

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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MEETING

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TUESDAY

MARCH 30, 2021

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The Advisory Committee convened via webinar at 2:00 p.m. EDT, Stevan Pearce,
Committee Chairman, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS

JIM CRUSE, Acting Vice Chairman

SPENCER BACHUS, III, Member

JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR, Member

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

STEVAN PEARCE, Chairman

MARIA CINO

BILL CUMMINS

PAULA DOBRIANSKY

RODNEY FERGUSON

LAWRENCE GOODMAN

OWEN HERRNSTADT

SCOTT PALMER

RICH POWELL

T.J. RAGUSO

ALEX SANCHEZ

VENKEE SHARMA

CHRISTOPHER SMITH

LINDA UPMEYER

JOANNE YOUNG

STAFF PRESENT

CHRIS VAN ES, Senior Vice President, Office of

Communications and External Engagement

HAZEEN ASHBY, Senior Vice President, Office of
Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs,
White House Liaison

SCOTT CONDREN, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of
Policy Analysis and International Relations

ADAM FROST, Senior Vice President for the
Program on China and Transformational Exports

ISABEL GALDIZ, Vice President of International
Relations, Office of Policy Analysis and
International Relations

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2:04 p.m.

MR. VAN ES: Good afternoon, everybody. It is good to be with you today. My name is Chris Van Es and I am one of the newest additions to EXIM. I started two and a half weeks ago as the SVP overseeing external engagement and communications and, along with our team of -- the new incoming team of political appointees, I know we're all excited to be with you.

A little bit about myself, I grew up in Wisconsin. I went to the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Moved to DC in 2010. Served in a few different econ agencies in the Obama administration, had roles at SBA, Treasury, and have spent the last four years in the capital market space at FINRA.

And so I'm incredibly excited to be with all of you to be starting on this, this journey, and I'm looking forward to a good dialogue today and in the coming months.

I'll let Hazeen, our White House liaison and SVP for congressional affairs provide more context on some upcoming administration priorities. But I think suffice it to say, I think we're working hard on making sure that we support whoever our nominees are in the coming months for, for board.

And above and beyond that will be, I think, ensuring that we're playing a role on issues like climate, equity for marginalized communities across our programs and making sure that, fundamentally, American businesses are positioned to compete around the world.

So with that, I am going to call the roll as I have been informed is a mandatory part of these virtual meetings, so if you'll bear with me. I will, I'll call names here quickly, and if you can just unmute yourself and speak up we can move into the meat of the agenda after that.

So running down the list, Steve Pearce?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Here.

MR. VAN ES: Maria Cino? Maria Cino? All right.

Bill Cummins? All right.

Paula Dobriansky?

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: I'm here.

MR. VAN ES: All right. Rodney Ferguson?

Lawrence Goodman?

MEMBER GOODMAN: Present.

MR. VAN ES: All right. Owen Herrnsstadt?

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: I'm here.

MR. VAN ES: All right. Bill Huntington?

Sean McGarvey?

Scott Palmer?

MEMBER PALMER: Scott Palmer.

MR. VAN ES: All right. Folks who are not speaking, if you could please just ensure that you are muted so that we don't have background noise, that would be great.

All right, moving along, Rich Powell?

MEMBER POWELL: Here.

MR. VAN ES: Okay. T.J. Raguso?

MEMBER RAGUSO: Here.

MR. VAN ES: Okay. Alex Sanchez?

MEMBER SANCHEZ: I'm here.

MR. VAN ES: Okay. Venkee Sharma?

MEMBER SHARMA: I'm here.

MR. VAN ES: Okay. Chris Smith?

MEMBER SMITH: Here.

MR. VAN ES: Linda Upmeyer?

Joanne Young?

MEMBER YOUNG: I'm here.

MR. VAN ES: All right. Well, with that out of the way, I'll turn it over to Congressman Pearce.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Chris, I think you called a couple names and people didn't respond. Try Bill and Rodney again.

MR. VAN ES: Sure. Bill, Roger, are you all there?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Bill Cummins and Rodney Ferguson?

MEMBER CINO: I'm sorry. I'm having video problems. Maria Cino is also here, sorry.

MR. VAN ES: Okay. Thanks, Maria.

DIRECTOR PRYOR: And I see Rodney and Bill but --

MR. VAN ES: Yeah.

DIRECTOR PRYOR: -- maybe we need them to verbally say that they're present.

MEMBER CUMMINS: I'm here.

MEMBER FERGUSON: No, I, I thought I did, but I'm here.

DIRECTOR PRYOR: Okay.

MEMBER CUMMINS: I'm here, too.

MR. VAN ES: Okay. All right, although I think Bill -- I've got Bill Cummins. Is there -- is Bill Huntington here?

All right. I don't see, and I'm just looking through my attendees list. I don't see Bill Huntington on my attendees list.

Okay, all right. If we're good on roll, then Congressman Pearce, I will turn it over to you.

Congressman Pearce, are you there?

DIRECTOR PRYOR: You're on mute, Congressman.

MR. VAN ES: Say, Marvin, can we, can we unmute Congressman Pearce please?

MARVIN: Sending that request now.

MR. VAN ES: Marvin, what's, what's the status here?

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Chris if you don't mind my saying, I'm jumping in, I think all of us were muted because I tried to click on mine and it wouldn't let me. So it needs to be corrected. If you heard me, I hope you hear me, and that's probably why Congressman Pearce couldn't get in.

MR. VAN ES: I can hear you, Ambassador.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: I know you can now, but I --

MR. VAN ES: Okay.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: -- when I clicked unmute it, for like five minutes, I could not unmute, so I bet that's what's happening.

MR. VAN ES: Okay.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: I'll stand down here.

MR. VAN ES: Okay.

DIRECTOR BACHUS: I had the same problem that the Ambassador had.

OPERATOR: So I do not see Congressman in the stack right now. I think he may have dropped off.

MR. VAN ES: In the panelists, we need to unmute Steve in the panelist box.

OPERATOR: He has been unmuted.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Okay. I was --

MR. VAN ES: Here we go. All right.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: It was really amazing the things I was saying. I'm sorry you all missed that. We'll have to start back from square one. But thanks for everyone being on here today. It is exciting to kick off this new year, new administration, new thoughts and that's what we're here to talk about. It should be an open and lively discussion.

I hope you all got a copy of the, the annual report, the 2020 that had a lot about the Advisory Committee in there. And I think that we filled key role, but keep in mind that the Bank was shut down for almost four years. I was in Congress in the committee that was trying to shut them down at that point. I was on the other side completely split away from my colleagues that, that would generally we agree on a lot.

And so that reauthorization was very key and the historic length of it was very key. but those things don't happen by magic. And I think this Advisory Committee serves a very important role as we, as we look down the road toward the next reauthorization. And that's always we should be thinking about the continuation of what we're doing because it is so important in the world economy.

We have become very uncompetitive because of the -- because of the Bank's inoperation. Watching kind of the excitement of the permanent staff build as we reopen, as we took on significant issues, the whole idea of reforms coming straight from members of the Senate who insisted on those reforms before they would pass the reauthorization.

Those need to be continued in our viewpoint, but then also just the kind of the taking care of the people who make this thing work. We've got to be cognizant of that.

I am just excited that we've got the same board members here. That continuation of communication with the actual board is, I think, very important.

And then lastly, we, we took on probably the biggest issue of our generation and that is competition with China. So a lot of things that we've taken on and, and you all were very key in all of that.

So we're going to go, I'll dispense with any further opening remarks, we're going to go straight to Jim Cruse. He is the Acting Vice Chairman and First Vice President. Jim, 51 years of service, we need to be giving you a medal of honor instead of letting you speak, but we're glad you're here and we're glad you're on duty and thanks for being here. And why don't you update us about the activities of the board and of EXIM Bank? Thank you.

And if I could get you to unmute?

MR. CRUSE: Can people hear me?

MR. VAN ES: Yes, we can.

MR. CRUSE: All right. How about that? Wonders of technology. Well, I welcome all of you here today. Not only are we glad to have you but I think we're also very fortunate to have you in the sense that in this meeting and the one that we'll have in May could well be bookends to two important issues that the Bank will be addressing this spring and early summer.

One is the Competitiveness Report as you see. The other one is the China program and, of course, the important content in that. You all played an important role in formulating the China program and the content policy back in December, and today we'll be discussing that to some extent, to a large extent.

And the Competitiveness Report is the most important function that the Committee has every year. So these next two meetings I think you'll be playing an invaluable role, and I am very glad that you as a group are basically back, just like our two directors, because both of these issues require a little bit of perspective and context. And I think you all bring an important amount of that to this.

Therefore, I welcome you and I, I appreciate you. So I'd not only say welcome here but I say thank you. And back to you, Chairman Pearce.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you very, Jim. Let me just tell you that the meeting today has -- is chock full of content and we have actually a very short time for, for the Board discussions. And what I'd like you to do as we're going through is write your questions down if you've got them for different presenters.

All the presenters will be available all the way until the end of the meeting and that, the chat time scheduled at 3:30 we're going to, to address those questions there. I feel like it's important that we get all the speakers in today so just write your questions down, hold them, and we will walk through that way.

So Jim, thank you very much for that update.

