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Texas Congresswoman **Kay Granger** will seek the chairmanship of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, according to her spokesman, ending rumors that she would forgo the post in favor of some other position.

Although no decisions have been made, until last night Granger was the ranking Republican on the panel and she is the clear frontrunner for the job. She would succeed current chairwoman **Nita Lowey** (D-NY), who has served as chairwoman since 2006.

"Congresswoman Granger is interested in continuing on as chair of the state and foreign operations appropriations subcommittee," **Matt Leffingwell**, her press secretary, told *The Cable* Wednesday.

When power switches in Congress, a complicated game of musical chairs begins as senior members jockey for committee and subcommittee chairs. Just being the highest-ranking minority member on a panel doesn't mean one automatically takes over the chairmanship.

But if Granger does succeed Lowey, she will play a large role in writing the bills that appropriate money for State Department operations, USAID, foreign operations, foreign assistance, humanitarian assistance, and many other things. Those accounts all face unprecedented pressure next year as the GOP led Congress will be looking for spending cuts that don't have strong domestic constituencies.

Last month, **we identified Granger** as one of 10 Republicans who stand to be influential in the next Congress if the GOP won control of the House. Since then, we've received several e-mails from sources who had heard that Granger would forgo the subcommittee chairmanship to pursue leadership of another panel.

We've heard that **Ander Crenshaw** (R-FL), the third-ranking Republican on the panel, was eyeing the chairmanship with the expectation that Granger would step aside.

(**Mark Kirk** (R-IL), the second-ranking Republican on the subcommittee, was elected Tuesday night to become the junior senator from Illinois, the seat once held by **Barack Obama**.)

So how would subcommittee chairwoman Granger handle the responsibility of writing the State and foreign ops appropriations bill? Here's what we reported in October:

Although [Granger] supported the bill put forth this year by current chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), **she criticized** the increases for the foreign-ops budget, saying, "We also face the continued concern in our own country about our economy and the devastating effects of skyrocketing deficits and debt." She's a strong supporter of a **balanced budget amendment**, which doesn't bode well for foreign-aid funding in this dismal fiscal environment.

Granger also serves on the defense subcommittee, placing her at the intersection of the debate over how to balance the national security budget and shift resources from defense to diplomacy and development. Here she seems to favor the Pentagon, saying in June, "I want to be sure that we aren't increasing foreign aid at the expense of our troops." Her lack of support of international organizations was criticized by the group Citizens for Global Solutions, which gave her an "F" in its **2007 to 2009 rating**. Granger is also on board with efforts to eliminate aid to countries that are not performing on internal reform, as she explained **when expressing opposition** to funding of the Senegalese government through the State Department's Millennium Challenge Corporation. "We can't just give out money and say we will put up with whatever you are doing," she said.

The committee leadership assignments won't be doled out for at least two to three weeks, our Hill sources report. But if Granger's bid is successful, she'll be instantly influential. The fiscal 2011 State and Foreign Ops bill still has not been completed by Congress, despite that the fiscal year began Oct. 1.

The stop gap funding measure that has been funding these programs since then, known as a "continuing resolution," expires in December. The lame duck Democratic led Congress is unlikely to be able to pass full appropriations bills on its way out the door, so they will likely pass another short term continuing resolution. That would leave the final work on the actual bill to the incoming class led by the GOP next year.

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