get the international community to pressure Iran to stop pursuing nuclear weapons. You have also pushed the UN to assist countries in the Middle East and North Africa that are facing difficult transitions.

And I know there are many issues you are always working that never make the front page. Unfortunately, in spite of your hard work, there have been many disappointments at the UN over the last year. The conflict rages on in Syria, with Russia and China unwilling to join the international community to take action against the regime.

We want to hear your thoughts on what, if anything, can still be done to put pressure on these countries to act. The situation is very troubling, and it is difficult to explain to our constituents why the UN cannot come up with a coordinated response to a crisis of this magnitude.

We have also watched with concern as the Palestinians go around the peace process to seek recognition as a Palestinian state. Administration officials made it known to the Palestinians that the US would veto a statehood resolution at the Security Council, but then the Palestinians simply changed their strategy and went to UNESCO.

And we are still concerned that the Palestinians will try to get their status elevated in the General Assembly and at other UN agencies. We would like an update on what you expect will happen over the next year.

As you know all too well, the U.S. is now withholding our contribution to UNESCO because of the Palestinians' actions, in accordance with U.S. law.

Many members of Congress believe that cutting off these funds is the reason the PA stopped further recognition efforts.

Yet, the Administration has requested the authority to waive the provisions of law that required UNESCO's funding to stop. We will want to hear more about this waiver proposal.

In addition, many concerns remain about the effectiveness and transparency of U.N. organizations. The Administration's report on U.S. contributions to international organizations shows that \$8.5 billion was provided to the U.N. and other international organizations in fiscal year 2010.

I was very concerned to learn that, while the U.S. is the largest UN donor, we have limited access to information to ensure that our funds are spent wisely and effectively. As a result, provisions are now included in the State - Foreign Operations appropriations bill that require the Secretary of State to withhold funds if the UN and its agencies are not making progress on transparency and accountability measures.

We expect to see real changes and want to hear how these new requirements will be met.

Another troubling development is that the Subcommittee recently learned about the possibility of a significant cost over-run for the UN headquarters renovation project. As you may know, language was carried in the last two appropriations bills to limit the cost of the project and minimize the burden on the United States.

We continue to expect that you and the State Department will work with the UN to finish the project within funds already appropriated for these purposes.

I want to close with a topic I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks – Iran.

The head of the IAEA recently said that he has “serious concerns” that Iran may be hiding secret atomic weapons work. While Iran has now signaled a willingness to return to talks, I am very concerned that the time for talk has passed. This promise could simply be another stalling tactic. We want to hear what actions you are taking at the UN Security council to increase pressure on Iran.

In closing, Ambassador Rice, I want to thank you and the US delegations stationed in New York and around the world. We appreciate the sacrifices that are made on a daily basis. Thank you for being here.

I'll now turn to Ranking Member Lowey for her opening remarks.