Hazeen Ashby is the Senior Vice President at the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs and White House liaison. So Hazeen, welcome. Thank you for being here today and thanks for jumping on board to help us out over here at EXIM. Welcome.

MS. ASHBY: Thank you, thank you. I'm excited to be here. Thank you guys for jumping on with us actually. I think this is -- I love that sentiment. I think EXIM is a wonderful place. I'm excited that you guys have decided to join us on the Advisory Council, that you put your name in.

As Mr. -- Congressman Pearce said, my name is Hazeen Ashby and I am the White House liaison and the SVP for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. Quick, a couple of quick things about myself. I'm joining you guys from the Hill. I worked at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and before that I was a Chief Counsel for the Senate Commerce Committee. So I've been in kind of commerce issues and policy issues for quite a bit now.

I am excited to be here because I think the Bank is, is really placed at a -- we have a wonderful nexus with all of the plans and priorities of the Biden-Harris administration, mainly to help create domestic jobs that, especially as we are trying to come out of this pandemic.

Not quite -- I don't know how -- I don't want us to go too deeply into all the plans but I know that one of the questions that most folks have about transition is about our next chair and our next Board. It is not -- has not been shared with me yet who those folks will be and when we will have those confirmation, when we will have those nominees and when they will be sent to the Senate. But I will say that the administration is absolutely committed to us maintaining quorum. I know that many of you guys know that we have several different ways in which to maintain quorum that since the 2019 reauthorization. You can see one of the ways that we've done that by making sure that the President designated Jim as our acting Vice Chair so I want EXIM to know that we will continuously have quorum until we have -- until we have a full Board in place.

I think I'm also supposed to introduce the rest of, the rest of our team. Right now the, we are four strong. Obviously, you guys have met Chris van Es, our SVP of External Engagement and communications.

We also have two folks who are here helping to set up the processes of the Bank and the Chair's office. That is Patrick McNally. He's our executive secretary and Laly Riviera Perez, who is our Director of Scheduling in the Chair's office.

And I'm sure you guys will have questions for me so I'll just wait until the end.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: We will. Yeah, we'll hold those to the end, but again, from the -- having a congressional point of view and Spencer Bachus would also share this, I'm sure, is that you understand the delicate nature of this reauthorization and the point.

And so as we go through the next a couple of years we'll be looking you to give feedback to the panel on the issues that are being discussed about in the Senate from both sides of the aisle. This was a pretty bipartisan vote to get this done. I think that's extremely important.

But thanks again for being on board and for your comments today.

We're going next to our Board of Directors' comments. Judith Pryor, again, we all know her well. She's a member of the Board of Directors, and Judith, welcome back and hope you're doing well this year.

DIRECTOR PRYOR: Thank you, Congressman. It's great to see you. It's great to see everybody still here with us. Thank you so much for your service over this past year or so.

I for one have certainly enjoyed our discourse during these meetings and learning from each of you how best to move the agency's best interests forward as we attempted to reengage with the global community after being shut down for what Congressman Pearce has already described, a very long period of time, nearly four years.

I've enjoyed the conversations we've had during these Advisory Committee meetings, and I've really enjoyed getting to know some of you even better. So thank you again for lending us your expertise and your thoughts on how we can make EXIM a stronger partner to our U.S. exporters and manufacturers.

I have been asked by the Biden-Harris administration to extend my time on EXIM's Board, as our charter permits, for up to six months past my term limit, which expired on January 30th. So I can be around up until July 20th.

I plan to run out the tape on my term and I truly look forward to working with you until then. And it looks like we're going to have another opportunity to get together this coming May. So while I'm still here, I'll keep my toes in the water and run point for the Board on Africa and the Middle East, energy, primarily renewable energy, and I'll help out as we all do with some of our small business activities, particularly women and minority businesses.

But actually I, like you, will continue to support EXIM in every way possible while I'm still here, but even after. Once a member of the EXIM team, always a member, right?

And last, kudos to Jim Cruse, who is doing a wonderful job at the helm of the agency as we await the next round of nominees and confirmations. I mean, who better, right, as, as Congressman Pearce indicated? I mean he's just celebrated 51 years at this venerable agency. So Jim, we're all here to support you in every way we possibly can in your acting capacity as Vice Chair and first Vice President. I'm sure the Advisory Committee agrees.

So thank you for your time today. It's great to see all of your smiling faces, albeit through my computer screen, and I look forward to the next few months. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Director Pryor.

The next gentleman I served in the Financial Services Committee under his chairmanship and so I always call him Chairman because he was one of the best Financial Services chairmen, and that's Spencer Bachus. Thanks for being with us today and thanks for your service on the Board. I recognize you now.

DIRECTOR BACHUS: Well, thank you, Steve, for those kind remarks and I think we're blessed by having your leadership as chairman of the Advisory Committee.

And I want to tell each and every one of you that I've really enjoyed working with, with each and every one of you. I think we've done important work as an advisory committee.

Hazeen, I want to lobby you. Judith and I have worked very closely together. We are good friends. We -- and six months is simply not long enough. She -- you can't run out on me, Judith.

DIRECTOR PRYOR: Spencer is my, my biggest fan and I'm his biggest fan, so if you didn't know that. Thank you, Spencer.

DIRECTOR BACHUS: Do not -- do not tell me that you will only be around until July. I mean I had to -- I'm going to -- if I need to, hey, then I'm going to make calls to my Republican colleagues to, to tell them, hey, you -- she needs to be reappointed.

She brings a vast amount of experience. The professional staff can tell you that. And, you know, I was designated as the small business representative on the Board of Directors and actually the Congress did that. They made that designation.

And it's been a joy to serve with Jim Burrows. And Elizabeth Thomas is my assistant. Jim's team and I'm going to start my prepared remarks, okay, so I won't linger and stick to under my five minutes or three minutes.

But it's been a joy to work with Jim Burrows, who's the EXIM Senior Vice President of our Office of Small Business and they've done a wonderful job advocating for our small business exporters. And Judith and I have traveled all over the country visiting them and each and every one of them is a really unique story.

I think Bill Cummins you can vouch for that in Alabama, just, just the group in Alabama. And they all had the same message and that's that EXIM is an important part of their -- of them being good exporters. They actually say that EXIM has been essential in growing their business.

I want -- one thing that I, when I visit people about EXIM, there's two things I stress. One is it's such an incredible agency. If you don't know about the 87-year history of EXIM, I invite you to do that when people start criticizing EXIM.

It was authorized in 1941 and their -- actually their first project was the Burma Road and I'm old enough to know what that is. Some of you may not know, but that supported the Chinese during their struggle with Japan.

And they went on. Their stellar engage -- their stellar, I think, contribution that we're still enjoying today is the fact that they administered the Marshall Plan.

And the Marshall Plan is still considered today as the most successful foreign policy initiative by the United State. It helped us win -- President Carter and President Reagan both honored EXIM's contribution to keeping the peace and winning the Cold War in Europe.

So this is this something we ought to all be proud of. They financed the Pan-American Highway. I don't know if you knew that.

But more recent, we're doing projects all over Africa to bring clean water and electricity to the -- to people there. And if you ever read Robert Caro's book about Lyndon Johnson you know that he brought rural electricity to a lot of the country, starting really with FDR. And electricity is a game-changer. It is absolutely -- it's hard for us to imagine what it's like not to have electricity until it goes out for a day or two. But still two-thirds of the people in Africa do not have electricity, and we are a part of an important mission there.

We have several missions, not only to bring rural highways to people there but electricity and potable water. So it's something we ought to all be proud of that we're a part of.

Second thing I stress to people is the agency itself. The agency itself is 400 people, but of that number, and this is pretty incredible, many of them have advanced degrees. They're engineers. They're accountants. They are Wharton School of Business. It's just an incredible array of IT, linguistic experts, financial degrees. It's just a -- it's something you could not replace if you had to start today. It's really a jewel in the federal government.

And they also support the State Department. They support the Commerce Department. They work with them and the Treasury, so -- in important things.

Now, when COVID struck, we all know how much Congress and the administration then and now, even as late as last week, supported the efforts for recovery. And many of those involved spending billions of dollars, but at the same time, people don't realize that the Export-Import Bank had a major role in supporting businesses and individuals and workers during the COVID crisis. And we did that without, you know, expense to the taxpayer.

So if EXIM hadn't been there it would have probably been necessary for the government to have spent probably billions of dollars doing things that we did and actually did at a win-win crisis.

I won't go into this. I had another. I was going to describe some of the things that EXIM did, but I just, you know, we got the supply chain financing. That's a new thing. We've been very successful on that. And the Working Capital Guarantee Program, that has -- that has really helped a lot of people.

And finally let me say this. I was struck last week when we went over some of our projects and whether they were profitable or not, whether they were successful or whether they were having problems, and I was struck by one number in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Do you realize that every project we've undertaken in Sub-Saharan Africa, and I mean, we're going back now to 2011, they've all met their payment schedule on time. We've had no defaults.

Now, these are some of the most challenged countries in the world, but EXIM and the Sub-Saharan African countries and their companies there and the people there have had a stellar success on making their obligation.

So it's been a real win-win in Sub-Saharan Africa. And we've done a lot of good work there.

So thank you. Thank you to the Advisory Committee and thank you for allowing me to serve with you on the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Congressman and Director. We appreciate those comments and those updates on what you're seeing.

Isabel Galdiz is going to talk about the report to the U.S. Congress on global export credit competition. She's the Vice President of International Relations at the Office of Policy Analysis and International Relations.

And just a side note, the meeting today sort of divides itself into a couple of different components, and so we're a couple of minutes ahead. I think we're going to go to questions at the end of Isabel's time. And it will be for the people in this part of the presentation. And then in our chat time at the end we'll ask questions to the next presenters from 3:00 on.

So Isabel, thanks for being here, and I appreciate it. Go ahead and take the floor.

MS. GALDIZ: Thank you, Chairman Pearce. Can you see my screen? Hello?

MR. VAN ES: Yes, we can hear you Isabel. I cannot see your screen yet.

MS. GALDIZ: Let me see. Okay. Can you see my screen now?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: We've got it.

MR. VAN ES: Sure can.

MS. GALDIZ: All right, great. Thank you. Thank you for your patience as I get my bearings here. And I'm sorry that my camera seems to have stopped working today.

My name is Isabel Galdiz, and I am vice president of the International Relations Division at EXIM Bank. And I work and have been working together with Jim Cruse for about 30 of the 51 years that he's been at EXIM.

And in that timeframe we've been focused on working together with the Advisory Committee on the production of the annual Competitiveness Report to Congress and specifically working together with you on your statutory role, which is to help you by providing a report that addresses the -- did my screen stop sharing? I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: No, you're fine. It's still sharing.

MS. GALDIZ: Okay. Providing a report to Congress on U.S. exporter competitiveness and your role is to review the findings of the report. And our statute asks that you submit a statement with -- along with the report to Congress where you describe whether you agree with the findings of the report and any recommendations that you would make and that you shared in your statement along with the report for Congress to receive.

Of course, you're familiar with this role because many of you provided a very detailed and thoughtful statement to the 2019 annual Competitiveness Report and -- can you still see my screen? I seem to have lost it here.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: It went to the agenda for today. We're back on your screen now.

MS. GALDIZ: Okay. Sorry about that. So the goal is to draw attention in the report to the competitiveness of EXIM Bank programs. And the reason why that is the central focus of the report is because together with many other mandated functions, Congress really did emphasize the primary function of the Bank, which was to improve the competitiveness of U.S. exporters through fully competitive financing.

So our goal since 1983 has been to be able to assess -- I'm sorry. I don't know why the screen keeps changing -- is to be able to provide you with an assessment of the -- an assessment of EXIM competitiveness based on information collected from exporters and lenders through a mandated survey and using that information together with the objective information and data that we collect through our many international engagements within the OECD, within the Berne Union and bilaterally working together with competitor ECAs to collect information and present that to you in the Competitiveness Report.

Just to give you a sneak preview of the report themes, this year we are focusing on, of course, the impact of COVID and how COVID has shaped the foreign export credit agency envelope of programs and the different policies that were introduced, with a particular focus on domestic support that foreign export credit agencies have introduced.

I'm hearing that we -- okay. So the main focus will be to present these three issue areas. One is how the foreign export credit agency landscape has expanded to address COVID, the introduction of domestic support into export credit agency range of programs.

Additionally, we've seen a multiplicity of climate finance initiatives that have been introduced, as well as sustainable financing initiatives that competitor export credit agencies are rolling out and continue to roll out in response to the various climate mandates that the export credit agencies have also been asked to respond to.

Finally, and it will come as no surprise to Ambassador Dobriansky and others that have served on the C4 Advisory Committee, underlying the OECD export credit agency trends the report also will focus on the increasingly strategic nature of Chinese export credit support and not only the voluminous size of those export credit support programs coming from China and other non-OECD players, but also the strategic nature of those programs and how they are targeting industry sectors and markets across the globe.

So we welcome any questions and comments you have on those specific themes that we've identified for you here in advance of the report.

Before going into the schedule for the Advisory Committee and the role that we'll ask you to play in terms of the timeline that we will offer you here, I also wanted to share with you a problem that we're currently facing and one that stems from the lack of credibility that EXIM currently is facing in the international stage because of this hiatus in EXIM's ability to provide support for so many, many years.

That lack of credibility has resulted now in a very low response rate to the EXIM Competitiveness Report survey that we each year conduct of exporters and lenders and that provides us with that information that we then are able to use in the report to help shape that story and that Congress has mandated -- mandated that we include as the basis for the report.

The very low response rate is troubling to us. And so we would ask that in addition to the mandated role that you play in providing this Advisory Committee statement that if you have any recommendations to us on how we could improve the response rate of the report or if you yourselves, your companies or your contacts have been provided a report, a survey to -- that you could please work together with them to get them to please respond to the survey.

We are really disappointed in the response rate to date. So now the schedule for the Advisory Committee that we hope to roll out is by the end of May we will distribute a draft of the Competitiveness Report to the Advisory Committee members.

And we hope that you are able to review and prepare an Advisory Committee statement. Chairman Pearce will provide you with more logistical details and instructions on exactly how that process will unfold.

And we will then meet together with the Advisory Committee at its quarterly meeting to discuss the Competitiveness Report's findings. We will come back and present those findings to you.

And we hope to work together with you in finalizing that Advisory Committee statement by the first part of June so that it can be included in the final Competitiveness Report that we are statutorily obligated to present to Congress by the June 30 deadline.

Staff is available to you and to Chairman Pearce to support any work that you have, any questions that you have on the report. And we are so grateful to you for once again working on the Advisory Committee to prepare that committee statement which is so important to Congress to have together with the report.

Thank you and again, apologies for the technical glitch.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Isabel, thanks. I appreciate your presentation and we're fine on any of the tech things. It worked well.

So we're going to go to questions now for 15 minutes. That will put us right back on our 3 o'clock schedule we -- I want to follow up what Isabel was talking about, kind of the lack of confidence. And Jim, there's always a truth in politics that you show, don't tell. And so what are you all doing right now? In other words, if we've got a lack of confidence that we're going to be able to fill the gap to provide those needs, what is the Bank doing in the last five months, six months or whatever?

And again, tell us a little bit about the loans and things that we're working on, if you would please, and then we'll go to questions from others. Just ask one question if you would. It can be a very quick round here.

MS. GALDIZ: So I don't know if Jim wanted to begin responding, but I can tell you that --

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: No, I was asking -- I was asking Jim to tell us about --

MS. GALDIZ: Sure.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: -- what the Bank is doing right now. In other words, you mentioned the lack of confidence and I understand it's a very key thing, but we show people what we're doing. We don't tell them what we're doing. And that would be by the deals that we're making, by the loans that we're making.

So Jim, I'm asking if you could update us a little bit on what we're doing right now in exact projects.

MR. CRUSE: Well, the medium and long-term business has been fairly slow, not least because of the COVID, but it's also due to the fact that a lot of transactions have been delayed.

And some of the ones that have been authorized are being reworked. So actually a lot of our activity and our value has been in restructuring and reworking a variety of transactions throughout the world to make them fit within the environment that is coming out of the COVID.

We have also had a lot of supply chain activity, and we've actually done one transaction in which we matched the Chinese for the first time in about a dozen years. We reached out and matched the terms of the Chinese and so far it looks like we won the transaction.

So the bulk of our activity right now has been in trying to prepare the program, the China program, and trying to align the policies and stuff with the new initiatives and in making sure that all the transactions that we have done over the years are still viable in today's times.

But we do not have a lot of medium and long-term authorizations to show, as is the story in some other institutions.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Okay, thanks. Other questions from the committee?

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this is Owen Herrnstadt.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Yes, go ahead, Owen.

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Hey, thank you very much. Isabel, thanks for the presentation. As you know, I've have been concerned about the survey and the methodology used for many years now.

It really will incur negative responses, people that are having problems as opposed to positive ones and with the further information that there's been a lack of number of responses.

Even in good years where there were more responses I think we were concerned about the statistical validity of some of the results. So that obviously is a continuing concern.

My question, however, goes to really China and that is if you could describe for us any of the efforts that are undergoing with our representation at the OECD to work with other OECD members to help really set rules for non-OECD members like China and other non-market economies, if that's been contemplated or if there's been any activity or if that's something that it looks like will be one of the -- one of the issues that will be done in the coming year? Thanks.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Jim, can you address that for us?

MR. CRUSE: Making sure that I'm unmuted. Well, there is an overarching project at the OECD called Modernization of the OECD. Its overall focus is to make the arrangement more flexible so that all the parties can be much more effective in matching up with what the Chinese do. That overall transaction has included a couple of major initiatives to get into local costs and interest rates, but it does affect the whole spectrum.

And there's nothing specific to report right now except that the focus of the arrangement that is in discussions is on doing something to make the arrangement more quickly responsive to what the Chinese are doing.

And at the same time, on a separate path, to make the arrangement more responsive to the pressures from the climate and other aspects. So those two broad areas are what is going on at the OECD right now. There's a lot of details underneath that, but that's the focus.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Okay, thanks. And Chris, I hope that your listening went up when he was talking about the question of the validity of the methodology. And I think that's a valid point and if you would look at that.

And then also the rules downstream for the non-OECD members to where we get a little bit more fair competition I think was the point there. Are there other questions?

MEMBER BACHUS: Yes, Steve, this is Spencer Bachus.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Go ahead. Go ahead, Spencer.

MEMBER BACHUS: Let me sort of -- I think some of the Advisory Committee probably doesn't see what's going on inside the agency. The number of it, and they're all -- they're not actually requests for funding. They're more like inquiries. We just get multiple inquiries every day.

And then when they submit information for funding it's often very incomplete. We have to go back to them and say, look, you're not -- you haven't provided this. You hadn't provided that. You haven't provided a financial statement.

And many times they don't really want to do that. They don't want to follow the guidelines. They don't want to supply this information.

And then during COVID, the volume really picked up. Now that hit at a very bad time because when we were shut down from 2015 to 2019, I can't overstress the number of talent drain we had.

We had numbers, probably, I don't know, Jim Cruse or someone else could tell you, the number of our top notch people that had a lot of experience that just threw up their hands and said, you know, they're not going to reauthorize this. I'm going someplace else.

And, you know, it was every month we were losing very talented people. And we're talking about an agency with 400. You know, we've just now gone back up close to 400, but I think we dropped down to close to 300. And many of them were our most veteran people. And they just got tired of all the criticism.

The other thing that people don't seem to realize is the statutory requirements. We have to notify Congress. We have waiting periods. We have to work with Treasury and State. Treasury almost always raises questions which we have to then answer.

So you've got, particularly in the transportation division and the commodities division, a lot of people were working overtime and a lot of it was just answering questions that Treasury would always throw 12 or 14 questions to us.

And the Chinese, they don't have those restraints. In fact, what they also do to us on our major project is they go back and say, look, even after we begin to finalize these projects and we have an agreement from the countries, they come in and offer them a better deal.

And we can't always do that. You know, let me say this. I don't know if it's ever been said in -- while we've met as an Advisory Committee. But a bad deal, making a bad deal on some of these transactions is not a good thing for the country.

I mean, there will be cases where we can't match China, nor should we, because making bad deals is not good for the country. A transaction that's not going to be worked, that's not going to be paid for, is going to cause default, that's not good.

If China wants to make some of those, sometimes we just have to step back and let them do it. You know, I hate that that's true, but we can't compete to the point that we violate our own charter unless that these have financial viability. And a lot of things we're asked to undertake simply don't have that.

Now, I do think (audio interference) side that we have a lot of credible people and companies that come to us and say, look, we haven't had a response. We've had our request in for 90 days. We simply -- the number of staff is simply inadequate to handle the volume.

It's, so I can assure you --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. CRUSE: -- that our staff are working overtime. So I'm sorry. That's enough.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: I appreciate that and I'm going to try to get one more question in here, maybe two. Thank you, Director.

Another question from the Advisory Committee?

MEMBER SANCHEZ: Steve, this is Alex Sanchez.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Yes. Mr. Sanchez and then Mr. Sharma. Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Sharma and then we'll go back to the agenda.

MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you, Chairman Pearce and thanks for your leadership, and it's an honor to be here with you, sir, and all our colleagues.

I have a question for -- is Hazeen Ashby still there?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SANCHEZ: Is she still on the phone?

MS. ASHBY: I am.

MEMBER SANCHEZ: Yes. Yeah, hey, Hazeen, hi.

MS. ASHBY: Hi.

MEMBER SANCHEZ: Alex Sanchez in Florida. A comment and a question combined into one. I'm encouraged by the Biden administration's response, initial responses to China here as our new president gets under way with his administration.

And I think we need to continue that. You know, China is certainly not a friend and it is a foe, but most importantly, it's our competitor. And I think the Biden administration's, at least from my -- from what I've seen, initial responses have been positive in that front.

And I would, again, encourage you to take that message, you know, to your colleagues in the White House because we need to continue to treat China -- because for far too long we did not treat them as a competitor and we need to.

And EXIM Bank, as you know, Hazeen, has a major role to play to help our nation's economy better compete on a global stage with China. So that is really -- it's more of a comment that I wanted to share with you on a positive front for our new president, and I hope you take that message to the White House. Thank you.

MS. ASHBY: Of course, of course. I definitely will do that. I hope that folks are realizing and have been able to note at least that this is part of Biden-Harris administration goals are to make sure that we're continuing to increase our competitiveness.

It is something that I believe that the administration is discussing a lot, that we are discussing. And we are hoping that as we get our, and we get our new Board, we put in -- and we put in place all of the -- we actually really start to initialize our China and transformational exports program, that everyone here will see that that is what we're focusing on.

We're going to focus on continuing to help increase our domestic jobs and manufacturing here and domestic manufacturing and making sure that we are competitive with China in the areas where we can do that.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, appreciate the response there.

Mr. Sharma, and that'll be the last question and we'll go back to our agenda at that point.

MEMBER SHARMA: Thank you, Chairman Pearce, honored to be a part of this committee. This is just a comment to the EXIM, to Vice Chairman Cruse and the EXIM Board that, you know, from my perspective on international projects what we've seen in the setbacks that the Bank has had related to the delay in reauthorization and the world changing around us, including the pandemic, I think there are two aspects that need to be considered and, again, sort of revisited.

One is the issue of speed, and it's not only one around China. I think the issue of speed is critical, and trying to benchmark what that means in the form of ranges is critical.

So I think there's a general impression that the speed in which a project would get financed even once it has the proper details by the U.S. EXIM Bank is excessive and that ends up being a deterrent to even seeing the opportunity by the Bank because we advocate for EXIM opportunities and we generally do get, in many cases, that feedback.

The second area that I think is of concern is the issue of integration. Another way the world has changed is that agencies or other countries, not just China, but more of the ECAs that we're used to seeing in Europe and so on bringing a bundle of packages.

And here I think that we can benefit by some method or an improved methodology around integration with other agencies, including DFC. I think these are two critical factors that can improve EXIM's -- get EXIM to the table and also improve our ability to get deals done. So that's just more of a feedback and thought. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Mr. Sharma. Appreciate those observations and they are absolutely correct.

We'll now go back into the agenda, and Scott Condren is going to talk to us about the content policy implementation. He's a Senior Policy Analyst at the Office of Policy Analysis and International Relations. Scott, thanks for being with us today and you've got the floor.

MR. CONDREN: All right. Thank you, Chairman Pearce. As you said, I am Scott Condren, senior analyst in the Office of Policy Analysis and International Relations here at EXIM. And I have been coordinating the implementation of the new transformational exports content policy. I say coordinating deliberately because this has been a bank-wide effort to create a viable policy, and I'd like to thank my colleagues for all the hard work on this effort.

As you're all aware, in December 2020 EXIM's Board passed a new content policy for ten congressionally identified transformational areas. The new policy lowers the U.S. content requirements for EXIM support from 85 percent to 51 percent for transactions in these areas and allows for transactions with less than 51 percent U.S. content to be eligible for EXIM support if certain criteria are met.

These criteria include submitting -- the exporter submitting a plan to meaningfully increase U.S. jobs over the next three to five years, as well as one of at least seven factors applying, such as a substantial probability of future exports resulting from EXIM support for the transaction.

In addition, the Board gave us several other objectives, including to come up with incentives to maintain a higher U.S. content and a presumptive prohibition on financing Chinese contacts.

Staff has made significant progress on several operational issues including the jobs plan guidance and methodology, a board pre-clearance process for low U.S. content transactions, potential incentives for higher U.S. content transactions, and ensuring that there are no fundamental operational or structural hurdles to implementing final policy.

That said, certain key issues not clearly addressed in the approved policy require broader discussion with the new administration. And during this transitional period bank staff must interpret the policy change narrowly.

The major issue that remains outstanding is the type of foreign content that EXIM can now support. The policy explicitly covers what is currently called eligible foreign content. That is foreign content incorporated into U.S. goods and/or shipped directly from the United States to the foreign buyer.

Covering this type of eligible foreign content will be implemented for the transformational areas, and that's the narrow interpretation that I refer to.

However, the policy could give EXIM room to take a more expansive approach by allowing foreign content to ship directly from foreign countries to foreign buyers without first transiting through the United States.

This expansive approach to foreign content raises other key issues, such as if EXIM were to cover such direct foreign content would U.S.-flag shipping still need to apply to them? And would EXIM cover shipments from China or cover goods shipped on Chinese vessels?

Furthermore, the Board's directive to not cover Chinese content still needs to be generally defined, as a strict interpretation of the policy would result in all Chinese content, even if currently considered eligible foreign content or non-transformational exports, becoming ineligible and thus not financeable by EXIM as transformational exports.

EXIM's current -- EXIM's staff is currently working to understand the implications of such an approach. In recognition of the Board's requirement for an April report on the new content policy following a stakeholder vetting process, EXIM will surely be soliciting public comment on the value of the new program if it were to be implemented on the narrow parameter basis.

In particular, EXIM would like to understand from a full range of stakeholders the importance, if any, in being able to support direct foreign content in the relevant sectors, the feasibility of excluding Chinese content from supply chains, and the ability to use U.S. shipping or excluding Chinese shipping on the foreign shipment.

Basically we are seeking to understand, does narrow interpretation best allow EXIM to support U.S. jobs in manufacturing, or would a more expansive approach allow EXIM to be more competitive and support more jobs overall?

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing your discussion on this issue. As Chairman Pearce said, I'll be available to answer any questions you may have on the content policy during the open discussion later.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Scott. Appreciate that presentation.

We're next going to hear from Ambassador Paula Dobriansky. She's going to talk about the recommendations from the Chairman's Council on China Competition.

Ambassador, thanks again for your work as chair of that committee and you've got the floor.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Thank you so much, Chairman Pearce. And let me also say up front thanks to members of the Advisory Committee as well as the Board of Directors because they have been integral to this entire process and no less the staff of EXIM, the veterans and then also hello to the whole new team. Just really glad to see all of you today.

Let me just make one statement, if I may, Mr. Chairman, before I go to the four recommendations. I do want to just underscore the backdrop. The backdrop of the establishment of that subcommittee on strategic competition with the People's Republic of China, C4 as we call it, basically it -- what underpins it in a very strong and I would say bipartisan way, is to support U.S. workers and companies as they compete for global projects against China's state-backed actors.

And there is a strong feeling that the China program really comes at an essential time within EXIM Bank.

So with that backdrop, there were four recommendations in a letter that we submitted to you and members of the Advisory Committee in January. Specifically these are the four points.

The first one is that EXIM should be -- should continue to expeditiously implement the China program. And towards this end, that means including, ensuring appropriate senior management attention and resourcing.

This includes federal appropriations, human capital aligned with the significance of the China program. And let me just, if I may, because we are going to have a discussion, a question I'd like to put forward here is the importance of the 20 percent, the 20 percent commitment.

And so it would be welcome if the very respected Jim Cruse and others on the team could address this. Is that going to be part of the effort going forward, that 20 percent?

And part of that is that it's not just the China program but how the entire EXIM team, if you will, and the programs are integrated towards this end, because it's not just one single program. It's really a whole of internal effort.

Let me go to the second recommendation. That's the outcome of the implementation framework for the narrowly tailored content policy for the China program as other China program-related policies, requirements, financial products, that they be streamlined, flexible and responsible to real time needs and resource constraints of exporters and the workers they employ.

There was definitely a strong feeling on the part of the subcommittee members that there needs to be agility, flexibility. It just can't be rigid as one goes forward.

Thirdly is, have to continue the positive momentum toward being an integrated tool of statecraft. It's very key that EXIM Bank is an important tool of statecraft.

So towards that end, the recommendation was that EXIM should synergistically collaborate with other federal agencies and with White House policy councils in order to scale up the impact of the deployment of U.S. government financial resources.

So here the concept was, and it was mentioned quite a bit, was the importance of a whole of government approach. Whole of government approach toward really having an impact.

And then finally, the fourth recommendation was that the China program must achieve concrete results. There was an extensive discussion about the importance of metrics and here, accordingly, the recommendation is that the senior management and team members have to focus on the ultimate metric by which the China program should be judged, the number and size of deals executed in which U.S. companies successfully compete against PRC-backed entities.

So in sum on those four recommendations we're talking about the importance of financing, which is absolutely crucial here. And not only financing but, as I mentioned, the integrated approach internally at EXIM, agility, flexibility, a whole of government approach, as well as metrics.

And let me, Mr. Chairman, also just mention because I think it's important when Jim -- excuse me, when Chris, sorry, when Chris opened, Chris had indicated in his opening remarks also the backdrop and as did Hazeen, the backdrop of climate change.

And I do want to mention the fact that in a couple of weeks there will be the climate change summit that's taking place. There are 40 countries that will be at that.

President Biden is going to be spearheading that. I hope, by the way, all of you can hear me because I hear some noise. That's not me. I mean I have my mic on, but I hear kind of a backdrop, so I hope you can hear me.

But just to come to the final point, there is this climate change summit -- thank you, I think it got stopped -- well, almost.

There is a climate change summit that's being held within a couple of weeks. It's April 22nd, 23rd. And clearly this is also an issue that has been integrated into the whole issue of exports as related to -- and businesses as related to climate change.

So I did want to highlight that and the fact that that has been major policy advanced by the administration. And there's actually an action that's coming up immediately this very month.

I'll stop there, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Well, thank you, Ambassador, and we could hear you clearly. As always your comments are to the point and very, very clear and understandable.

I would highlight that in your emphasis on the 20 percent mandate from Congress that Jack Lew, former Treasury Secretary under President Obama's Council on Foreign Relations just put that report out.

And that was one of their key points is that, that we must pay attention. We must make sure it's funded. And so I'm sure we'll get questions on that as we move forward. I would just request that all the presenters be ready for that.

Adam Frost is the Senior Vice President for the Program on China Transformational Exports. And if, Adam, you've got the floor now if you'd like to give us your thoughts on this.

MR. FROST: Thank you. Thank you, Congressman Pearce. Congressman, is everything coming through clear?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Yes.

MR. FROST: Great. Well, I just want to thank you. This is my first opportunity to address the Advisory Council, so obviously I'd love to thank you and all the Advisory Council members, of course Ms. Pryor, Congressman Bachus and, of course, Jim Cruse for the opportunity to speak. And I

just have to say, Ambassador, your comments and your recommendations are sage and we are taking them to heart very seriously within the China program and within all of EXIM.

And I'll offer a few short remarks to give you some evidence, but the theme you'll hear from my comments are we are absolutely heading in the right direction. And we do have a long way to go.

So in short, as far as implementing the program and making it solid and continuous within EXIM, I think my presence here is a testimony to the seriousness with which EXIM is taking it.

As you're aware, EXIM, using program funds has hired myself as a senior vice president and two vice presidents. All of us are cleared to hold Top Secret/SCI clearances which will enable some of the integration with the rest of the government.

And I'd also add that the program remains well-organized within EXIM as a direct report to the president and chairman with a dotted line report to the chief banking officer, making us, I think, appropriately situated within the organization.

As far as the resourcing goes, I can tell you that we did submit resourcing requests for FY21. That was transmitted to the Hill but was not incorporated into the FY21 budget for EXIM.

So our Chief Financial Officer is working closely with OMB to submit our request for FY22 with the administration.

As far as on the flexible and agile I would like to point out, so Mr. Scott Condren, I think, adequately covered all the activities that are going on from the policy side to make sure that we have the right policies in place that my team can help execute in coordination with the Bank.

And I'll say that over February and March, the team has spent, under the leadership one of our vice presidents, Mr. Charles Barnett, we spent our time developing the business processes for how the program itself integrates with the other elements of EXIM Bank to make sure that we are additive to and streamlining and fast and smooth.

And I will not bore you with the hours of details of the 40-page report we put together for how we're going to do that, but I promise you that agility and speed is important to us because if we are not adding net value to EXIM and its clients then I think we need to step back and readdress ourselves.

As far as integrating with the rest of the government, we do have some progress. So again, I've only been here since early January, so I've only been here for a few weeks and months.

And I'll tell you just a little bit about myself. Background is about 15, 16 years in the Defense Department as a civil servant, working across a range of programs and projects for all the military services and the joint staff.

Since coming on board, also should add I am a military reservist and a China Foreign Area Officer. I personally have lived in China for over two years and I'm a fluent Mandarin speaker. So with that I should say upon coming over to EXIM we immediately started reaching out to make sure we had good connective tissue with the other parts of government because Ambassador, you're absolutely right.

EXIM's weight will be felt by how much we integrate with those other parts of government and our effort as part of a whole of government national strategy.

So a few highlights from us as well. We're already heavily engaged with the National Security Council particularly the Asian Departments, right, the China team over there. And we work very closely with, with Intecons, which handles the international trade and economics portions.

We are regularly consulted by all manners of country directors at the National Security Council for advice on how EXIM could help support larger projects.

With the Defense Department just in the last few weeks we've briefed the commander of Pacific Air Forces himself. We have had office calls with the Office of Secretary of Defense through the DASD for China, OUSD A&S which runs the CFIUS process and is usually DoD's voice.

And we have a close and ongoing relationship with other elements of the joint staff, J5, and with our partners in OSD Policy.

Additionally, at State we have close ties not only with State Econ Bureau, which is -- OPAIR manages a very good relationship with them, but we've expanded to include East Asia/Pacific and are working closely with the China team over there to make sure we're integrated with how they're going. And we can tell you some of the great efforts State's doing.

And lastly, I'd be remiss if I didn't bring up our friends at the Department of Commerce, right, which are leading a number of initiatives precisely for how do I get American manufacturers more competitive overseas, and how do we integrate more with the whole commercial service.

So we're making good progress, I think, on the interagency integration parts, but again, always a long way to go.

And then lastly, you're absolutely right, ma'am, about concrete results. And so if I don't stand before you in the year 2025 with something that sounds close to 20 percent of EXIM being dedicated towards this program then it's probably time that you find somebody else to run this division. Because we are dedicated and motivated to moving that as fast as we can and helping American exporters and workers compete strongly against the PRC.

Mr. Jim Cruse mentioned a few moments ago a deal that we just -- the EXIM Board recently approved where it was a direct competition with the People's Republic where they, where the U.S. firm had one fair and square deal.

The Chinese had come back and tried to pressure the foreign government with a change in financing and the Board actually approved a change to the tenor of the deal to help to make sure those Americans firms kept that job.

So I'll leave that as one result because we have a lot more to go through and I want to make sure my remarks are short. And you have a small team here an EXIM dedicated -- integrated with the rest of the large team to echo the comments made earlier about the excitement and motivation of the larger team at EXIM to get after these problems.

And we look forward to working with everyone here to try to do that. Thank you, ma'am.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Thank you. Can't hear you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Okay.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: I'm talking into the blue here, but we're going to go to the questions now and I appreciate your presentation.

So kind of the rule of thumb is that we should be -- if you've asked a question, if you would defer to other people. If we get a chance for a second round of questions I'm happy to do that.

So if you did not ask a question at the first opportunity then if you have a question for any of our presenters today, we'll have those questions.

And we're just going to kind of flow into the comments from the committee, that session that starts (audio interference).

So the floor is now open for questions. Paula, go ahead.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Yes, thank you so much. I just, I appreciate the opportunity because I want to commend you, Adam. I thought you gave really just a very crisp to the point response to the different recommendations.

And just two quick points and one question. The two quick points, really, really thrilled to hear your comments about your own background on DoD.

I think you'd be very interested to know that the subcommittee members felt very strongly about having EXIM have a connection with the Department of Defense, because the Department of Defense has really put China front and center, also the State Department.

So it's music to one's ears, just really thank you for that and also given your own background.

And then secondly, thank you for the answers relative to financing. You mentioned the integration. But the quick question is, you know, you're spearheading the China program. One of the comments made was also about integration within EXIM itself, that you not be a standalone, that you also have the opportunity to work with your colleagues and be reinforced by your colleagues.

In other words, we know that sometimes bureaucracies get a little bit stovepiped. So that's just another point to put forward for your consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you.

MR. FROST: And yes, ma'am. I think I should say -- oh, I'm sorry, Congressman. Should I respond or should I wait?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Go ahead, Adam, yeah, thanks.

MR. FROST: Oh, thank you, sir. Ma'am, and to your point, I just -- a personal note since coming over to the team, you know, in the interagency a lot of people say well, how many people is your team?

And I'll say well, there's four people in the office, and they'll roll their eyes. And I say but we're a 400-person team.

Right? And that's just my way to emphasize that since coming on board I've got to say I've moved around the government a few times, it's been the most welcoming experience I've ever had coming into another government agency. And I have felt nothing but camaraderie and collegiality from everyone in EXIM.

I think the entire staff here believes in this mission, in particular, and we're working together closely through all the issues we need to be to be successful together.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, and, I guess as a follow-up. In that Jack Lew report, the CFR report, they recommended the program be scaled up to at least 20 million for your program. I'd be interested in later hearing on that, but I'm going to go to another question from staff -- or from Advisory Committee.

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Mr. Chair, Owen Herrnsstadt. I just want to get in the queue.

Okay. Should I go ahead?

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Uh-oh.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Maria, I see your hand as gone up, and Owen, you will be the first or the second there, thank you. And, Joanne, I'll come to you next.

MEMBER YOUNG: Great.

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Well, yeah, this is my first question.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER CINO: -- second question jump in and --

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Go ahead, Maria.

MEMBER CINO: Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, Advisory and very, very able staff, it's great to get together and see everybody.

Let me just first say that I wholeheartedly support the recommendations, and we do need to move forward. I think it's also worth highlighting the fact that these are, in my mind, bipartisan recommendations. These are all across the board extremely, extremely important.

In the tech industry we battle China every day, and it's extremely important that we continue to remain as competitive as we possibly can. Good example is the -- is the chip shortage, which I won't get into, but I think with regards to the metrics we do, it is essential that we hold our feet to the fire.

And those metrics are set high and they're met because if we're going to get to that 20 percent, I think it is extremely important that we get those big deals. It's a lot of money out there, and to push that money out and get those deals and to be as competitive as we want to do, it -- want to be, we've really, really got to stay focused on those metrics, and we've got to measure them at intervals so that we don't get to the end and say oh, we didn't meet the metric.

So, again, wholeheartedly, less a question than an observation, wholeheartedly endorse the recommendations and the hard work.

Ambassador Dobriansky, great job as always, and then the implementation is the part that we now have to make sure that we do flawlessly.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Adam? Adam or Scott?

MR. FROST: Oh, I'm sorry. It just took me a moment to get in. My computer was cutting in and out, ma'am. But, yeah, absolutely, right?

We look forward to working hard on all these issues, and I apologize if my -- my screen cut in and out, I wasn't able to catch the entirety of your question.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Yeah, I think she was just pointing out the -- just the absolute importance of pushing it out the door and making deals and making sure that we're active out in the market, I think is it. Maria, if you'd like to fine-tune that.

MEMBER CINO: It'll take me longer to get off mute.

MR. FROST: Yes, ma'am.

MEMBER CINO: I think, with regards to the metrics, I guess, is really my question because, you know, we all, whether you're in corporate government or at -- whether in corporate America or government or even non-profit, metrics are extremely important.

And I guess, you know, have we set those metrics and when are we going to measure them? As I said, the biggest disappointment is sometimes that we have it as a goal and when we -- we don't go to it until the end and we see that we haven't been able to meet it.

So how often will we be able to look at that because we've got to put a push on? It's better to know that beginning or midpoint through than at the end. So that --

MR. FROST: Yes, ma'am.

MEMBER CINO: -- an observation and a bit of a question.

MR. FROST: No. Yes, ma'am, and I should -- you should know part of our implementation plan for the business processes of the program, we're working very closely with the IP team to make sure that we're identifying deals as they hit the beginning of our pipeline and that they are tagged as related to this competition so we can track them through their lifetime.

So my hope is that within the near future we'll be able to come back to you with more accurate metrics over time. But I would ask for the advisory council's advice on this one because one of the interesting things we're noticing is that when we do our job, so for instance, this one particular transaction in West Africa, because the U.S. won now that project is a non-event. So it doesn't show up on somebody -- somebody who's got a One Belt, One Road tracking system somewhere or somebody saying look at all the horrible things the Chinese are doing.

When we succeed they now fall off the table, and nobody sees that they -- so it's on me to help tell that story over time, but I think it's an interesting activity that when we become more successful and when we start pushing back on the abuses that are hurting American workers, we're going to start seeing less PRC activity.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Adam.

Joanne?

MEMBER YOUNG: Well, I -- sorry, hold on one second. Okay. Yes, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: We can hear you just fine. Go ahead.

MEMBER YOUNG: One of the concerns about China that makes, it seems to me, EXIM's goal of clean energy and mitigating climate change more difficult is the emphasis that through their Belt

and Road Initiative China is putting on ensuring countries depend on carbon-intensive power for decades through its export of coal.

And I'm -- I'm just wondering whether there are projects where EXIM is funding or could fund alternate clean energy resources that would be in direct competition with this aspect, the coal aspect of the Belt and Road Initiative?

MEMBER POWELL: Mr. Chairman, I have a question that builds on that same question. I wonder if maybe --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: -- Rich, but let's go ahead and get an answer to Joanne's question.

Scott?

MR. FROST: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, sir. My quick -- I'll just take a quick stab, and then, ma'am, I'll turn it over to the OPAIR team. They have more -- more specific information.

But I would say, if you recall, one of the transformational export areas we're supposed to prioritize and focus on is renewable energy. That's a congressional requirement.

And then I think you're already seeing heavy emphasis from this administration on pushing forward on activities that would help in the renewable energy market.

So I do expect to see a future where deals that work through the EXIM pipeline are very applicable to pushing back against that level of strategic competition.

And I think that they would, therefore, because of the transformational export designation we might find other ways to help process those deals to the benefit of American workers and manufacturers. Because while you're correct, ma'am, they do push a lot of coal-fired plants out, if you're -- I'm sure Ambassador Dobriansky will comment as well, the renewable energy, solar panels and those type of energy products are a top priority for the 14th Five-Year Plan that has just rolled out of the People's Republic.

So I mean, make no mistake. They are gunning for the future of those industries, and they do want to own them. So I would expect in three to four years, we're already seeing some, but you will see increased levels of Chinese transactions trying to grab the market share on exactly the kinds of projects you'd like to see us go after.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: If I may, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Rich Powell, go ahead.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: It's a -- just a two-finger before --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: -- before Rich Powell goes?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Let me go to Rich, and then I'll come to you, Paula.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: All right. Go ahead.

MEMBER POWELL: I'll just quickly -- I'll just quickly build on that question and, and, you know, bring the staff and perhaps the rest of the Advisory Committee's attention to the fact that since the reauthorization was passed, we've also had a major new program passed in the year-end omnibus in December, the Energy Act of 2020.

Amongst other things, that Energy Act established a massive new demonstration program for next-generation American clean energy technologies, in part with the explicit intent to say well, we're so far now behind the Chinese, for example, on photovoltaic solar, how do we get to next-generation renewable technologies, storage technologies, advanced nuclear technologies, carbon capture technologies, where we might still actually have a chance of building an industrial base and being competitive on exports in that.

And so building on the recommendation from the Ambassador's subcommittee here that you adopt an all-of-government approach and actively collaborate with other agencies.

I would just very much encourage the staff, Adam and your team and the entire bank to be talking closely with the Department of Energy as they're choosing which of the technologies and which of the companies to engage in these public-private partnerships and demonstrate these technologies to be thinking not just about applicability for the U.S., which is, you know, a large market for clean energy resources, but tiny compared to the scope of the global market.

And to be actively engaged with them and perhaps choosing the technologies that are really applicable globally where we might retake our edge in clean energy exports.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Adam, any response? Rich, do you need to hear something or just mostly a comment there?

Okay. All right. Paula, go ahead.

MEMBER DOBRIANSKY: Mine is just a comment. I first wanted just to back up what Adam said in response to Joanne Young. Your question, I think, is an excellent one in focusing on the direction that China is going in terms of its energy.

It's true that it certainly is fossil fuel-based, but Adam, I think, definitely pointed out it has itself internally highlighted and upped its emphasis on solar panels and solar energy.

If you go to China you could actually see that everywhere, so he's right in saying that. And I think he emphasized the diversification.

And then my second comment, Mr. Chairman, was just I think Rich Powell's suggestion is superb, spot on about the whole of government approach. He's absolutely right.

In terms of EXIM bank, it just makes eminent sense for a whole of government approach not only to be strategically aligned with Defense, State, but absolutely in this area in terms of energy and energy diversification because so much has been happening.

And last point, because China has definitely -- definitely in the technological space has moved into it. It's extremely competitive. So he's absolutely right. That's an area that we should be engaged in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you. Any other first time questions? Owen, you're still at the top of the list here for the second questions.

Yes, Mr. Smith, go ahead.

MEMBER SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to follow up on your comment about the Council on Foreign Relations report that just came out recently. Jack Lew, former Treasury Secretary and other notable folks put that together. I thought they did a great job.

And I'm wondering if that's not -- could not be something perhaps for our next meeting to get a briefing from them on their recommendations with respect to EXIM, to get some more details on that.

It didn't come out in time to make Ambassador Dobriansky's letter but those, those suggestions, I think, dovetail very nicely with what we've been working on and what the Bank's been working on with the China program and would probably be worth highlighting in some way going forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thanks, Chris.

And Chris Van Es, if you might accommodate that? I think that's really a good request. We will look to try to do that on the next meeting.

Other questions from Advisory Committee members?

Yes, Ms. Upmeyer?

MEMBER UPMEYER: Hi. I'm sorry. I'm getting feedback here.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: If everyone could mute their microphones?

MEMBER UPMEYER: Let me see if I can call back before I ask a question.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Mr. Ferguson? Mr. Ferguson, you're muted, I think, and we're getting feedback from somewhere.

MEMBER FERGUSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to address this question to whomever may be the most appropriate at the Bank to answer it, but a couple times we've made reference to the climate summit coming up in April.

And then of course we're -- that that is a prelude leading up to the Conference of the Parties in Glasgow at the end of the year. And it strikes me that among all the areas where we may be cooperating more successfully with other allies in their export support functions would be around renewables and clean energy.

It's an area where it's not only important commercially for the United States but it's important from a national security perspective and all the reasons we know.

And I just wonder if there has been any conversation regarding how we can better cooperate, look at more ways to co-finance more easily and sort of break down barriers that would otherwise prevent us from working with other export agencies, particularly when you're looking at China which is -- has remarkable ability to both financially and coercively come into these markets and dictate energy programs.

If we can cooperate with other export agencies, we would be all the more capable of competing with China on export, supporting particularly large-scale renewable projects around the world. And I'm just curious if -- if that possibility has been discussed within the Bank? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Jim, that seems like that might be best in your wheelhouse, if you can give us the overall viewpoint if that has been discussed? It may be that you want to hand it off to one of your colleagues, but why don't you take a stab at it?

MR. CRUSE: Well, we definitely have discussed co-financing. In fact, we have explicitly discussed it with some of the telecommunications countries, particularly Finland and Korea.

And we have ongoing discussions with them trying to find ways to use their equipment focus and their expertise and their status in the industry with our desire to match up with the Chinese.

So we definitely are looking at co-financing as one of the ways to do that, particularly in that particular industry.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you very much.

And as we're talking about the climate change, we can't just ignore the letter that Senator Toomey sent to EXIM and to the media. And it's focused on this question and the executive order, and basically we need to be reminded that -- that all forms of energy have to be considered, and it's got to be a pretty level playing field if I'm correct on the reading of the law there.

Other comments or questions from our executive committee -- or Advisory Committee?

Scott, go ahead.

MEMBER PALMER: Thank you, Chairman Pearce. This may be to Jim Cruse or someone else on the staff and -- and it doesn't need to be in too much detail, but I'd just be curious.

Highest level, very high level description to hear about, you know, the kind of deal that you believe that's squarely within our wheelhouse, maybe one that we recently won or bid. And at the same time, you know, a deal that we want, a deal that we wanted or would have fit squarely within our wheelhouse that we didn't get and why.

I'd be curious about the size of the loan, the type of the borrower, but just a very just general description about a great deal that we did and a deal that we really wanted but why we didn't get it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Jim, if you want to pick that up?

MR. CRUSE: Well, the deal we got is the one we keep talking about in Senegal, which was roughly a \$100 million transaction involving a small business of renewable product into Africa in direct competition with the Chinese, who were making an aggressive, in fact, very, very aggressive move.

And we matched the Chinese by extending the term. So we hit all of our key variables of jobs, small business, renewable, African commitment, and meeting the Chinese. So that hit about every part of the wheelhouse you would want and was one in which we went the extra step to match their specific terms.

I would let Adam, if he wanted to broadly, we can't go into much detail of cases we're still working on. I don't know of one that we have already lost.

I know where there are some we're working uphill on. But, Adam, do you have anything you could add there speaking broadly?

MR. FROST: Not too much to add, Jim, I think for the short time we have left with this group. I mean, there are -- each transaction at its surface can look like strategic competition or a direct competition with the PRC. But then as you dig down into the individual details, each one kind of has its own issues that we have to work through.

And so I'll leave it relatively short because I think some of it does go back to the conversations that OPAIR is leading about how we implement some of these issues.

MR. CRUSE: It is hard --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. CRUSE: I would just point that we have to address the content issue fully and completely in order to make a lot of progress vis-a-vis China. The cases where we're having more problems matching up and completing a case all deal with one degree or another of content.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you. Other first-time questions?

Joanne, I see you. You'll go on the second question list.

MEMBER YOUNG: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Other first-time questions? If not --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Who was just flagging me? First-time question?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: I'm going to Owen if I don't see a first-time. Owen, go ahead.

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Yeah, thank you. Yes, my first-time question with the China issue, so, you know, it's no secret that, well, as the only labor representative on this Advisory Committee that's here today, it's no secret that we have very strong and continuing concerns with not only the procedure that was followed with respect to the new content policy for the China program, but also strong substantive questions and concerns about it.

And, you know, one continues to be, and I guess this is for Jim, there was a lack of empirical support or even study with respect to lowering content for the China competition.

I guess the claim was by lowering content and providing greater incentive for a company to get EXIM financing for an exported good, for the foreign content it somehow would be a positive for U.S. jobs on that same product. And I've never seen the empirical support for it, and I don't know whether that's been done or done specifically for the ten transformational technologies that were included.

I guess I also raise a concern because just from a commonsense viewpoint the Biden administration introduced the executive order strengthening Buy America on just the third day of taking the oath of office. It's something we very much welcomed and very much applauded.

Even his predecessor had a few executive orders regarding strengthening Buy America that includes content, it includes lowering waivers under Buy America, et cetera, on it.

This seems to be moving in the exact opposite direction of everybody else in government. I note that it lowers the content for these transformational industries to 51 percent, and then I guess it can lower it to even zero if it meets seven other factors, if I've got that right, but none of those really look at domestic job impact.

I'm just not sure how to reconcile that with how everybody else is moving on it, and I'm wondering if you can comment on that.

And then I'll note for the record, labor as well as two other folks had dissented, I guess at our -- at the Advisory Committee letter. I guess we had hoped to have an opportunity to file that dissent, but I guess that didn't occur because the letter was issued I guess later that day on that.

And then just the transparency issue on the December 18th Board meeting, it's just troubling that it would have been nice to have known exactly what the Board was considering, I guess before they considered it.

I understand there's a deliberation there on it, but it all kind of boils down to wondering if, you know, we really do need strong empirical support and a good study so that we can really see how this will impact on the American workers, keeping in mind that statecraft, while it is incredibly important for everything the Bank does, the Bank's mission is also to ensure the creation and maintenance of good U.S. jobs here at home.

And that means more than lip service. That means actually, as we've heard already this morning, that means getting that actual job done from the Bank. And we just want to make sure we get all those policies right. So thanks.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Owen.

Jim, would you like to address those issues?

MR. CRUSE: Well, first of all, couldn't agree more that the primary objective of the Bank is jobs. It has been and is clearly stated that way.

And everything that we try to do is to maximize and bring additional jobs. So let me just in that, that context address some of what Owen was talking about.

We have not moved to fully implement the December objective because one of the things we are doing is looking at each of the ten sectors on an empirical basis and trying to develop information as to what is the traditional supply chain, what is the traditional U.S. content that can be done technologically, as well as practically. What would be feasible as a way of trying to maximize the jobs within each sector.

So we are trying to develop empirical-like, I don't know if we can do it in a statistical, academic sense, but we are trying to develop empirical information relating to each of the ten sectors in terms of exactly what would be the expected content level that would be reasonable for that sector.

And moreover, keep in mind that one of the things we expect to get from these things is an action plan or a plan if they try to go below that on how to increase jobs.

So jobs is the focus of our research. Jobs is the focus of the criteria for getting extra support. Additional jobs is the metric by which we will judge this program successful or not.

So right now I don't have anything but effort and attempts and in, and exercise to show for it, but we are definitely not going into this with the idea of subtracting jobs or doing things that reduce the jobs.

If we didn't think we would get more jobs from lowering the content in a transaction, we shouldn't do it. All right? And so that's just how we're approaching this whole thing.

The Buy America thing is something that was -- did come in, and we have been looking at that trying to figure out if there are ways that we could use that as a metric or a tool.

The China issue addressed ten specific sectors that didn't fit well into the Buy America metric. That doesn't mean that we can't fit it better as we go into it in more detail.

It is not something that we are opposed to. We just don't know enough about all the sectors. The sectors we did know enough about to start with did not fit well into that metric.

In terms of transparency, I can't speak to what was wrong with December. We weren't trying to hide anything as much as we were doing a lot of things simultaneously. That just meant that there wasn't a lot of order in terms of first, second, third, fourth.

I apologize for that. That wasn't an attempt to not be transparent. But in the end of all of this, keep in mind that we are going forward right now in a very, very conservative sense, one that ensures that there isn't any dramatic action that would lower content without a clear rationale.

On a case that we did do in the China program, we did not have to touch on the content. We did that with the 85 percent standard.

So where we can, we will. Where we don't think we can, we will come up with a reason why and a number that we think is the maximum that the U.S. can do right now and a plan to try to increase that.

So we very much don't just -- that's too many negatives. We totally support what Owen is saying about the focus on jobs.

Everything we're going to do in this area is going to be directed to the jobs that can be developed, and we will try to have a fulsome informational, I don't want to use the word empirical too much, basis for whatever we do.

And it will be explained and provided in a transparent way, and this committee will be a big part of that. I don't know how much more I can say.

MEMBER HERRNSTADT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Jim. You've been very, very articulate there.

And, Owen, thank you. As I communicated in that December meeting, it was my intent that your dissent be communicated along with our letter. You were very straightforward about that, and I think you argued your point well.

I would note that this bipartisan CFR report that came out is recommending that the content policy be expanded into all loans, and so they see that as a very critical step. And, again, that's a bipartisan report.

We are past the point where we're supposed to go to public comment. I will ask the staff if you will facilitate. I don't have the ability to see if we've got public comment, but it's now time to open the floor for any of those viewers out there, any of the listeners who would like to make some observation about the meeting so far.

So if you all would accommodate that I would appreciate it.

MR. VAN ES: Thanks, Congressman. If folks have a comment or question to submit into the record, just utilize the chat function. I'm not seeing any at the moment.

While we wait for possible comments or questions from the general public, Lawrence Goodman from the committee, I think you were trying to get in a question at some point? And so just wanted to acknowledge that and see if you still had a question or comment to submit?

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Larry, jump in here if you'd like.

MEMBER GOODMAN: I do. Thank you very much. I do have a comment and a question. It was a little bit cumbersome getting through, but regardless, it's lovely to be here.

I do have a big picture comment and that is that U.S. exports have fallen dramatically over the years. They recently were a peak of 14 percent of GDP, and now they're less than 10 percent of GDP.

This -- this signals a pretty large loss in growth capabilities, and it's pretty clear that EXIM can help close this gap over time.

And what I thought was interesting is as a point of reference, the Competitiveness Report last year was comprehensive. It was well-written. It was clear and compelling language. So congrats to Jim Cruse and the staff.

The emphasis was largely on issues surrounding, at the time, the new reopening of EXIM, the reauthorization, and China as well. And it strikes me that this year it's going to be interesting to see how EXIM can close this competitiveness gap.

In the often-cited report now, today, the CFR report that was spearheaded by Jack Lew and Gary Roughead, they did two things, among many.

They highlighted the importance of EXIM, and they also highlighted just how gigantic China EXIM spending has been. They -- that it was six time U.S. EXIM spending and -- 90 percent of all of G7 spending.

But here the tricky issue, right, is on the amount. EXIM, it seems, would be ill-advised to try and match this largess of lending coming from China, and frankly, this largess of lending often leads to -- hinders growth and it ends in default.

So I was enthused to hear Hazeen Ashby's comments and Adam Frost's comments, and I was looking forward to hearing if they and others, and they've been pretty comprehensive, if there any other issues regarding specifically how -- well, how the thinking is evolving?

And I do realize that it's early days, regarding how to move forward strategically and parsimoniously using resources in an extremely effective way. So anything additional that they could share would be great, even though they've already shared a lot.

And it will be interesting to see this as these issues evolve. So thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Larry.

Hazeen, would you want to jump in here? And I know that we are in the early days, but feel free to weigh in. I think the comments that Larry just made were right on point.

MS. ASHBY: I agree. I agree exactly with everything that Larry just said. I don't think that there's too much more to share. I think that Adam and Jim have really gone through that we're still in the process of making sure that all of our policies are, one, that they are synchronized.

We're still in that transition period. I think, as I stated earlier, we are a team of four right now on the -- from the administration side on our political team. We are still working on the implementation of the China program in general and making sure that it is integrated within -- throughout the rest of the Bank.

I would say that the main thing that we are making sure that resonates throughout all of our programs is, one, that we are following our charter, and then, two, that we are focusing on domestic jobs and domestic -- and domestic infrastructure and manufacturing.

So either making sure that we're the only -- we are the only financing agency in the United States, that it's tied correctly to drop, to domestic drop in U.S. exports while we are making -- as we move forward and as we start to look at how we want to implement any new policies, that -- what we are looking at especially around the content policy is that if we do need to put in place a new content policy that we are looking at ways in which our financing can help spur the domestic infrastructure here so that we can create and bolster manufacturing in the United States.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you, Hazeen.

MS. ASHBY: And I'm not sure exactly, but that is our main goal right now, just how can we be part of Build Back Better to bring back jobs here and increase our manufacturing.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Thank you very much.

Chris, any -- Christopher, anything coming in from our chat room?

MR. VAN ES: We have not gotten any questions or comments submitted by chat. We'll give just another few seconds here.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Okay. We'll keep them going. That is another five minutes, and we'll give them their opportunity.

I think even though it's -- it's early in the administrative zenith, that you can be an effective conduit in expressing the views from this advisory committee.

And I understand that we're just an advisory committee, but we fill an important role. And so if you can be that conduit of information back there into the White House and into the decision-making rooms, that would be very effective.

I think you can tell that there's just unified concern about the jobs that we've lost, the manufacturing sectors that we've lost, the technology sectors that we've lost to China.

And so the congressional mandate but then also the EXIM direction with our chairman's committee, the C4 Committee headed up by Ambassador Dobriansky is -- I think that we're giving adequate focus to these things.

And so consider us to be your resources to call on if the discussions reach a point then I think that we can offer a lot. The individual members have a lot to offer, and so feel free to call any of us if those discussions come to a point where they need input from people who've been out fighting in these sectors. And a lot of the people on this committee have been in exports for some time.

Other -- so we're going to go to the chatroom and then to other questions to wrap up this session from the committee.

MR. VAN ES: So we don't have any questions or comments that have been submitted by the public. But, Steve, just did want to acknowledge your comments there about engaging with this group.

I know certainly as part of, you know, my mandate and my role, I certainly view you all as a resource and look forward to talking one-on-one over the coming months, as well as meeting again as a group in a few months.

So those comments are well-heard and we definitely, I think, will need all of your help in getting us through this transition period and to full strength hopefully soon.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Okay.

MR. VAN ES: So, Steve, no more -- no more comments or questions. I think we can probably adjourn or open for a last call to questions or comments from the committee.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: Sure. Yes, let me make one more suggestion there to Jim.

Jim, I think one of the more exciting things that we saw after the four years of being on ice and being shut down and then the reauthorization and people kind of looking over their shoulders to see what might be coming next, and then we saw the agency transform into this really -- group of people who are filled with vitality, excitement.

They were mobile. They were agile. We're moving into the markets, and I'm just wondering anytime you have a change in leadership, morale can take a dive. How's the morale among the people right now in your 400 folks? Everybody is charged like they have been.

MR. CRUSE: Well, I think everybody is very excited by the fact that everywhere you look we're seeing EXIM Bank mentioned as a possible answer to one of the issues being raised, whether it's climate, whether it's China, whether it's manufacturing, whether it's jobs, whether it's infrastructure.

What is not at all clear is how with 400 people we're going to do all those things. But I do believe that the Bank staff is quite encouraged by the fact that after not quite seven years in the wilderness, we are seeming to be coming out the other side.

And maybe we are beginning the seven years of, I wouldn't exactly call it fat, but a better time where the tools and capacity of the Bank are being tapped and used.

The staff does see that. The staff is anxious to get into all of these things. And right now we're figuring out how to do that.

CHAIRMAN PEARCE: All right. Well, we are one minute away from adjournment time. We're going to give you one minute back to your lives. Thank you very much for your participation in this meeting today.

Again, every time I get to interact with you all, I'm stunned at the knowledge, the background, the experience that we bring to this committee.

And so thank you to each one for your wonderful presentations. And until we meet again, you all be safe and healthy. Thank you. We're adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 4:00 p.m.)